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Idaho Meth Project having an effect

When people use meth, no one wins. That's the sentiment that is sweeping the state in response to the growing success of the Idaho Meth Campaign. "When we travel across the state, we have lots of kids tell us that they had no idea what meth could do to them." said Idaho Meth Project Executive Director Megan Ronk.

"I was giving a presentation to a group of foster care children. After our presentation, a girl came up and told me that she was in foster care because her mother had been a meth addict." Ronk said that the foster child had recently tried to buy meth because she felt that if her mother could choose meth over her, then it must have been a big deal.

"She told me that after hearing my presentation that she finally understood what her mom did and how dangerous meth was," said Ronk. "She made the decision not to try meth."

This story represents just one of the many stories about how the Idaho Meth Project is having a positive effect on youth and families in Idaho. According to this year's Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey, conducted by the Idaho Meth Project, awareness, education and prevention of meth use is increasing.

After one year of advertising, community engagement and education, 63 percent of teens and 77 percent of young adults now believe that there is a "great risk" in taking meth just once or twice. These statistics are up 8 and 9 points respectively from last year. The survey also shows an 8 point increase (39 percent) in parent-child discussions about meth use.

The driving force behind Idaho Meth Project is its graphic and somewhat disturbing advertisements which are intended to show the effects of meth on Idaho teens and young adults.

In reference to the project's advertising campaign, Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter said, "You're going to see disturbing and even shocking images of what meth does to people. These public service spots don't sugar-coat it, because it's just that ugly. And Idahoans need to see and hear the truth about this drug," according to the Idaho Meth Project web site.

Previously using national advertisements, this year the project produced advertisements taken from the experiences of Idaho residents. "What's exciting about our new advertisements is that they are real Idaho teens," said Ronk. "We traveled throughout the state and interviewed 70 teens who had used meth. Its important for people in Idaho to realize that meth does effect kids and families in Idaho — its often right in our backyard."

The effects of meth use don't end there. According to Ronk, its use is also affecting the pocketbooks of Idaho residents. She said that meth use costs taxpayers nationally more then 23.4 billion dollars and that rural states like Idaho share a disproportionate amount of that cost. "A modest investment in prevention will save money in the long run." said Ronk.

To find out more about the Idaho Meth Project or to obtain the full Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey, visit www.idahomethproject.org.