

CODA Set to Launch New Documentary Video Series

CODA is pleased to announce the production of five educational videos. The **Crossroads** series is a five-module, documentary style video series featuring six young Canadians and their first hand experience with drug addiction. Four of the five videos focus on a different drug of abuse; Marijuana, Crystal Meth, Cocaine/Crack, Prescription & Over the Counter drugs and the fifth video encompasses general drugs of abuse. The videos highlight how detrimental a chosen path of drug abuse can be, not only to an individual's health, but also to their psycho-social wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, families and future. Each of the videos is approximately seventeen minutes in length and will be used as part of CODA's in-class education programs in Canadian schools. The **Crossroads** series has been successfully piloted with over 7,700 Ontario students in grades 7, 8 & 9 yielding positive and exciting reviews.

The **Crossroads** video series has taken approximately one year to complete. Choosing the participants was the most difficult part of the process. CODA Educator Heather Angus-Kelley outreached to several youth that had completed a four month residential treatment program for addiction. In turn, these youth networked to other youth in similar situations to inform them of this opportunity. A meeting was set up to brief the youth of the details of the project and what the scope of their participation would be. Drug use history information was collected from each of the interested participants. The group was asked to act as a working advisory panel that would brainstorm ideas for the documentary as well as to participate in the filming process. In total, seventeen youth volunteered to contribute to the Crossroads project on various levels. Six youth were selected to be interviewed and profiled individually. Each interview was audio taped and case notes were written. Each youth was asked to "tell their personal story" of addiction. The profiles reflected the progression of addictions, the negative consequences of abusing drugs on health, family relationships and academic performance, as well as the legal and emotional effects. Each of the profiled youth indicated that their drug of choice is one of the four drugs profiled in the series.

In addition to the six video participants, there are several others who have important messages that depict the negative consequences of drug use. These youth will be included in a group discussion that will be filmed. This segment of the videos will be used to summarize the detrimental outcome when one chooses to become involved in a drug lifestyle. Questions like 'How honest are drug dealers?' 'What is cocaine cut with?' etc., will be asked and answered within this format.

The **Crossroads** video series is an impactful, honest and grassroots vehicle for youth to speak directly with youth about first hand drug abuse. For more information, visit the CODA website at www.drugabuse.ca after the program launch in September and click on the **Crossroads** page.