



Mn Adult & Teen Challenge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2017

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Know the Truth to Reach 60,000 Students During 2017-2018 School Year *Prevention program partners with 160 schools and adds on-site support groups in Anoka-Hennepin schools*

MINNEAPOLIS — Know the Truth, the substance-use prevention program of Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge, will speak in more than 160 high schools and middle schools across the state, reaching more than 60,000 students during the 2017-2018 academic year. Additionally, Know the Truth has added programming within Anoka-Hennepin schools in response to the success of a pilot program launched in spring 2017.

Starting this year, a Know the Truth representative will be onsite in six Anoka-Hennepin schools, including five high schools and the Alternative Learning Center, facilitating specialized support groups and giving students the opportunity to drop in and speak about their substance use concerns. The program began as a pilot last spring, and the successful results led to the District receiving a grant to expand it for the 2017-2018 academic year.



The Know the Truth program has seen significant success in helping prevent substance use among Minnesota's young people. Last year, after hearing the Know the Truth presentation, nearly 90 percent of students made a commitment not to use illegal substances and 75 percent vowed not to use alcohol before the age of 21. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the vast majority of Americans who struggle with addiction started smoking, drinking, or using drugs before age 18, underscoring the critical need to share the prevention message with students.

The Know the Truth team consists of six full-time presenters and numerous volunteers, all who have overcome substance use issues. From September through May, presenters visit multiple schools every day, reaching out to students and spreading the prevention message as well as gathering data about substance use among young people. The program has grown more than 250 percent since it began eleven years ago, speaking in only 50 schools to 16,000 students.

“Know the Truth is built on evidence-based principles,” explains program manager Vanessa Koebnick. “We believe if we can change students’ attitudes towards drugs and alcohol, we can change their behavior.”

In most cases, the Know the Truth presentations are included in health classes, embedded into the drug and alcohol unit. Some schools, including East Ridge and Woodbury high schools, also host all-student assemblies. In addition to classroom presentations, students are encouraged to seek continued dialogue with the presenters via social media @knowthetruthmn and the text hotline 612-440-3967.



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“We use a peer-to-peer format, with presenters who are close in age to the students,” says Koebnick. “They share personal stories of substance use and communicate important messages about prevention and the hope for recovery.”

“Growing up, my home life was great. My parents raised me well, but that didn’t change the fact that I dealt with depression and anxiety,” shares Lauren Dokken, a presenter for Know the Truth. “I can use the mess of my past to influence teens to not take the path I did. I know what it’s like to feel hopeless, that there’s nothing left, and I also know what it is like to find out that is not true.

About Know the Truth

Know the Truth (KTT) is the substance-use prevention program of Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge. KTT works within communities to help prevent teenage substance use by sharing personal stories about the struggles with addiction and by presenting students with information about the dangers of alcohol and drug use. Each year, KTT speaks in over 160 high schools and middle schools and reaches over 60,000 students.

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