



MIDDLESEX DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT PROGRAM

Program Description

The Public Service Announcement Program is a peer-education initiative designed to encourage teenagers to speak out against cultural and social influences that affect their health and safety. In 2009, the program was initially launched in response to the troubling results of a youth survey conducted by the Boston Public Health Commission. The findings of this survey underscored the urgency to develop new, creative ways to educate teenagers about the seriousness of dating violence. As a result, the PSA Program was created. The program is now an annual initiative in which students from across Middlesex County create and produce their own 30-60 second public service announcements on issues that impact their health and safety. In the program's first three years, a total of 381 students participated in the creation and production of 134 PSAs speaking out against dating abuse, impaired driving and cyber bullying. Each year the program focuses on a new topic. A panel comprised of staff from the District Attorney's Office, police officers, school personnel and community service providers narrow down each year's entries to five finalists. From there, the final five PSAs are viewed by students from across the county in health education classes and student assemblies. Students vote to determine the PSA that conveys the most effective message. To date, over 4,500 students have viewed and participated in the selection of the winning PSAs for 2009, 2010 and 2011. The program is a collaboration between the Middlesex District Attorney's Office and Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.

Goals of the Public Service Announcement Program

- To create awareness and spark positive dialogue among teenagers about issues that impact their health and safety
- To change attitudes about social norms that jeopardize the well-being of teenagers
- To encourage students to take leadership positions in promoting positive attitudes and behaviors among the teenage population
- To help teenagers foster an environment within the school setting where positive choices are made, pro-social bonding can occur and where educational development is paramount