



Contact:

Chris Schueler, 837-1770 (o), 450-9995 (cell)

Chris@ChristopherProductions.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 20, 2005

LOCAL TELEVISION STATIONS, THE STATE AND ORGANIZATIONS JOIN TO COMBAT MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

ABC AND PBS TELEVISION STATIONS STATEWIDE TO AIR DOCUMENTARY “*NOT IN MY FAMILY*” AND INTERACTIVE FOLLOW PROGRAM.

AIRING:

Friday January 6 7pm

KNME 5 KRWG 22

Saturday January 7 Noon

KOAT 7

Sunday January 8 3pm

KOAT 7 and KVIA 7

Monday January 9 11am / Tuesday January 10 10pm

KENW 3

More than 3,000 children and young adults, ages 10-24, take their own lives each year in this country. That's the human loss equivalent, in children, of September 11, repeating itself every year.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

ALBUQUERQUE, NM —

“... just a second ago, when I brought that issue up, you said, ‘well, that’s something that we don’t want to talk about.’ So my question is, why don’t young people, as well as adults, why don’t you want to talk about mental health issues?” asks teacher Steve Nash to students at Farmington High School. So begins a documentary about the stigma associated with mental health issues. The “Not In My Family” project including the documentary and a follow up interactive broadcast with youth input from throughout the state is being produced by SafeTeen New Mexico and Christopher Productions. The

project is presented by The New Mexico Mutual Group, Independent Insurance Agents of New Mexico, and the New Mexico Department of Health in association with Cooperative Educational Services, the UNM Department of Psychiatry, Competitive Benefits Administrators, the UNM Communication and Journalism Department, New Mexico Parent Teacher Association, the New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition, KNME TV, KOAT TV, KRWG TV, KENW TV, KVIA TV, and the Albuquerque Journal.

The 40 minute documentary **Not In My Family** revolves around the stories of four young people in New Mexico who are at various stages of their own mental illness. It includes comments that teenagers have filmed on their cell phones talking about the issue as well as a full classroom discussion. Following the documentary, a live program will use text messaging, web cams and a small group of experts to examine next steps in addressing this critical issue **that affects one in five young people in our state**. “Because recent research has shown that over half of mental health disorders manifest themselves by age 14 and that most people don’t seek or get appropriate treatment until as long as 10 years after the problem has surfaced, it’s important for young people and their families to understand the importance of early diagnosis and treatment,” said Chris Schueler, Producer/Director of program. “Like most ailments, if treated early, mental health issues can be substantially reduced and controlled and certainly can help eliminate the possibility of larger issues occurring later on in life. “

The New Mexico Department of Health helped fund the documentary as a way to educate people about mental illnesses and provide resources for those who need services. “The Department of Health appreciates the opportunity to partner with Christopher Productions to raise awareness about such an important issue,” said Health Secretary Michelle Lujan Grisham. “We hope this film generates conversations across the state about ways we can work together to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness and the devastation caused by suicide.”

“According to the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, stigma is a major factor impeding access to care for behavioral health problems. "Not in My Family" is an important step in providing all New Mexicans with crucial information to help break down this barrier by showing that across communities and cultures behavioral health problems are both common and treatable." says Leslie Tremaine, Ph.D., manager of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative.

Coordinated by SafeTeen New Mexico schools across the state have participated in the production through creation of news stories and through the use of cell phone text messaging and video taping interviews with their peers. The schools included: Farmington, Carlsbad, Espanola, Oñate in Las Cruces and West Mesa in Albuquerque. “Mental health issues are a huge concern in every community. We’re thrilled that teens across the state are helping to create this unique project,” said Thom Turbett, Executive Director of SafeTeen New Mexico. “By having high school students so involved in this production, we’ll certainly start discussions around the kitchen table all over the state,” said Turbett. “Talking about it is the first step in eliminating the stigma associated with this issue. Then people can start seeing this for the common and treatable problem that it is.”

“We are facing a serious crisis in New Mexico in terms of mental health,” says Dr. Steve Adelsheim, associate producer of the program who works with the N.M. Department of Health. “When we look at our youth risk and resiliency surveys in New Mexico, we find that over 30% of kids have stopped doing some usual activity in the last several weeks, over 14% of our high school youth have tried to kill themselves in the previous year. And of that, almost 7% had a serious enough attempt to require some form of medical attention. “ Adelsheim, a child psychiatrist, goes on to say, “But we still often don’t have the comfort level to even talk about it as a community.”

“When you talk to people and most of them are not prepared to discuss this with you on camera, you understand we have a devastating problem,” says Schueler. “But when you have the power of ABC and PBS television stations in our region, plus the Albuquerque Journal – you know we have an opportunity to help open this discussion.”

“This unique collaboration affords KNME and KOAT the opportunity to combine and focus their collective resources, convening a statewide look at, and a discussion about, mental health, which is an extremely difficult subject to tackle,” said Ted A Garcia, KNME-TV General Manager and Chief Executive Officer.

Mary Lynn Roper, President and General Manager of KOAT-TV echos a similar sentiment, "Many of us have noted, year after year, the extremely sad results of a lack of adequate mental health care.

KOAT welcomes the opportunity to provide a forum to open discussion about this issue and help eliminate the stigma associated with it."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: SafeteenNM.org/nimf

SafeTeen New Mexico has opened a website that allows for discussion of this issue and links to a variety of resources. There is also a brief curriculum guide that is free to download on their website. And the television broadcast itself also includes an active internet and wireless component. Viewers can log on to **SafeTeenNM.org/nimf** and be linked to resources and where they can contribute content to the program, participate in a PSA contest to win a Blue tooth earbud or take a text message survey.

###

THE FOLLOWING PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:

Chris Schueler, President

Christopher Productions

Phone: 505-837-1770

Cell: (505) 450-9995

Email: chris@christopherproductions.org

www.christopherproductions.org

Steve Adelsheim, MD

Consultant, NM Department of Health

Associate Professor, UNM Dept. of Psychiatry

Phone: 272-0770

Cell: 505-220-2280

Email: steve.adelsheim@state.nm.us

Thom Turbett, Executive Director

SafeTeen New Mexico

Phone: 843-7231

Cell: 239-6500

Email: thom@ianm.org

Lanny Leyba, Project Director

New Mexico Youth Alliance

New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community

Phone: 821-3574

Email: lanny@nmforumforyouth.org