

NEWS RELEASE



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NCADD-NJ Releases Film on Addiction Advocacy

TRENTON ... (July 5, 2005) – The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-New Jersey (NCADD-NJ) has released a short film entitled “Together There's Nothing We Can't Change” that reveals the importance of personal stories in advocating for policy change. The 10-minute film captures policymakers, addiction professionals, advocates, and private citizens in recovery from addiction talking about the need for a sustained dialogue about issues such as access to treatment in health care coverage and stigma and discrimination that affect the many New Jerseyans who have an alcohol or drug problem and many in recovery. The film can be viewed in streaming video at www.ncaddnj.org .

The documentary follows 600-plus participants preparing for a rally on Advocacy Day, which took place at the State House in Trenton late last year and was sponsored by NCADD-NJ and the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA). NCADD-NJ Director of Public Affairs and Policy, John Hulick and Mary Lou Powner, President of GCADA informed participants about how to effectively meet with elected officials and bring important issues such as health care coverage and access to treatment to their attention.

NCADD-NJ Communications Specialist, Lori H. McDaniel, who produced the film, said that “stories are the key to having addiction understood in public health terms, as well as a way to affect societal changes.” Through interviews the film also demonstrates that

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BUDGET

PAGE TWO

constituents have no reason to dread approaching their legislators: “The film shows that elected officials live in our communities and care about the issues voters bring to their attention. Hearing first-hand from a constituent how a certain policy has affected their life or their family makes the greatest impact on legislators.”

The film also features Carol McDaid, an addictions advocate from the Washington-D.C.-based Capitol Decisions. McDaid spoke about her own recovery from addiction and now being a mother, a wife and a small business owner. She described the growing movement of recovering people across America and exhorted the audience to help further grassroots efforts on addiction issues and to accept a public role by presenting themselves as individuals who, after undergoing appropriate treatment, are successfully restored to their families, communities and workplaces. She told the audience that they needed to “step out of the shadows” and come forward, so that “the public doesn’t only see the horrible face of the addicted but the face of recovery and people who are doing well.”

NCADD-NJ’s McDaniel cited part of a speech Andrew Burness, a non-profit communications expert, delivered to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grantees that articulated the essence of the film’s message: “You must tell your stories. You must be advocates, because dollars, policy change and public will don't grow in a vacuum ... who better to do this than you?”

NCADD-NJ has dedicated itself for more than 20 years to educating New Jersey’s citizens about alcohol and drug use issues, to advocating on state policies concerning individuals addicted to alcohol or other drugs, and to reducing the stigma that frustrates a public health approach to the disease of addiction. More information and resources on addiction please visit the website, www.ncaddnj.org.

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