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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Norma Norris, Executive Director of Candle, Inc., and developer of the innovative drug and alcohol awareness and prevention program, the Reality Tour ©.

As the Principle Investigator of the initial evaluation of the Reality Tour ©, I am pleased that Ms. Norris has made the decision to undertake a rigorous evaluation of her program in order to prepare a submission to the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). The evaluation of her innovative program is a significant first-step towards obtaining the status of an evidence-based program.

The Reality Tour © evaluation involves several components required by NREPP. These components include a description of the conceptual model underpinning the program, a time-series design to assess program outcomes and effectiveness, and measures of major variables related to drug and alcohol use. The conceptual model of the Reality Tour includes both the use of dramatic enactments of scenes related to potential consequences of drug and alcohol use and question and answer sessions led by law enforcement officers and recovering addicts or relatives of addicts. Of the former, there is a growing body of literature pertaining to the use of dramatic enactments for drug and alcohol prevention and other health –related behaviors (see, particularly, Stephens-Hernandez, et al., *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 11, 2007). The use of dramatic enactment as a prevention strategy should not be confused with more direct and confrontational strategies, such as those associated with deterrence programs like "Scared Straight". The time-series design of the evaluation allows for assessment of the program prior to the intervention, immediately after the intervention, and 30 days following the intervention. The specific measures being used are included in SAMHSA's National Outcome Measures project. These measures, "Perceived Risk of Harm" and "Favorable Attitudes Towards Use," have been used in a numerous prevention program evaluations as well as major state drug and alcohol surveys and have been determined to be significant intervening variables for drug and alcohol use.

Submission to NREPP is expected to take place by the end of 2007. At that time, NREPP will evaluate the submission and determine its worthiness as an evidence-based program.

Based on the program model and design of the evaluation, I anticipate that the Reality Tour will meet the requirements for NREPP review. I am also confident that Ms. Norris will continue to monitor her truly innovative and important program and make any necessary changes as the accumulated evidence requires.

Please contact me at jpg127@pitt.edu or at 412.904.6127 if there are any questions, comments, or concerns about the evaluation of the Reality Tour ©.



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