

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Reality Teen Talk Show Coming to St. Louis
St. Louis Mental Health Board and CITY TV 10
partner to open dialogue about real issues facing teens

A group of teens gathered recently, talking about what it's like dealing with violence and disruptions at school while still maintaining their grades. Later they spoke about drinking and drugs – who's doing it, when they started, what they have seen it do to friends.

What was different about *this* frank discussion was the TV cameras were rolling as they spoke. The group of 15 teenagers, representing a number of area schools, were part of a new talk show for teens, "What's Up?," filmed recently at CITY TV 10.

Four shows on varying subjects are part of a pilot being rolled out by the St. Louis Mental Health Board (MHB) and CITY TV 10. Each 30-minute show starts with teens sharing their views on issues, while in the second half they are joined by an expert to address issues they raised and interact with the expert about them.

"What's Up?" is the first initiative to be rolled out by the St. Louis Mental Health Board in managing the Community Children's Services Fund. City of St. Louis voters passed the Community Children's Services Fund, also known as Proposition K, in November 2004. The vision of the fund is that all children living in St. Louis grow up safe and have opportunities to succeed.

"We see this show as a great way to reach a very important population – our city's teens – using a medium they can identify with," Don Cuvo, MHB executive director, says. "It's a creative way to catch their attention on important issues, and give them as well as parents, an opportunity to obtain inside perspectives on a host of youth-related issues."

The four-show pilot series will deal with topics of school violence, drug and alcohol abuse, parental involvement and communication issues. They will begin airing on CITY TV 10, a cable channel available to St. Louis City residents, late April. In addition, radio ads will also help get the message out to the community.

Add One – New Reality Teen Talk Show Coming to St. Louis

The teen participants were optimistic that the show would help adults understand better issues facing teens. "I think 'What's Up?' will help people understand what teenagers go through every day," Alison, 15, says. Sam, also 15, agrees. "I don't think adults have a handle on what happens in high school today. Some things might be worse than they imagined, such as kids slipping alcohol into school in water bottles. Other things might surprise them, such as we are not dodging bullets in the hallways to get to class."

"These shows are innovative, energetic and attention grabbing, besides being informative," Donna Brooks of CITY TV 10, says. "I think our adult viewers will be surprised at the insight they will get into issues kids deal with today. We're really proud to be part of St. Louis's first teen talk show. After all, as a community we all need to know what's up with our youth today."

For more information, call Laura Diaz of Marketing Works, Inc. the co-producers and coordinating firm for the “What’s Up?” program at 314.621.mktg (6584), ext. 11.