



CENTER FOR MEDIA LITERACY

1962 S. Shenandoah Street • Los Angeles • California • 90034 • (310) 559-2944

FAX # (310) 559-9396

FAX TRANSMITTAL

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

TO: George

FAX # 215-898-2024 CODE: _____

FROM: Jeff Johnson

PAGES: 3
(Including cover sheet)

Original NOT being sent.

Original being sent via:
 Regular U.S. Mail
 Federal Express
 Messenger
 Other

COMMENTS:

*George - just sent for your information -
By the way I love the tape but I really
did (except for some production glitches) -
But you are eloquent as always + I'm
delighted your analysis is on tape.*

NEWS

#51

**CENTER FOR MEDIA LITERACY****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday June 6, 1994

NATIONAL CONTACT: Carl Rogers

Day: (310) 559-2944

Evening: (310) 306-4127

Fax: (310) 559-9396

[See end of release for local
Massachusetts contacts]**YOUNGSTERS DEMONSTRATE THEIR "ADSMARTS" AND MEDIA LITERACY WITH THE CREATION OF AN ANTI-SMOKING BILLBOARD SCHEDULED FOR HIGHWAY POSTING THIS TUESDAY, JUNE 7TH, IN BILLERICA, MASSACHUSETTS.**

They are surely America's youngest creative ad team: six year old slogan-writer Jackie Love and 12 year old graphic artist Jonathan Renoni. Both students created winning entries in a contest run by a unique school-sponsored Media Literacy Ad Lab which, according to program Co-Director, Dr. Renée Hobbs, was initiated to provide students and teachers with the opportunity "to plan, design, create and disseminate persuasive public service messages relevant to the citizens of Billerica," a town thirty miles northwest of Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. John S. Katsoulis, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Billerica, indicated that the Ad Lab is a simulation of an authentic advertising agency, complete with teachers and students serving as the staff of creative media and research departments. He notes that the Ad Lab was designed as a part of a system-wide media literacy initiative and has, among others things, helped students "unmask the claims and myths of tobacco and alcohol advertising."

Earlier this week the young ad-makers and their classmates toured the Ackerly Communications factory in nearby Stoneham to view a 48-foot hand-painted billboard version of their work being completed. It features young Renoni's graphic design and Love's original slogan: "Save Someone Special. . . Stop Smoking!" It is being donated and installed by Ackerly Communications as a public service. And in a dramatic ceremony on Tuesday morning, June 7th (11:00 A.M.), the two students will observe the raising of their billboard to its location across from a popular shopping mall (Trebel Cove Mall, off Highway 3A in Billerica). The "hoisting" ceremony will involve a large crane which lifts three separate wooden panels into place. It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Children who participated in the Ad Lab program, as well as teachers and parents, will be in attendance to commemorate the event.

-MORE-

Billerica Billboard

Page 2

"This is a model project, the first of its kind in the United States," said Professor Hobbs, who teaches at Babson College and also serves as Director of the Institute on Media Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "The anti-smoking billboard that these two Billerica students created proves we've started something here that really excites students. Media literacy teaches them to think critically, to communicate creatively and to act constructively," said Hobbs. She defines media literacy as "the ability to analyze, evaluate and produce messages in a variety of forms, including advertising." "These kids," she continues, "need to understand the messages between the lines of ad copy, beyond the engaging sounds on the radio, and behind the fast-paced visuals on TV. What we're talking about is essentially a driver-training program for the information highway," says Professor Hobbs.

According to Dr. Katsoulis, "our mission was to create a model program that could become a regular part of this community's school program, where all grades, K to 12, would have an opportunity to engage in hands-on learning in an authentic communication environment."

This spring, more than 2,000 children throughout the Billerica school system participated in programs sponsored by the Media Literacy Ad Lab, organized for the first time last year as part of a Masters in Education Program in Media Literacy, done in conjunction with Fitchburg State College and the Merrimack Education Center. The resources for this project were provided by the Department of Education through funding from the Massachusetts Tobacco Tax.

One of the first tools Professor Hobbs secured for the Billerica Ad Lab was a media literacy curriculum called *AdSmarts* produced jointly by the Center for Media Literacy and the Scott Newman Center, both in Los Angeles. The five-module teaching resource, made possible by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, includes video presentations, teacher hand-outs and comprehensive lesson plans for five weeks of training. "The goal of *AdSmarts*," says Elizabeth Thoman, Executive Director of The Center for Media Literacy, "is to develop action skills in young people that will help them expose, alter and counteract the media messages — particularly the dangerous messages in alcohol and tobacco advertising."

In the first of the *AdSmarts* modules, students learn about communications media and persuasive images through a clever and quickly-cut rap video. In another module, students learn about the inner workings of an ad agency by watching a mock soap opera. The final module provides a smorgasboard of activities designed to motivate the students into action in their schools and communities. The Center for Media Literacy, distributes *AdSmarts* nationally and hopes the comprehensive media literacy curriculum will help foster the creation of other Ad Labs and anti-smoking and anti-drug public service campaigns around the country, based on the positive Billerica experience.

-MORE-

Billerica Billboard

Page 3

[A sample review copy of *Adsmarts* is available from the Center for Media Literacy, 1962 So. Shenandoah Street, Los Angeles, CA 90034. Their phone number is: (800) 226-9494.]

"We created a package of curriculum materials for teachers to help students develop a critical perspective on tobacco advertising," says Jean Brusseau, a Billerica middle school music teacher and a member of the Ad Lab team. "And we implemented a series of contests, inviting students to create a variety of posters, newspaper editorials, radio ads, video public service announcements, bumper stickers, billboards and other media messages."

The students' winning newspaper editorials were printed in the town's weekly newspaper, *The Billerica Minute Man* on May 26th and the student videotapes are scheduled to air on the town's local access channel, part of the Continental Cablevision system, an industry leader in promoting TV literacy, and the producers of a "TV Tool Kit" for kids, their parents and teachers.

Dr. Katsoulis reports that more than 20,000 student-designed stickers were distributed to students throughout the Billerica school district and more than 250 T-shirts were given away with student-created anti-smoking slogans.

"When students become message makers, instead of just message receivers, their motivation and interest in school skyrockets," says Professor Hobbs. "And by experiencing the process of making persuasive messages, students can be better prepared to analyze the multitude of ads they are exposed to each day."

The Center for Media Literacy, founded in 1989 (originally as the Center for Media and Values), is the foremost publisher of resources for media literacy education in America. A nonprofit membership organization, it has established a network of schools, religious organizations, and community groups committed to the growing media literacy movement.

Local Massachusetts contacts: Dr. Renée Hobbs
Babson College
Day: (617) 239-4975
Evening: (617) 769-1556

Dr. John S. Katsoulis,
Assistant Superintendent
Billerica Public Schools
Day: (508) 436-9502
Evening: (508) 692-2264



CENTER FOR MEDIA LITERACY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday June 6, 1994

NATIONAL CONTACT: Carl Rogers

Day: (310) 559-2944

Evening: (310) 306-4127

Fax: (310) 559-9396

[See end of release for local
Massachusetts contacts]

YOUNGSTERS DEMONSTRATE THEIR "ADSMARTS" AND MEDIA LITERACY WITH THE CREATION OF AN ANTI-SMOKING BILLBOARD SCHEDULED FOR HIGHWAY POSTING THIS TUESDAY, JUNE 7TH, IN BILLERICA, MASSACHUSETTS.

They are surely America's youngest creative ad team: six year old slogan-writer Jackie Love and 12 year old graphic artist Jonathan Renoni. Both students created winning entries in a contest run by a unique school-sponsored Media Literacy Ad Lab which, according to program Co-Director, Dr. Renée Hobbs, was initiated to provide students and teachers with the opportunity "to plan, design, create and disseminate persuasive public service messages relevant to the citizens of Billerica," a town thirty miles northwest of Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. John S Katsoulis, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Billerica, indicated that the Ad Lab is a simulation of an authentic advertising agency, complete with teachers and students serving as the staff of creative media and research departments. He notes that the Ad Lab was designed as a part of a system-wide media literacy initiative and has, among others things, helped students "unmask the claims and myths of tobacco and alcohol advertising."

Earlier this week the young ad-makers and their classmates toured the Ackerly Communications factory in nearby Stoneham to view a 48-foot hand-painted billboard version of their work being completed. It features young Renoni's graphic design and Love's original slogan: **"Save Someone Special. . . Stop Smoking!"** It is being donated and installed by Ackerly Communications as a public service. And in a dramatic ceremony on Tuesday morning, June 7th (11:00 A.M.), the two students will observe the raising of their billboard to its location across from a popular shopping mall (Trebel Cove Mall, off Highway 3A in Billerica). The "hoisting" ceremony will involve a large crane which lifts three separate wooden panels into place. It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Children who participated in the Ad Lab program, as well as teachers and parents, will be in attendance to commemorate the event.

-MORE-

"This is a model project, the first of its kind in the United States," said Professor Hobbs, who teaches at Babson College and also serves as Director of the Institute on Media Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "The anti-smoking billboard that these two Billerica students created proves we've started something here that really excites students. Media literacy teaches them to think critically, to communicate creatively and to act constructively," said Hobbs. She defines media literacy as "the ability to analyze, evaluate and produce messages in a variety of forms, including advertising." "These kids," she continues, "need to understand the messages between the lines of ad copy, beyond the engaging sounds on the radio, and behind the fast-paced visuals on TV. What we're talking about is essentially a driver-training program for the information highway," says Professor Hobbs.

According to Dr. Katsoulis, "our mission was to create a model program that could become a regular part of this community's school program, where all grades, K to 12, would have an opportunity to engage in hands-on learning in an authentic communication environment."

This spring, more than 2,000 children throughout the Billerica school system participated in programs sponsored by the Media Literacy Ad Lab, organized for the first time last year as part of a Masters in Education Program in Media Literacy, done in conjunction with Fitchburg State College and the Merrimack Education Center. The resources for this project were provided by the Department of Education through funding from the Massachusetts Tobacco Tax.

One of the first tools Professor Hobbs secured for the Billerica Ad Lab was a media literacy curriculum called *AdSmarts* produced jointly by the Center for Media Literacy and the Scott Newman Center, both in Los Angeles. The five-module teaching resource, made possible by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, includes video presentations, teacher hand-outs and comprehensive lesson plans for five weeks of training. "The goal of *AdSmarts*" says Elizabeth Thoman, Executive Director of The Center for Media Literacy, "is to develop action skills in young people that will help them expose, alter and counteract the media messages — particularly the dangerous messages in alcohol and tobacco advertising."

In the first of the *AdSmarts* modules, students learn about communications media and persuasive images through a clever and quickly-cut rap video. In another module, students learn about the inner workings of an ad agency by watching a mock soap opera. The final module provides a smorgasboard of activities designed to motivate the students into action in their schools and communities. The Center for Media Literacy distributes *AdSmarts* nationally and hopes the comprehensive media literacy curriculum will help foster the creation of other Ad Labs and anti-smoking and anti-drug public service campaigns around the country, based on the positive Billerica experience.

[A sample review copy of *Adsmarts* is available from the Center for Media Literacy, 1962 So. Shenandoah Street, Los Angeles, CA 90034. Their phone number is: (800) 226-9494.]

"We created a package of curriculum materials for teachers to help students develop a critical perspective on tobacco advertising," says Jean Brusseau, a Billerica middle school music teacher and a member of the Ad Lab team. "And we implemented a series of contests, inviting students to create a variety of posters, newspaper editorials, radio ads, video public service announcements, bumper stickers, billboards and other media messages."

The students' winning newspaper editorials were printed in the town's weekly newspaper, *The Billerica Minute Messenger* on May 26th and the student videotapes are scheduled to air on the town's local access channel, part of the Continental Cablevision system, an industry leader in promoting TV literacy, and the producers of a "TV Tool Kit" for kids, their parents and teachers.

Dr. Katsoulis reports that more than 20,000 student-designed stickers were distributed to students throughout the Billerica school district and more than 250 T-shirts were given away with student-created anti-smoking slogans.

"When students become message makers, instead of just message receivers, their motivation and interest in school skyrockets," says Professor Hobbs. "And by experiencing the process of making persuasive messages, students can be better prepared to analyze the multitude of ads they are exposed to each day."

The Center for Media Literacy, founded in 1989 (originally as the Center for Media and Values), is the foremost publisher of resources for media literacy education in America. A nonprofit membership organization, it has established a network of schools, religious organizations, and community groups committed to the growing media literacy movement.

Local Massachusetts contacts: Dr. Renée Hobbs
Babson College
Day: (617) 239-4975
Evening: (617) 769-1556

Dr. John S. Katsoulis,
Assistant Superintendent
Billerica Public Schools
Day: (508) 436-9502
Evening: (508) 692-2264