



3/5/08 “The Super Power Project” introduces a teen-inspired awareness campaign to bust the myths that can lead to dating violence. Online animation and Body Spray parody launch on YouTube.

For Immediate Release

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The Super Power Project brought together two groups of high school age youth in BC to rethink power, smash stereotypes and to become heroes in their own stories, told through video, animation and comics. The first short messages to launch will be a PSA called “Blend Out” and a short flash animation.

“Blend Out”, made by Haisla Nation youth pokes fun at body spray ads while promoting a message of “respect” as the way for young men to be irresistible to women. The animation introduces our heroes *E-man* and *M. Power* as they encounter the nefarious schemes of Dr. Z who, with his big machine, is attempting to distill the male and female essences from typical teenage brains.

Both short messages will be distributed online through YouTube and the campaign site: TheSuperPowerProject.com.

The common assumptions that lie behind the myth being busted in these stories are that boys must “naturally” be the aggressors, and girls are inherently more passive. This is a dangerous story that’s been around a long time. When taken to their stereotypical extreme, these myths contribute to the belief by males that they have the right to control or abuse women and girls, and the myths produce a feeling of helplessness in women and girls where they may believe they deserve this abuse. Unfortunately statistics tell the sad story that this scenario happens far too often. And this cycle often starts with high school dating.

Exploring and exposing these assumptions based on gender has been the goal of the workshops as well as the campaign that is being created out of the ideas generated by the youth. A dozen youth from the Haisla Nation in Kitimaat Village, and ten youth from Vancouver participated in this first phase of the project.

Says Dalya Israel, WAVAW Educator, “The Super Power Project fosters youth to develop strong critical thinking skills that will enable them to question society’s prescriptions of gender, and what it means to be a man and a woman. Understanding the negative impact of sexism on both boys and girls will help them to reach their full personal potential as healthy well rounded individuals with



the skills for building healthy relationships. These healthier relationships are the foundation for building safer communities free from violence.”

Together with WAVAW educators, Good Company Communications’ media team conducted multi-media workshops where the youth had a hands-on opportunity to use video gear and brainstorm their own scripts and messages. GCC Creative Director Katherine Dodds explains “we have found that working on making messages through video workshops is a much more effective way of focusing attention on an issue than trying to get active youth to quietly sit and listen. They are the experts in telling us how to get their attention and that of other youth and are ruthless in letting us know how to make the messages relevant to them.”

Zy Beaudoin, 17-year old project participant, did much of the animating. He says: “It’s important when making things to appeal to my age group that aspects of the story seem random. Videos and animations with elements that make you go — ‘what was that?! – they are the ones that get sent around online. If you can’t attract attention, the message will be ignored.”

The two longer videos created by the youth teams will launch in April through community screenings. In year two of the project WAVAW has plans to develop and package the materials on DVD for use in schools and community groups (concentrating on the grade 8 level) and Good Company Communications is developing a plan to expand the video workshops to include development of an educational online game associated with the project.

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