

## Target America Exhibit Tour

(This exhibit is not recommended for children under the age of 10.)

### Tour Stops:

1. Debris Field
2. Lost Talent Memorial
3. Money Laundering
4. Drug Trafficking
5. Heroin Lab
6. Cocaine Lab
7. Costs to Children
8. Costs to Inner Cities
9. Prescription Drug Abuse
10. Methamphetamine Motel
11. Cost to Environment
12. Costs to Brain and Body
13. Breaking the Cycle
14. The Discovery Corner
15. Drugs in Louisiana

### **Stop 1: Debris Field**

This is the front half of a 1994 Thunderbird that crashed into a mother and three children in Ohio in February, 2004. The 43 year old man driving this car was high on a mix of marijuana, cocaine, benzodiazepines, and opiates. He is now serving a 10-year sentence for aggravated vehicular homicide because the 30 year old mother in the other car died in the crash. The other items in the debris field represent things found in any neighborhood, reminding us that the effects of drug abuse can reach us anywhere.

### **Stop 2: Heroin Lab**

On the right is a replica of an opium-processing lab in Afghanistan. The white milk or latex is hand scraped from the seedpod of the poppy plant. The opium is taken to a lab like this and processed into heroin. It is dried and pressed into bricks to be shipped around the world.

### **Stop 3: Cocaine Lab**

On the left you will see a replica of a makeshift cocaine-processing lab found in the South American jungle. Notice how well it is camouflaged and guarded. The leaves from the coca plant are handpicked and taken here where they are pressed to release the resin. The resin is processed with cement and kerosene or gasoline and dried on cheesecloth stands to produce white, powdered cocaine. Once the powder has dried, like heroin, it can be pressed into bricks, and shipped around the world.

### **Stop 4: Drug Trafficking**

Heroin, cocaine, and marijuana are the main drugs that are produced from plants; most others are synthetically made from chemicals. Most drugs are produced in remote areas of the world and trafficked to major metropolitan areas to be distributed. There are many ways to conceal drugs for import into the country. They can be hidden in cargo shipments going by land, sea, or air. Smaller quantities can be hidden in luggage compartments, clothing, and inside the body. A person who smuggles drugs inside their body is called a mule. Some swallow small latex bags filled with cocaine or insert them into different body cavities.

### **Stop 5: Lost Talent Memorial**

The wall of pictures shows people who have died from drug use or, in the case of the police officers, were killed making drug-related arrests.

### **Stop 6: Money Laundering**

The global drug trade is a multi-billion dollar enterprise that generates a lot of cash. This money is hidden from tax revenue and law enforcement by money laundering, not being able to trace it back to the source. Cash is carried in briefcases to safe banks or traded in for gold or different currencies. Even ATM cards are being used to transfer and hide money around the world.

### **Stop 7: Costs to Children**

The damage caused by illegal drugs does not only affect the user, but it affects all of us either directly or indirectly. Children are some of those hardest hit by drug abuse. For example, this young child, Chelton Hicks, died of severe burns sustained in a methamphetamine lab explosion in his house. His parents were making methamphetamine when the house exploded. They ran out of the house and forgot that they had left their baby behind.

Drug abuse is not only a problem in the United States. Here is a picture of a man in Thailand who is high on methamphetamine, has sliced his ear and is holding this young teenager hostage at knifepoint.

A very disturbing photo is this one taken of a young mother who is passed out, high on drugs. Her baby in diapers is crawling next to her on the bed while the father is beside them shooting up. This child is obviously not getting the attention and care that he needs.

### **Stop 8: Costs to Inner Cities**

This bedroom represents an inner city crack den. The message here is that cocaine use leads to a dangerous and violent lifestyle that children often get swept up in.

### **Stop 9: Prescription Drugs**

The illegal use of prescription drugs has become more and more prevalent. These drugs include Xanax, Vicadin, Oxycotin, Ketamine and Ritalin and are illegally sold by pharmacists or obtained by doctor hopping or are stolen.

## **Stop 10: Methamphetamine Motel Room**

The hotel room replica represents a temporary meth lab. This could be in Anywhere, USA, where you may be staying in a hotel/motel room while right next door there could be a meth lab. Methamphetamine is made from common ingredients that can be bought at almost any drug store and hardware store. Many of these things are toxic and flammable like battery acid, solvents, paint thinner, starter fluid, and antifreeze.

Even more frightening than being next door to a meth lab is staying in a hotel room that was a meth lab the day before. When the Drug Enforcement Administration sends a crew to clean up a meth lab, they send a hazardous waste team. However, if undetected, the hotel staff would vacuum and dust, but toxic chemical spills could remain in the room. Clandestine meth labs have sprung up in large numbers around the U.S., especially in the Midwest.

## **Stop 11 - Costs to the Environment**

The large panel displays a photo of a forest that has been clear-cut to grow marijuana. Many byproducts of drug processing are dumped into the environment, into streams, lakes and water supplies.

## **Stop 12: Costs to the Brain and Body**

Certain drugs are addictive because they interact with the reward circuit or pleasure center of the brain. The natural feel good chemicals (or neurotransmitters) in the brain include dopamine, serotonin, and noradrenaline. The drugs usually cause a surplus of these chemicals to be present in the brain making you feel good. Soon your brain compensates for this over stimulation and slows down the production of these chemicals which are naturally produced. Consequently, the things that made you happy without taking drugs don't make you happy anymore, and now you need the drug just to feel normal.

There are video clips of young people who share their experiences involving drug abuse and treatment. There is a prop of a PET brain-imaging machine where the video clip shows how brain function is affected by drugs. In addition, there is a glass case with a pair of healthy human lungs and a pair of unhealthy lungs from a smoker.

## **Stop 13: Breaking the Cycle**

### **DEA and Law Enforcement**

The Drug Enforcement Administration's mission is to identify and arrest the members of major drug trafficking organizations around the world and seize drugs coming into the country. They have offices all around the world and work with foreign governments to shut down drug production and trafficking. The DEA developed this Target America exhibit.

### **Parental and Community Involvement**

Parental involvement is a huge factor in keeping children drug free. In addition, there are national and local agencies that can provide drug prevention education and resources.

### **Addiction Research**

We continue to learn about the brain and addiction through medical research. Research has found that LSD resembles the serotonin neurotransmitter, and cocaine inhibits dopamine reuptake causing a high concentration of dopamine in the synapse. Four out of ten people who die from AIDS in the US contracted the virus from drug-related activity.

### **Stop 14: The Discovery Corner**

#### **Electronic Guest book and Literature**

**O**ur visitors are encouraged to sign the electronic guest book in the Discovery Corner and give us their comments. Free drug education and prevention literature is also available.

### **Stop 15: Drugs in Louisiana**

**D***rugs in Louisiana* looks at the history of drug usage in Louisiana and how law enforcement, prevention and treatment work together to eliminate drugs from the community.