



Kangaroo Project Attains High Five; Domestic Violence Prevention Will Be Focus Of Annual PSA Competition

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Airtime Guaranteed As Organizers Dovetail With 24-Hour Helpline Provider Cornerstone; Concept, Directorial Deadlines Are June 9 and August 4, Respectively



MINNEAPOLIS, May 26, 2006, Millie Takaki --- The Kangaroo Project has pocketed a milestone, now entering its fifth year. Sponsored by the nonprofit Sean Francis Foundation in order to mentor promising creative and filmmaking talent via the production of worthwhile public service ad work that is guaranteed airtime, the annual Kangaroo Project this time around is a PSA that promotes prevention of domestic violence.

The Francis Foundation and Kangaroo have recruited Bloomington, Minn.-headquartered Cornerstone as a partner this year. Cornerstone is a nonprofit organization founded in 1983 to prevent violence and to provide comprehensive services to victims of domestic abuse and their children. These services include a 24-hour helpline, supportive housing, an emergency shelter, individual advocacy and life skills training.

As in years past, The Kangaroo Project consists of two prime competitions. First, the concept competition in which individuals submit storyboards and scripts for the PSA. One doesn't have to be an agency creative to enter a concept. People from all walks of life and the business are welcome to take their conceptual shot. Two judging panels, consisting of leading advertising and production professionals from around the country, will assess the entries, which are due no later than June 9.

Once the winning concept is announced, the second leg of the Kangaroo competition opens as prospective directors submit their treatments, conveying their vision of the premise. Again, there's no prerequisite for a directorial entrant; he or she does not have to be a seasoned helmer. Editors, producers, agency creatives, students, et al, are all eligible to submit treatments. Last year's winning director was a New York-based production assistant, George Andrew "Andy" Basore. He directed "Bleep," a PSA promoting safe and courteous driving.

Deadline for submission of director treatments is August 4. A panel of ad agency creative directors and producers will then judge the treatments. The winning director and treatment will be announced in August. Pre-pro, production and post will then take place, primarily in September and into October. Plans call for the final PSA to premiere at the Minnesota Advertising Federation's "The Show" in October. The PSA will then gain airtime via the partnership with Cornerstone.

JOEYS

Beyond creating PSAs that promote worthwhile causes, The Kangaroo Project also carries a mandate to mentor aspiring crewmembers in TV commercial production. Each year, experienced crew artisans mentor apprentices, called Joeys, during the making of the selected spot.

Film producer Julie Hartley, president of the Sean Francis Foundation, explained, "The goal is to train new talent by giving them an opportunity to work with a professional team in a professional environment."

Thus the Kangaroo project not only opens up avenues for up-and-coming directors and creatives, but also the next generation of crew people. It's all about developing new, deserving talent. Last year, there were 30 professional crewmembers and approximately 30 Joeys to learn from them.

SEAN FRANCIS

Hartley teamed with several members of Minnesota's production community—including Kirk Hokanson, owner/president of Voodoo Films, Minneapolis—to form the Sean Francis Foundation, named after her 20-year-old son who died in a motorcycle accident in '00. From the Sean Francis Foundation sprung the Kangaroo Project, and the decision to create a motorcycle safety PSA in the competition's inaugural year of '02. In subsequent years, PSAs were created, produced and aired to address

such issues as organ donation, youth AIDS awareness, and the earlier alluded to safe and courteous driving.

Hokanson, who is also president of the Minnesota chapter of the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP), described Francis as "the best P.A. on the planet" and an aspiring producer who was on the path to making his mark in filmmaking. But with Francis' life cut short, the Kangaroo Project was initiated to, in a sense, make an ongoing filmmaking mark in his memory, helping to nurture and open up new opportunities for deserving creatives, directors and crew members—in some cases, helping them to start their careers.

The Kangaroo moniker grew out of the way the animal carries and nurtures young marsupials in her pouch. The apprenticeships parallel this in that experienced crewmembers will help Joeys take a hop forward in their careers. The project is also an opportunity for creative individuals to gain recognition for ideas and, so too, get their leap ahead. The Kangaroo designation was also chosen in that Francis was born in Australia.

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