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**ADE, Arkansas PBS Create New Documentary, Classroom Resources
That Highlight Opioid Crisis in Arkansas**

Resources Available for Red Ribbon Week Activities in October

LITTLE ROCK — In 2020, a total of 547 Arkansans died from drug overdoses, an increase of 195 from the previous year, according to the Arkansas Drug Director's Office. While the number of opioid prescriptions in Arkansas is decreasing and Naloxone, an opioid-combatting drug, is saving lives each day, these efforts are not enough to offset the over-arching reach that opioid addiction has on the Natural State. Education has always been a very important partner in the war against drugs, but as the opioid crisis refuses to slow down, the role of education in preventing addictions and deaths is more critical now than ever before.

To better assist educators with the tools they need to inform students of the harmful effects of addiction, the Arkansas Department of Education, law enforcement partners, and Arkansas PBS joined forces to create a powerful, new documentary that sheds a light on the opioid crisis in Arkansas. The documentary, along with classroom-ready resources, will be available for schools, institutions of higher education, and communities to show during Red Ribbon Week (October 23-31).

The documentary, "7 Days: The Opioid Crisis in Arkansas," features Arkansans who have recovered from opioid addiction, families who have suffered the devastating loss of a loved one, and medical and law enforcement professionals who shed a spotlight on the opioid crisis in the Natural State. In addition to the hour-long documentary, ArkansasIDEAS, which develops educational professional development trainings and programs for Arkansas educators, created classroom-ready resources, which will be available October 15 on the ArkansasIDEAS website: <https://bit.ly/39Z63Q1>. The documentary also has been selected for showing at the 30th Annual Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival in October.

"As a state, we continue to see disturbing increases in opioid addictions and deaths that affect Arkansans of all ages," ADE Secretary Johnny Key said. "Because this epidemic affects students and their families, our role as educators is essential to helping our law enforcement partners combat this deadly epidemic through the power of education. Our hope is that students, families, and communities will watch this documentary, be a part of critical conversations about drug use, and embrace prevention strategies. Together, all of us can combat this deadly epidemic and help ensure our students have a bright, successful future that is drug free."

"As we explore ways to combat the continuing opioid crisis in our state, our network recognizes the power of local stories to speak to those who are suffering from or recovering from drug addiction, and those who have experienced deep personal loss," Arkansas PBS CEO Courtney Pledger said. "Arkansas PBS is uniquely positioned to reach across our rural state with vital information for all Arkansans on the threat and consequences of opioid addiction. We are proud to have had the opportunity to make this film, in partnership with ADE and produced entirely in Arkansas, to inform Arkansans on the dangers surrounding opioids as well as aid those seeking a variety of resources during this devastating crisis in our state."

Over the last several years, ADE has partnered with the FBI-Little Rock office, state Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Arkansas Drug Director's Office to encourage districts to coordinate a same-day showing during Red Ribbon Week of the "Chasing the Dragon" documentary, which sheds an important light on the opioid crisis across the country. With approximately 85 percent of school districts participating, the response has been overwhelmingly supportive.

This year, ADE is providing these additional prevention and awareness resources and is encouraging schools to participate in a same-day showing of either "7 Days" or "Chasing the Dragon" on October 27 during Red Ribbon Week, which is October 23-31. As in years past, schools can register to participate. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/3IWL4CE>. Prior to Red Ribbon Week, schools will have the option of accessing the link to "7 Days" or can receive a DVD of the documentary. In order to receive a DVD, schools must register by October 8.

Schools and communities will have additional opportunities to learn more about the documentary with the following activities.

- **October 13:** The documentary will be shown at 2:30 p.m. at the 30th Annual Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. The virtual screening window will open at 10 a.m. on October 14. More information is available at hsdfi.org.
- **October 22:** ADE will join other partners for a panel discussion on "Arkansas Week: The Opioid Crisis in Arkansas" that will air at 7:30 p.m. on Arkansas PBS.
- **October 25:** The entire documentary will air at 8 p.m. on Arkansas PBS, followed at 9 p.m. by "Understanding the Opioid Epidemic."
- **October 27:** At 10 a.m. ADE will live stream a showing of the documentary at <https://bit.ly/2Wb5RTB>, followed by Secretary Key leading a panel discussion with representatives from the FBI-Little Rock Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Arkansas Drug Director's Office, and an Arkansan featured in the documentary. Representatives from the news media are invited to attend in person.

The complete schedule and ways to watch Arkansas PBS are available at myarpbs.org/watch. All programming also will be livestreamed at myarpbs.org/watchlive. Both "7 Days" and "Arkansas Week" will be available at youtube.com/arkansaspbs after the broadcasts.

In addition to the documentary, ADE also has created a new Red Ribbon Week webpage with links to additional resources. To access the webpage, go to <https://bit.ly/3zEwQDQ>.

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