



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Gang Prevention Campaign Earns International and North American Awards

Winnipeg, Manitoba June 3, 2024 – A cutting-edge gang prevention campaign held in 2023 and aimed at youth throughout the province has earned international recognition with an International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Gold Quill Award of Merit and North American recognition with a Social Marketing Association of North America (SMANA) Gold Medal.

The initiative, led and funded by the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP) Organized Crime Committee and Manitoba Justice, partnered with The Link: Youth and Family Supports, who responded to anonymous text messages from youth throughout the two-phase campaign. Three short, gritty videos broke down the myths of gang life including drugs, sexual exploitation and gun violence while targeting youth aged 13 – 16.

The recognition from IABC, in the category of Public Sector/Government Communication saw the entry rigorously evaluated by seasoned professionals against award criteria and a seven-point Scale of Excellence. The SMANA is a competition exclusively devoted to behavioral and social change marketing. The Gold Medal awarded was for 2024 Overall Social Marketing.

“There are many reasons to be proud of this campaign: we developed a creative concept that resonated with youth; we had 11.68 million impressions leading to over 45,000 clicks to the Gang Life is No Life landing page; and we saw 150 conversations from 109 unique phone numbers.” Says MACP President, Deputy Chief Scot Halley of the Winnipeg Police Service. “We’re thrilled to have our approach and efforts recognized on both world and North American stages,” he adds.

In addition to the IABC and SMANA awards, Gang Life is No Life has been named a finalist for the Canadian Public Relations Society’s (CPRS) National Award of Excellence for the Canadian Advocacy and Social Marketing Campaign of the Year. The winner will be announced later this month.

“We were pleased that the concept successfully engaged youth and that they felt safe to reach out and text The Link for help,” says The Link’s CEO, Kerri Irvin-Ross. “We are also impressed that the campaign resonated with three sets of judges who recognized the research and creative process needed to develop this outstanding campaign,” she adds.

The success of 2023’s campaign has led to renewed funding for the project in 2024 and 2025 to develop further videos depicting gang life myths to continue to grab young people’s attention and offer a life line to help resist or get out of gang involvement.

To view the videos go to [Gang Life is No Life - The Link \(thelinkmb.ca\)](https://thelinkmb.ca)

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