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## **Award Winners Take Aim at Addictions**

*Winnipeg* - Six Manitoba schools and community groups are being recognized at today's launch of Addictions Awareness Week for activities promoting better alternatives to alcohol, other drug use and gambling.

Heavy drinking and frequent cannabis use are revealed in the 2008 Manitoba school report by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, showing two-thirds of grades 7 to 12 students drink and over one-quarter use cannabis. More alarming is that almost one half of student drinkers have had five or more drinks at a sitting and one-third of all students in grades 11 and 12 use cannabis.

"The award winners are models in offering healthier choices to students," says chair Richard Loiselle of the Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week Committee.

"This year's theme, *The Best of Me*, asks youth to seek their potential to avoid the harm caused by addictions," notes Loiselle. "Both alcohol and cannabis use impair drivers, causing countless motor vehicle collisions and injuries. Yet, surprisingly, almost one in five students do not see a problem with using cannabis and driving."

The awards to groups for promoting addictions awareness activities are:

Provincial Award of Distinction: Swan Valley Inter-Agency Inc.

Merit Awards: Nelson McIntyre Collegiate, Winnipeg; Dauphin Friendship Centre, Heritage Park Children's Programs Inc., Winnipeg; Ethelbert School, and Hapnot Collegiate, Flin Flon.

Some of the activities carried out by these groups include participation in the Elks essay and poster contest to promote alcohol and drug awareness in Swan Valley, the Wellness and Healthy Living Conference at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate in Winnipeg and the Amazing Rat Race at Hapnot Collegiate, Flin Flon.

A resource kit with information to assist in educational activities on alcohol, other drug use and gambling has been distributed province-wide to schools by the Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week Committee. Information is also available online at

[www.afm.mb.ca/maaw](http://www.afm.mb.ca/maaw).

For more information, contact Estelle Sures, Media Coordinator, (204) 488-9934 or

[esures@mts.net](mailto:esures@mts.net).

