

Former Idaho Falls Meth Addict Shares Journey to Recovery

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By Danielle Grant, Local News 8 Reporter

It's a highly addictive, powerful drug that can take over and destroy your life even after just one use.

We're talking about meth.



According to the Idaho Meth Project, it is the drug of choice within the state and it is the number one drug problem too.

Tuesday evening, two Idaho Falls hospitals sponsored a family forum for parents, tweens and teens to get them talking about the dangers of this drug.



It was standing room only as the forum was packed with families learning just how dangerous this drug is.

Hearing the first-hand experience of Tesja Erickson, it shows just how powerful meth is and the damage it leaves behind.



"If I would've known what methamphetamine was and what it would've done to my body, I would've never done it once," explained Tesja Erickson.

Nearly nine years ago, Erickson smoked meth for the first time.



"It was a weekend thing and before I knew it, I was doing it every weekend and then weekends blurred into the week and everyday was a Saturday," said Erickson.

She used the drug for six years; smoked it, snorted it, ate it and used it with a needle.

Everyday destroying her own life and her family's lives in her turbulent wake.

Local jails and prisons say nearly 80-percent of their inmates are there because of some kind of drug or alcohol-related charges.

"They're everyday people. They're people you pass on the street. Some of them hold down good jobs, some of the loss good jobs, loss their family, loss everything they have because of meth," said Madison County Jail Administrator Doug Siepert.

"I talk about why they're there and we talk about what specifically got them there. There's tears

shed and it's a heart wrenching experience," Pocatello Women's Correctional Center Warden Brian Underwood explained.

It's a time Tesja will never forget and never wants to go back to.

"Making sure you have that next bag because you need it; physically, mentally, emotionally that's how bad it is. It hooks you in all areas of your life," Erickson admitted.

Tesja's been clean for three years and shares her near-death experiences as a forever changed woman.

"Everyday I work to build the relationships with my friends, my family and the community and I'm the happiest I have ever been," Erickson said.

Several kids at the forum said meth and drugs in general are a problem within their schools.

And that's why they want to learn about this deadly drug and share with others why they're standing up against meth.

According to an Idaho Meth Project research, in 2008 one in five Idaho teens saw little to no risk in trying meth once or twice.