



**CABLE INDUSTRY EFFORTS TO EMPOWER
TELEVISION VIEWERS:
CHOICE, CONTROL AND EDUCATION**

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INTRODUCTION

The cable industry has a longstanding commitment to addressing parents' concerns about what they and their children see on television. NCTA and individual cable operators and program networks are strongly committed to addressing these concerns.

Cable's approach to addressing indecency and violence on television is based on the concepts of *choice*, *control* and *education*. Cable provides the widest possible *choice* in television programming, including many channels that serve children and family viewers and provide educational, informative and entertaining programming. Nickelodeon, Noggin, Discovery Kids, WAM!, Hallmark Channel, ABC Family, and National Geographic are just some of the networks that ensure cable customers can find age-appropriate programming at virtually any time of the day.

That choice is supplemented by technology that offers families a broad range of *control* over what programming can be displayed in the home. Analog and digital cable set-top boxes provide tools to block unwanted channels and programming, thus empowering families to manage content for their viewing. In addition, the cable industry supports the TV ratings system, which can be used in conjunction with V-chip-equipped television sets to block specific programming that parents deem inappropriate for their family.

For more than a decade, cable networks and operators have worked to *educate* viewers about how to take charge of the diverse content available to them on cable television. Since 1994, NCTA, Cable in the Classroom (CIC) and the National PTA have collaborated on a national media literacy initiative designed to provide parents and

teachers with simple and effective methods to critically examine media messages and make informed judgments and decisions about media use. The cable industry has also worked to develop and distribute informational materials to increase public awareness of the TV ratings and the V-chip. Additionally, individual cable networks and operators have aired programming and developed pro-social initiatives designed to help communities, families and children deal with difficult issues, including violence in society.

CABLE OFFERS CUSTOMERS GREAT CHOICE

Cable provides a wide array of programming aimed at diverse audiences, including many channels and programs that serve children and families. Cable networks such as Nickelodeon, Noggin, Discovery Kids, Disney Channel, and WAM! are 24-hour cable networks devoted solely to children. They provide hundreds of hours of high-quality, age-appropriate programming that educates, informs and entertains. For example, Noggin is a commercial-free educational channel dedicated to preschoolers twelve hours a day, seven days a week. Noggin airs some of kids' favorite educational shows, like *Blue's Clues* and *Sesame Street*, along with new original series. Noggin uses a "connected learning" approach, which links key educational content with experiences children know. Starting at 6 p.m., Noggin's nighttime block, The N, provides programming dedicated to helping teens and pre-teens figure out their lives.

Discovery Kids, another cable network devoted to children, provides real-world entertainment to kids of all ages and interests. With original programming like *Jeff Corwin Unleashed* and *Scout's Safari*, children are whisked around the world from the

comfort of the family couch. Discovery Kids became a household phenomenon in 2002 with its launch on NBC's Saturday morning block. This year, TLC and Discovery Kids reinvigorated the award-winning "Ready Set Learn!" three-hour weekday morning block of commercial-free programming for preschoolers with five new series and a new animated host.

In addition to these networks designed for kids, cable provides an abundance of opportunities for the whole family to watch television together. For example, ABC Family features family favorites like *Full House* and *7th Heaven*, in addition to original series and movies. Hallmark Channel provides a diverse slate of high-quality original productions, programs from the Hallmark Entertainment library and the prestigious Hallmark Hall of Fame Collection, coupled with acquired family classics like *Little House on the Prairie*. National Geographic Channel, another network for the whole family, is a 24-hour cable network that offers a new realm of adventure, exploration, science and culture. These, and dozens of other examples of family-friendly programming, make cable a great place for families to find appropriate fare any time of the day.

CABLE OFFERS CUSTOMERS CONTROL OVER PROGRAMMING

The cable industry has been at the forefront of efforts to provide parents with tools to control and better manage the programming that comes into their homes. Analog and digital cable set-top boxes allow cable customers to manage the programming coming into their homes by blocking channels and specific programming. Additionally, the cable industry helped develop, and has actively supported, the TV ratings system,

which provides information about the content of television programming and that can be used with the V-chip to block unwanted programming.

Cable Set Top Boxes Provide Customers with Parental Controls

Cable customers who want to block programming coming into their homes have several options. Most advanced analog boxes have the ability to block user-selected channels. If a customer doesn't have such a box, cable operators will provide one upon request. To block a channel, the viewer enters a Personal Identification Number ("PIN") code – which acts as a password – using the set-top's remote control or the keypad. Other users of that TV will not be able to view the blocked channels without entering the PIN password and authorizing the channel to be viewed.

Digital set-top boxes provided by cable operators and in use today have additional parental control capabilities. Like analog boxes, parental controls in digital boxes must first be activated by the subscriber creating a PIN code; this prevents other users from changing or overriding the selected controls without entering the PIN. Although specific functionality of digital set-top boxes varies depending on manufacturer and model, typical features include the ability to block channel and specific programs, using a variety of subscriber-selected criteria. These criteria may include:

- Channel blocking – customers may select an individual channel or several channels they wish to block. The channel(s) will be blocked at all times unless viewing is authorized by entering the PIN.
- Time and Date – customers may select the date, time and channel they wish to block.
- TV Parental Guidelines – customers may select the TV rating(s) they wish to block. If "TV-14" is selected, programs with this rating, regardless of the channel on which they air, will be blocked.

- MPAA Movie Ratings – the customer selects the movie rating(s) they wish to block. All movies with this rating will be blocked, regardless of the channel on which they air.
- Adult Titles in Program Guide Listing – the cable operator’s electronic program guide includes the title of programs, including premium service and Video-On-Demand programs. Using the parental controls, a customer may “hide” adult titles that appear in the program guide.

TV Ratings and the V-chip Provide Additional Control

Following enactment of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the cable industry played a leadership role in developing and implementing the current system of TV Parental Guidelines – a voluntary system designed to give parents information about the content of television programs. Today, most television programs on cable and broadcast television carry a TV rating applied by cable and broadcast networks, and producers of programs. News and sports are exempt from the system. The guidelines are divided into ratings categories for programs designed for children: TV-Y (All Children) and TV-Y7 (Directed to Older Children – age 7 and older); and categories for programs designed for the entire audience: TV-G (General Audience), TV-PG (Parental Guidance Suggested), TV-14 (Parents Strongly Cautioned – may be unsuitable for children under 14) and TV-MA (Mature Audience Only – may be unsuitable for children under 17). The TV Parental Guidelines combine information about the age appropriateness of a program with specific information, where appropriate, about the content of the program (i.e., “V” for violence, “S” for sexual content, “D” for suggestive dialogue, and “L” for strong language).

A program’s rating appears in the upper left hand corner of the television screen at the beginning of the show. Cable networks and broadcast stations also encode the

ratings information in their signal so it can be “read” by television sets equipped with the V-chip. Consumers can block shows with certain ratings by programming their V-chip-equipped TV sets using an on-screen menu of options. Shows can be blocked according to the TV Parental Guidelines or, when applicable, the Motion Picture Association of America’s movie ratings. Using the TV Parental Guidelines, parents can block shows according to the age-based categories (such as TV-14) or content labels (such as V for violence). All television sets with screens 13” or larger sold after January 1, 2000 contain V-chip technology. About 80 million V-chip equipped TV sets have been sold to date.

CABLE EDUCATES VIEWERS ON TOOLS TO MANAGE CONTENT

To help parents better understand how to take charge of the diverse content available to them on cable television, the cable industry, in partnership with the National PTA, developed a media literacy initiative to help parents and children understand and interpret what they see on television. The industry has also developed and distributed a variety of materials to raise public awareness of the TV ratings system and the V-chip. Moreover, individual cable operators and program networks have aired programming and developed initiatives to help communities, families and children address difficult issues, including violence in society.

Cable Industry Reaches Out on TV Ratings and the V-Chip

Since the TV ratings system was developed in 1997, the cable industry has worked to develop and distribute informational materials to increase public awareness of

the TV ratings and V-chip. NCTA has joined with other television industry organizations and interested advocacy groups on many of these projects.

In conjunction with the development of the TV Parental Guidelines, the television industry created a homepage with information about the TV ratings and V-chip (www.tvguidelines.org). The industry refreshes this website regularly. Most recently, NCTA joined the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) in creating a brochure that parents can download from the site called “*Navigating Your Way Through the TV Parental Guidelines and V-Chip.*” The brochure describes the TV Parental Guidelines and answers many frequently asked questions about the ratings and the V-chip.

NCTA distributed hard copies of this brochure to cable systems across the country along with other information and resources on TV violence. Many cable systems have requested additional materials for use in their local communities. These materials continue to be available through the NCTA’s website.

In another public education campaign, the cable industry joined the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Center for Media Education in promoting the *V-chip Education Project*. NCTA, NAB, and MPAA produced and widely distributed several public service announcements to raise awareness of the V-chip and to promote the availability of additional information.

In 1998, NCTA, in partnership with the nation’s leading children’s advocacy groups from the fields of health, education and child development, announced a public education effort to help parents understand and use the TV ratings system. Materials created as part of the campaign, “*Tools to Use to Help You Choose: A Family Guide to*

the TV Ratings System,” included a video explaining each ratings category and content descriptor, a companion print brochure, and a peel-off sticker for the remote control for quick reference to the TV ratings categories and content labels. More than 300,000 copies of the *Tools to Use to Help You Choose* materials have been distributed – free of charge – to parents, schools and organizations nationwide.

Cable Industry and National PTA Support Media Literacy

For almost a decade, the National PTA, Cable in the Classroom (CIC) and NCTA have been involved in a collaborative national media literacy initiative. Initially known as “*Taking Charge of Your TV,*” this initiative provides resources to parents and teachers in order to help families critically examine media messages and make informed judgments and decisions about media use. Parents learn how to get the most out of media while mitigating its potentially negative effects.

In the first phase of the project, more than 3,000 PTA and cable leaders were trained in the key elements of media literacy and how to conduct workshops for parents, educators and organizations in their communities. These workshops brought media literacy information to families and schools in communities across the country by providing simple and effective strategies to parents concerned about the content of some television programming. Tens of thousands of parents attended workshops in more than 40 states. The critical viewing project also developed several videos and a workbook to bring media literacy, other television viewing skills, and information to families and educators who could not attend a local workshop. Cable in the Classroom and NCTA

distributed, free of charge, more than 300,000 copies of the workbook for parents and over 200,000 videos.

In the second, ongoing phase of this media literacy project, Cable in the Classroom collaborates with the National PTA and other partners to produce and distribute media literacy materials to parents and teachers. CIC's website (www.ciconline.org) supports families with a variety of resources, including an online primer called Media Literacy 101 and streaming video clips. More than 10,000 copies of the primer have been downloaded from the CIC website. These materials are also available on the FCC's website for parents, Parent Place (www.fcc.gov/parents).

In October 2002, Cable in the Classroom and the National PTA jointly commissioned *Thinking Critically About Media: Schools and Families in Partnership*. Written by six experts in media literacy, the report details the importance of teaching children to understand and analyze the media messages that bombard them daily, and the growing need for parents and teachers to arm children with media literacy skills. The report outlines useful strategies parents and schools can adopt to transform the passive hours children spend consuming media into hours spent enhancing their critical thinking skills while analyzing and challenging the messages they are taking in. These strategies include: starting media literacy as soon as children begin watching TV; providing a weekly menu of shows from which to choose, and allowing children to help select from those programs; committing to one hour a week of "cognitive TV," incorporating guided discussion and identification of the values, ideas and information conveyed; and getting children involved in media production, to illuminate the decisions and choices that are made in constructing media messages. More than 10,000 paper copies of *Thinking*

Critically About Media have been distributed, and 25,000 copies have been downloaded from the CIC website.

Later this month, Cable in the Classroom and the National PTA will release a new media literacy paper that will provide guidance to parents on using media to support the development of young children aged 2-11. Like its predecessor, this paper recognizes that media can provide helpful tools and teach valuable lessons to children, and that a consistent and developmentally appropriate approach, grounded in medial literacy strategies, can help parents to harness the best aspects of media for their children.

Individual Cable Networks and Systems Support Pro-Social Initiatives

The cable industry's commitment to address difficult issues, including violence, builds upon a unique blend of resources: its national program networks, which have developed and produced initiatives delivering specific pro-social messages to targeted audiences, and local cable systems that deliver services directly into customers' homes. Cable operators and networks are partnering with local organizations, non-profits and governmental agencies to devise specialized programs that address the needs of their customers. Every day, they are working to bring together students, parents, educators and others to help them deal with difficult societal issues, including violence.

Attached is a description of just a few of these initiatives.

LAW AND REGULATION OF INDECENT PROGRAMMING

Any discussion of indecency on television should take place in the context of the applicable laws and the limitations the First Amendment places on government regulation

of speech. The Communications Act prohibits *both* broadcasters and cable operators from showing obscene programming on cable systems.¹ However, the Act treats cable operators and broadcasters differently as to their responsibilities to restrict indecent programming because of fundamental differences between broadcast and cable TV having to do with the fact that broadcasters deliver their programming over the public airwaves, that cable solely is subscription-based, and that cable customers have the ability to control unwanted programming.

Broadcast indecency is prohibited under the U.S. Criminal Code.² Court decisions and the FCC's regulations interpret the prohibition to bar indecent programming between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., when there is a reasonable risk of children in the audience. "Indecent" programming for these purposes is considered to be "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

As explained on the FCC's website, "The statutory prohibition against indecency does not apply to programming aired on cable-only channels." Rather, cable operators are required to provide customers a variety of technical options to prevent the viewing of unwanted indecent programming in the home. The subscription nature of cable, and the ability and responsibility to provide tools to block unwanted programming, differentiate cable from broadcasting, which is received free and unfiltered over the air. As the U.S.

¹ The Supreme Court in the 1973 Miller v. California case, defined "obscenity" as content which, taken as a whole, "appeals to the prurient interest..." which describes sexual conduct "in a patently offensive way", and which, "taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value." Obscenity is measured based on an "average person applying contemporary community standards."

² 47 U.S.C. § 1464.

Supreme Court found in United States v. Playboy Entertainment Group, 529 U.S. 1878 (2000), for purposes of a First Amendment analysis of indecency restrictions, the “key difference” between cable operators and broadcasters is that “cable systems have the capacity to block unwanted channels on a household-by-household basis.” The Court explained that “targeted blocking is less restrictive than banning, and the Government cannot ban speech if targeted blocking is a feasible and effective means of furthering its compelling interests.”

Congress enacted three specific blocking mechanisms – unique to cable – that provide greater control over which programming may enter the home. First, Section 624(d)(2) of the Cable Act, 47 U.S.C. § 542(d), provides that upon request, a cable operator must provide, either through sale or lease, a device “by which the subscriber can prohibit viewing of a particular cable service during the period selected by that subscriber.” Under this requirement, a customer who subscribes to a tier can request equipment that would enable the customer to block a particular channel that he or she otherwise is authorized to receive.

Second, the law ensures that cable subscribers can avoid any undesired video or audio reception from a channel to which it does not subscribe. 47 U.S.C. § 560 provides that upon request, a cable operator – without charge – must fully scramble, or otherwise block, the audio and video of a channel so that a non-subscriber does not receive even a partially viewable or audible signal.

Third, a further legal protection against unwanted communications arises when a cable operator offers a free preview of a premium service. Sec. 624 of the statute, 47 U.S.C. § 544, provides that operators that choose to offer free previews of premium

channels that offer movies rated X, NC-17 or R to cable customers who do not subscribe to that premium channel must give 30 days advance notice, and block the channel carrying the premium channel upon the subscriber's request.

In addition to the subscriber-blocking mechanisms, Congress has also granted cable operators some discretion to block indecent programming on access channels over which they otherwise have no editorial control. Under the Cable Act, operators must dedicate a portion of their channel capacity for persons unaffiliated with the operator for commercial use (i.e., leased access). Cable operators can also be required by franchise authorities to set aside channels for public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access.

As to leased access, operators can enforce a written policy of prohibiting leased access programming that the operator reasonably believes is indecent. 47 U.S.C. § 532(h); see also 47 U.S.C. § 532(c)(2). The U.S. Supreme Court upheld this right, but found unconstitutional a provision that would have required operators that did not ban such leased access material to segregate and block it. Denver Area Educational Telecommunications Consortium v. FCC, 518 U.S. 711 (1996). Indecency on PEG channels was treated differently by the Court in Denver Area. It struck down, on First Amendment grounds, a provision of the 1992 Act that would have permitted a cable operator to prevent the transmission of “patently offensive” (i.e., indecent) PEG access programming, based on the longstanding history of these channels and the rule that self-regulating aspects of most PEG programming.³

³ Note, however, that the Denver case addresses 1992 amendments to the Act; there appears to remain a ban on “indecent” and “nudity” in Sec. 611(e), which has not been litigated.

CONCLUSION

The cable industry takes seriously concerns about some of the content available on television today and about the impact of media, especially its effect on children. Cable, like the entire entertainment industry, has a responsibility to participate in serious and substantive efforts to address these issues. That is why the cable industry is committed to: (1) offering customers the widest possible *choice* in television programming, including many channels that serve children and family viewers; (2) providing technology that offers families a broad range of *control* over the programming that comes into their homes; and (3) *educating* viewers about how to take charge of the diverse content available to them. We recognize that more can be done, especially with respect to educating consumers about the choices and controls available to them, and we are committed to undertaking new efforts to achieve these objectives.

ATTACHMENT

CABLE NETWORK AND OPERATOR PRO-SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Many cable systems and networks have aired programming and developed pro-social initiatives designed to help communities, families and children deal with use of the media and other difficult issues, including violence in society. Just a few examples of recent and ongoing initiatives are described below.

Court TV

Choices and Consequences – This multi-faceted program provides teachers, parents, and caring adults with resources to address a wide range of issues that impact teens, in particular, youth violence. The goal is to “resensitize” adolescents to the risks associated with aggressive and other antisocial behavior. The most widely used lesson plan in middle schools is called *Teen Pranks*. This Court TV curriculum features video footage of actual trials aired on the network, which involve teen perpetrators and victims. The goal is to help children realize that some seemingly “harmless” pranks can lead to very tragic outcomes. *Choices and Consequences* materials have been researched and evaluated by the University of California Santa Barbara, and the findings show that kids exposed to the curriculum demonstrate a greater knowledge of the legal system, an increased ability to empathize with fellow teens, and a reduction in verbal and physical aggressive behavior.

Mind Over Media – In 2001, Court TV collaborated with the National Education Association and the National Middle School Association to produce *Mind Over Media*—two one-hour television programs and curriculum packages that explore the connection between the media's influence on youth behavior and how communities have a role in the discussion. These one-hour specials help young adolescents watch and listen more carefully, while encouraging strong parental involvement.

Digital Fingerprinting Days for Kids – Court TV's *Digital Fingerprinting Days* is a promotion designed to provide parents with necessary tools and information to keep their children out of harms way. Court TV offers families FREE digital fingerprints and picture as a means of accurate identification for children around the country. Court TV has partnered with local cable operators on more than 105 digital fingerprinting events, fingerprinting more than 75,000 kids across the country in the process.

Discovery Communications

Assignment Media Literacy was introduced to Maryland teachers in 2000. Funded by Discovery Communications and developed with the Maryland State Department of Education, the program provides teachers with training and standards-based curricular materials for teaching students media literacy skills. During the six years prior to Assignment Media Literacy, Discovery Communications (through TLC) provided in-service media literacy training to teachers through *KNOW TV* workshops.

Hallmark Channel

The V-Chip Education Project – Hallmark Channel led the industry in building awareness about V-chip technology through the network's multi-faceted campaign with Kermit the Frog as the official “spokesfrog.” On-air public service announcements, a ratings brochure, as well as Kermit standees, posters and ceiling mobiles were provided free to local cable systems for distribution to area schools, libraries and organizations. Kermit and other Muppet characters were used to instruct parents on how to interpret the ratings system and use the V-chip. Two years ago, Hallmark also gave the gift of the Kermit image to the Federal Communications Commission for use on a brochure that was part of the government’s V-chip awareness raising campaign. Hallmark continues to provide V-Chip information.

Lifetime

Our Lifetime Commitment: Stop Violence Against Women – This Lifetime Television campaign is dedicated to using the power of the media to raise awareness of the problems of domestic abuse and sexual assault, and to change laws and lives for the better. In this initiative, Lifetime works with leading non-profit organizations, affiliate partners, corporations and government officials to create extensive original on-air programming, online content and community outreach that offers lifesaving information and support, promotes passage of progressive national legislation and encourages both women and men to work together to stop the violence. A recent element of the initiative is *The Times Square Project*, a year-long initiative utilizing prominent electronic signage in the Times Square Business Improvement District, potentially reaching 1.5 million daily visitors to raise awareness of violence against women.

Lifetime Programming...Making a Difference – This program provides expanded resources and information to viewers on a wide variety of topics addressed in Lifetime’s programming. Immediately following the airing of original movies, acquired movies, and episodes of original series that tackle important issues, Lifetime airs public service announcements (PSA’s) to connect viewers with a variety of advocacy organizations through toll-free hotlines and links on Lifetimetv.com. In this effort, Lifetime has created a total of more than 1,500 PSA’s in partnership with 200 non profit organizations. Through the use of educational materials, Lifetime also reaches out to over 50,000 high schools across the country to help teachers and guidance counselors talk to students about important issues, including sexual assault and teenage suicide.

Nickelodeon

Talking with Kids About Tough Issues – Every day, many kids face teasing and bullying that can escalate into violence – and parents are often unsure how to help their children deal with such aggressive behavior. These and other “tough issues” like alcohol, tobacco and drug use, sex and puberty form the basis of the inclusive *Talking with Kids About Tough Issues* campaign. This effort was developed by Nickelodeon, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now. Extensive on-line and print resources are available to help open up and foster much-needed dialogue between parents and children.

NICK News – Special Editions of Nickelodeon’s *NICK News*, with Linda Ellerbee, have addressed media literacy, as well as a variety of sensitive and topical issues, with special attention to the needs of young viewers. For example, in an episode called “*Are We What We Watch?*” Ellerbee and a group of children examined how television portrays behaviors, values, stereotypes and conflict. Other recent topics have included terrorism, homelessness, AIDS in South Africa, Native American kids living on reservations and adoption.

Oxygen Media

Fight Like a Girl – Oxygen Media’s *Fight Like a Girl* was created to work with local cable operators to spread the word and raise awareness within local communities about the importance of women’s self defense. *Fight Like a Girl* featured free specialty classes at various locations throughout 2003. All who participated received free lessons in self defense, boxing, kick boxing and martial arts from top-level instructors or police officers. The classes encouraged women to recognize the importance of self defense, and to become knowledgeable and confident about defending themselves. *Fight Like a Girl* is available to affiliates wishing to hold events.

TV Guide Channel

"Family Do's and Don'ts" – In an effort to educate its viewers about television programming that is suitable specifically for family viewing, TV Guide Channel features a nightly segment as part of its one-hour “*What’s On*” signature primetime series. “*Family Do's and Don'ts*” gives viewers suggestions about what families should – and shouldn’t – watch. Hosted by TV Guide Channel field correspondents, each segment gives a synopsis of upcoming shows airing in primetime that families may enjoy watching together, and identifies programming that may not be appropriate for family viewing, such as shows that contain violent themes or adult situations. In addition, the TV Guide Channel displays program ratings in its scrolling guide.

WAM!

Table Talk – *Table Talk* is a series of interstitials that uses dramatized dinner-table conversations about difficult issues to stimulate important conversations among families. It allows children and parents to witness ways in which anxieties are shared, concerns are voiced, problems are reflected upon and compromises are implemented. From peer pressure to sibling rivalry, curfews to dating, social issues to world problems, *Table Talk* serves as a template for resolving conflict by exploring how families voice their feelings and reach understanding through an open verbal exchange.

Cablevision

Internet Smarts – A new **Power to Learn** initiative, *Internet Smarts* provides a forum for teachers and parents to work with children to understand which online behaviors and practices are safe and appropriate and which are not. *Internet Smarts* includes online, interactive case studies, an online quiz, a family resource booklet, “*Internet Smarts: Safeguarding Your Children in Cyberspace,*” and links to more information. During

2004/2005, *Internet Smarts* will be made available to 2,100 schools in New York City area. **Power to Learn** is a multi-faceted initiative dedicated to integrating the Internet into education to enhance learning, including wiring schools with broadband and the powertolearn.com educational portal.

Comcast

Facing Fear – In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, and the 2002 sniper attacks in the Washington, DC area, parents and teachers have been seeking expert guidance about how to help youngsters process and heal from tragic events. In response, Comcast in Montgomery County, Maryland, partnered with the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area to produce a video entitled *Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal with Terrorism and Other Tragic Events*. Targeted to educators and parents, the video offers expert advice and comes packaged with lesson plans and other materials. Comcast distributed 250 copies of the video to schools in Montgomery County, and the Red Cross has made the video available to nearly 1,000 Red Cross Chapters across the country.

Safe Surfing Workshops – Comcast of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, has partnered with the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General and the YWCA of Carlisle to offer *Safe Surfing Workshops*. The first workshop was developed for the YWCA of Carlisle's "Week Without Violence." Each workshop includes a presentation and handouts that are designed to educate parents and other adults about the dangers that exist online, help them to recognize suspicious behaviors and teach them concrete ways to protect their children.

Cox

A Season for Non Violence – Through Cox's local programming channels and bulletin boards, the company promotes a number of local anti-violence events. For example, in Hampton Roads, Virginia, Cox is the media sponsor of *A Season for Non Violence*, a national anti-violence initiative in honor of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Cox produces shows that feature local leaders who discuss ways to encourage positive community change through non-violent means.

Line Against Violence – Cox New England provides a toll-free confidential hotline for students to use to report bullying, hazing, gang threats and incidents of violence at school. The company pays for the toll-free service and donates advertising time to run public service announcements that encourage students to use the hotline. Cox also pays for and distributes *Line Against Violence* hotline materials at community events and promotes the number on the company's service vehicles.

Tell Somebody Campaign – In response to the Columbine shootings, in 2001-2002, Cox Gulf Coast sponsored this initiative aimed at young people. The campaign was based on an assumption that no matter how secretive the Columbine shooters were, somebody knew what was about to happen, but didn't know how to share the information. The initiative urged students to *Tell Somebody* through campaign buttons, pencils, posters, and public service announcements donated by the company. Cox also distributed "You Can Tell Me" buttons to guidance counselors, business leaders, clergy and law enforcement personnel.

Texas Cable & Telecommunications Association

In 2002, the Texas Education Agency, in partnership with and funded by the Texas Cable and Telecommunications Association and Texas cable operators, adapted *Assignment Media Literacy* to fit the Texas standards (Essential Knowledge and Skills). This initiative provides training and curricular materials to middle and high school teachers across the state. Congressmen Gonzalez (D-20th District—San Antonio) and Ortiz (D-27th District—Corpus Christi) have appeared in PSAs, produced and aired by Time Warner Cable, stressing the importance of media literacy.