Message from the President

To the Creators:

It has become apparent over the past few decades just how much influence children have in families’ buying decisions—and that includes buying movie tickets, DVDs, CDs, and time donated to watching television.

Children’s entertainment continues to grow almost exponentially in both availability and quality. The lines that once divided children’s entertainment from adult-targeted entertainment—simplicity, specific media like comic books and cartoons—have been erased. Comics, cartoons and videogames are now just as popular with adults as with children; and similarly, entertainment geared toward kids has been made much more humorous and intelligent in order to attract adult audiences.

Children’s entertainment has come a long way. But many leaders in this genre were ahead of their time in recognizing their influence and using the media to educate their young audiences, rather than mislead them with inaccurate information.

As new trends continue to evolve, there is every indication that our industry is taking its ability to cause positive societal changes seriously. To make it easier for you to ensure the realism of your productions, I urge you to consult EIC’s free First Draft technical assistance service, where you can be linked with an expert or experts in a host of health and social issues.

Brian Dyak, President & CEO

Rewriting History

EIC has been onto the significance of the comic book segment of our industry for years. EIC Trustee Stan Lee, creator of Spider-Man and founder of Marvel Comics, made a risky move in May 1971 when issue #96 of his The Amazing Spider-Man was published—without the seal of approval from the Comics Code Authority. The storyline of the issue was rejected because it dealt explicitly with drug addiction; though the story carried an anti-drug message, the Comics Code Authority prohibited any drug reference at all. Lee published the issue anyway, and DC Comics followed suit shortly thereafter with a story about the Green Lantern’s sidekick, Speedy, and his heroin addiction. “The Code was totally rewritten because of Stan and that cover within the month,” said Neal Adams, creator of The Green Lantern series.

Executive Examples

Herb Scannell, MTV Networks Group President is responsible for all creative and business operations at Nickelodeon, the #1 kid’s entertainment brand; TV Land, the highest rated cable network to launch within the past six years; and the first network for men, Spike TV. Under Scannell’s leadership, Nickelodeon has been the number one-rated cable network for seven consecutive years in total day ratings.

Amnesty International recognized Scannell in 2001 for his outstanding commitment to promoting social responsibility in Nickelodeon’s programming. In 2002, he received the Imagen Vision Award for his continued leadership and groundbreaking commitment to diversity with shows such as Dora The Explorer, The Brothers Garcia and the Nick Cannon Show.

Herb Scannell is an outstanding example of how a pioneering spirit, commitment to social well-being and business savvy can surpass all expectations for success.
If you Google search "children’s film festivals," the results might surprise you. There are scores of festival venues that invite creators of quality children’s entertainment to come and display their wares, often competing for distributors and prizes or other awards.

But as with the Burbank International Children’s Film Festival (BICFF), most of these festivals serve a purpose beyond selling movies—they’re also selling the idea of content.

The BICFF’s stated mission is “to address the need for socially responsible children’s entertainment, and to provide encouragement for new talent.” The BICFF draws attention to the entertainment industry’s efforts to make a positive difference in the lives of its audiences.

Scholastic Partners with NIDA

Scholastic, Inc., the children’s education and media company and publisher of the phenomenally popular Harry Potter books, has joined with the National Institute on Drug Abuse to produce a new in-school education program for children and teens. “Heads Up: Real News About Drugs and Your Body” brings kids and their teachers and parents the latest science has to offer on the effects drugs can have on the human brain and body. The project’s website offers unique, interactive features, such as an online scavenger hunt, pop-up brain diagrams, personal stories and a poster contest for students.

For more information on the NIDA-Scholastic partnership, go to www.nida.nih.gov.

NIDA recently released new Principles for Preventing Drug Abuse among Children and Adolescents. These principles are intended to help parents, educators, and community leaders think about, plan for, and deliver research-based drug abuse prevention programs at the community level. Here are a couple examples:

- Prevention programs should address all forms of drug abuse, alone or in combination, including the underage use of legal drugs (e.g., tobacco or alcohol); the use of illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana or heroin); and the inappropriate use of legally obtained substances (e.g., inhalants), prescription medications, or over-the-counter drugs.
- Prevention programs should be tailored to address risks specific to population or audience characteristics, such as age, gender, and ethnicity, to improve program effectiveness.

Got questions about drugs? You’re not alone. Dr. NIDA shares the answers to the most frequently asked questions here:

- **General Questions**—What drugs are commonly abused?
- **The Brain and Addiction**—How quickly can I become addicted to a drug?
- **Anabolic Steroids**—Are anabolic steroids addictive?
- **Marijuana**—How long does marijuana stay in the user’s body?
- **Nicotine**—What happens when nicotine is taken for long periods of time?
- **Other Drugs**—Looking for information on other drugs not listed here? NIDA has lots of other resources available - just look here.