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7/7/05-Tyler

7 On Your Side: Casting Call



"Open casting call for children and teens!.. for one day only!" says the postcard mailed to East Texans. Aquarian Associates, Inc. out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania claim they can put you in front of major casting directors, model scouts and agents. Just attend this "free evaluation" in Tyler.

But the Consumer Protection Board in New York is sending a warning to East Texans. "We have information that leads us to believe that everyone is evaluated and that everyone is invited to the next step and that next step costs them more than \$500 dollars," says Jon Sorenson with the Consumer Protection Board. "7 On Your Side" found several postings on a web site called "Easy Background Check" to support this.

After attending the free evaluation, pre-selected kids are invited back for a "call-back meeting". This parent says it wasn't until the last ten minutes of their session they were told about a \$485 fee to attend a national search in another city. Another parent says they had good reasons to be "greatly disappointed". "The only reason we allowed our daughter to participate was because we spent in excess of \$800 for plane tickets and lodging," reads the web posting.

The director of Aquarian Associates denied our request for an interview but did fax us a written statement saying: "...anyone with a legitimate complaint can file with the Better Business Bureau" and "...if someone is expecting to be assigned a work opportunity at our meeting, this will not be the case." "The key here is you can get these opportunities for free," says Sorenson. "You don't have to pay somebody to introduce you to the right people if the right people want to meet you.

It could take more work than simply paying a fee and going to one session." 7 On Your Side is not suggesting you not to take your child to this open casting call. But just like any endeavor you take on know what your options are, don't be afraid to ask questions or just say no.

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