



Keeping
KIDS
Safe

A GUIDE TO DRUG AND
ALCOHOL PREVENTION

Red Ribbon Week



Your Future is Key,
So Stay Drug Free.
That's the theme for Red
Ribbon Week in 2017.

In 1988, The National Family Partnership sponsored the first National Red Ribbon celebration to honor fallen DEA agent, Enrique Camarena. His life was tragically taken during his battle against illegal drugs.

The National Red Ribbon Campaign continues to spread his message by urging communities to educate youth and participate in drug-prevention activities.

Each year, schools are encouraged to choose a theme that portrays their view on the dangers of drug use. The Red

Ribbon Campaign recommends themes be brief and catchy. As a concerned parent or teacher, visit www.redribbon.org/enter to learn how to enter your school into the campaign next year.

This year's winner received national recognition and \$500 in Red Ribbon theme merchandise.

2017 WINNER

A student from Solon Middle School in Solon, Ohio, won the 2017 Red Ribbon Theme contest by displaying a great mes-

sage for the country: Your Future is Key, So Stay Drug Free.

According to the National Red Ribbon Campaign's announcement, the entire community of the student who created this year's theme, Iris Yu, has gotten behind the winning theme and has shown tremendous support.

Make sure your community supports upcoming Red Ribbon projects. A local student might gain the same recognition and make a difference in your school district.

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Signing the Red Ribbon Pledge allows both parents and children to become involved in anti-drug efforts. These are the guidelines for the pledge as stated by the Red Ribbon Campaign:

1. As parents and citizens, we will talk to the children in our lives about the dangers of drug abuse.

2. We will set clear rules for our children about not using drugs.

3. We will set a good example for our children by not using

illegal drugs.

4. We will monitor children's behavior and enforce appropriate consequences.

5. We will encourage family and friends to follow the same guidelines to keep children safe from substance abuse.

HOW TO DONATE

There is another way to help the Red Ribbon Campaign: donate. Head to www.redribbon.org to donate to a meaningful cause. One dollar invested in prevention saves seven dollars in treatment.

Drugs and Mental Health

Drugs can wreak havoc on your physical body and vital organs. Many drugs cause liver damage, make your body vulnerable to infection and can even make your heart work harder. Mental health is just as compromised by drug usage.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than half of people who have drug problems have existing mental health issues. Experts believe that this relationship is due to users attempting to treat their unpleasant symptoms.

The NIDA says this self-medication might ease conditions temporarily, but mental health issues return, sometimes stronger than they were before.

MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS

While different drugs affect bodies in different ways, they all have damaging chemical effects on the brain. Here are some ways illegal drugs are detrimental to your mental health, as reported by Drug and Alcohol Information and Support:

- **Increased anxiety:** Typical symptoms of this disorder include increased heart rate, trembling, shortness of breath and risk of panic attacks.

- **Psychosis:** Psychoactive drugs can cause you to have illusions or hallucinations even when you're not under the influence.

- **Mood disorder:** Drugs such as cocaine, heroin and methadone increase depression. You might notice feeling delusional, irritable or even manic.



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BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

Attempting to self-medicate due to mental-health symptoms might lead to worsening conditions if usage is constant.

In certain situations, drug usage could even trigger a mental illness that otherwise

would lie dormant due to the chemicals' effect on your brain.

These dangerous behaviors also are linked to substance-use disorders in those attempting to self-medicate their mental illness:

- Using substances in haz-

ardous situations such as driving;

- Sudden mood swings, irritability or outbursts;
- Lack of motivation at work or school; and
- Constant legal trouble due to taking and acquiring illegal drugs.

SEEKING TREATMENT

If you or someone you know is struggling with the dual-diagnosis of a mental-health disorder and drug addiction, it is crucial to seek treatment. Rehabilitation experts will assist you in dealing with both conditions safely.

American Opioid Epidemic



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, America is suffering through an epidemic due to opioid usage.

In 2015, prescription opioids and heroin were responsible for killing more than 33,000 people.

Incredibly, nearly half of these overdoses involved a prescription. Learn the risks of these dangerous substances and the how to spot warning signs in loved ones.

COMMON OPIOIDS

Opioids are drugs typically used to reduce pain in Americans. Because prescription opioids can be legally obtained with the recommendation of a doctor, people tend to become over-dependent.

Common opioid drugs that are prescribed include OxyContin, Vicodin, morphine and methadone.

There are two other common forms of opioid usage on the rise as reported by the CDC.

- **Fentanyl:** This synthetic form is used as a pain reliever that is much more powerful than other opioids. Authorities believe illegally-manufactured fentanyl is pouring into the United States from China, thanks to the drug being inexpensive and easy to produce.

- **Heroin:** This illegal opioid is on the rise in the United

States and affects Americans of every gender, age group and income level.

ADDICTIVE PROPERTIES

The National Institute on Drug Abuse suggests opioids are so addictive because they change the way nerve cells work in the brain. Even taking a prescription opioid as directed by a doctor can create a dependency in these cells and create withdrawal symptoms when the drugs are no longer being consumed.

If you are prescribed this type of drug, work with your doctor to ensure you are not

becoming dependent. Your health care professional can teach you how to stop taking your prescription while lessening the risk of unpleasant feelings and reactions.

By taking a prescription improperly, or abusing illegal types of opioids, you are risking sedation in dangerous situations, an increased tolerance or even accidental overdose that can lead to death.

PAIN MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Before accepting an opioid prescription from your doctor, ask if there are any alternatives to help manage your

pain.

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, the following methods can be effective in those concerned with the risk of addiction.

- **Biofeedback:** A method used to teach people how to understand cues that cause discomfort. It's useful to become aware of symptoms and how to control them.

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy:** CBT is a psychological treatment that helps reduce pain and depression by controlling perceptions of pain in patients and learning to adapt to symptoms.

Who Was Enrique Camarena?

Enrique “Kiki” Camarena was a special agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration. He gave his life attempting to take down one of Mexico’s largest marijuana and cocaine distributors, trafficking to the United States.

His death opened America’s eyes on the drug epidemic in America and helped inspire the National Red Ribbon Campaign.

EARLY YEARS

Camarena was born July 26, 1947, in the small town of Mexicali in Baja, Calif. He would later graduate high school in Calexico, Calif., before joining the United States Marine Corps. in 1968.

Kiki Camarena proved to be a vital part in his community after his stint in the military by becoming a fireman and later a police officer in the town he grew up in.

He proved great worth to his department and would later be promoted to a Narcotics Investigator in Imperial County. It was 1974 when he became a special agent for the DEA and committed himself to lessening the drug problems in America.

His mother even tried to talk him out of this position because she feared for his safety.

Camarena was so concerned about the problem he is quoted as telling her, “Even if I’m only one person, I can make a difference.”

During his life and death, he did just that.

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

According to the DEA, Camarena was extremely close to

exposing a multibillion-dollar drug pipeline at the time of his abduction. On Feb. 7, 1985, he was kid-napped while on his way to lunch with his wife.



Enrique “Kiki” Camarena

Nearly a month later, on March 5, 1985, his body was discovered in Mexico. His murder was

administered by the same traffickers he was trying to dissolve.

Camarena gave his life in the fight against drugs and America acknowledged his efforts by displaying red ribbons in honor of his sacrifice.

HIS IMPACT ON RED RIBBON WEEK

In 1985, Camarena’s hometown of Calexico, Calif., began celebrating Red Ribbon Week to show their appreciation to him and his efforts in enhancing awareness of the American drug epidemic. It wasn’t long before the movement gained momentum and national exposure.

In 1988, the event was nationally recognized as Ronald and Nancy Reagan served as Red Ribbon Week honorary chairpersons.



Youth Drug Prevention

Teaching young people about the risks of drug use is crucial to promoting successful futures and wellbeing. Youth are often exposed to dangerous behaviors from their peers and sometimes believe they must participate to fit in. As a parent or mentor, it's important to set a good example and educate the young people in your life.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016 showed the largest decline in illicit drug use in American eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders. This encouraging data is largely due to programs like the Red Ribbon Campaign, which educates parents and children about the risks of drug usage.

Experts hope these levels will continue their decline for 2017. You can help by understanding the risks and knowing how to address the topic of drug use with the children in your life.

TALKING ABOUT DRUGS

While the topic may be uncomfortable, it is necessary to introduce your child to the negative effects drugs can have on their futures. The American Academy of Pediatrics has some great advice on approaching the subject:

- **Leaving NO Doubt:** The children in your life must be aware of the firmness of your stance about a drug-free lifestyle.

- **Be affectionate:** Let your children know that you don't want drugs in their life because you love them and don't want to see them cause harm to their lives or future.

- **Be emotional:** Explaining to your children that drug use would make you feel disappointed can make a big emotional impact if they're considering trying drugs.

- **Explain consequences:** Share the strict consequences if drug usage were to occur.

EXPLAINING RISKS

Besides bringing up the conse-



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quences that await your child if they do drugs, they should also know the risks of their physical and emotional health.

According to the NIDA, drug and alcohol usage accounts for 570,000

annual deaths in America. Young people who abuse drugs are at risk of perishing in a traffic accident or overdose.

They also are more prone to developing life-threatening diseases after

participating in unsafe sex and other risky behaviors.

Mental health risks also are enhanced by drug usage at a young age. It can even hinder developmental progress.

Teachers' Impact

Being a teacher provides the opportunity to educate children about drug awareness.

This unique role allows teachers to help America's youth make healthy decisions for their health and futures.

Take advantage of Red Ribbon Week to create fun lessons that will stick with the youth when a decision about drug use arrives.

The week of Oct. 23-31 marks the national celebration of Red Ribbon Week. As an educator, prepare your curriculum to include important facts about the risks of drug use and the benefits of avoiding them.

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO EXCITE YOUNG ADULTS

A great way to reach most of your student body is by posting drug-free messages throughout social media. It is likely that your students are engaged in Facebook, Twitter or other community-based media sites.

Take advantage of this by spreading the message and encouraging feedback from your students.

The Red Ribbon Campaign suggests the following sample posts to get everyone involved in the campaign:

- Today, I'm honoring Kiki Camarena, a DEA agent who died while fighting substance abuse. Join me in celebrating



Red Ribbon Week 2017.

- I'm a teacher who believes in a drug-free future for my students. Join me in celebrating Red Ribbon Week.

- It's Red Ribbon Week, and I am taking a stand against drugs. Join me.

These examples are meant to pique the interest of youth and get them involved in the movement.

GET THE WHOLE SCHOOL ON BOARD

If your community features both a high school and middle school, you have a great opportunity to get the whole student body involved.

Encourage older students to set an example for younger children by creating a chain made of red construction paper. These links should

include the names of the high schoolers and their pledge to stay drug free. Sometimes, the best way to inspire the younger generation is by following the advice from their older role models.

THEME WEEK

Plan a fun theme for each day of Red Ribbon Week. Here are some practical and creative

ideas from Redribbon.org:

Monday — Wear Red Day
Tuesday — Put a Cap on Drugs Day (hat day)

Wednesday — Put a Sock on Drugs Day (sock day)

Thursday — Be on a Drug-Free Team Day (Wear your favorite team's jersey)

Friday — Shade Out Drugs Day (wear sunglasses)

Drugs in America



America's drug problem is a real issue affecting people of all ages, ethnicities and income levels. With education and proactive measures, you can do your part in lowering its impact.

By understanding these startling facts from the Addiction Center, you will realize how important supporting causes like the Red Ribbon Campaign truly is.

- Over 200 million Americans over the age of 12 have an addiction, excluding tobacco.
- 2.6 million people with addictions have a dependence on both alcohol and illicit drugs.
- Over 90 percent of

Americans with an addiction began drinking, smoking or using illicit drugs before they turned 18.

- On average, 7,000 people try marijuana for the first time, every day. It is the most commonly used illicit drug Americans begin using.
- Of the 2.6 million people who tried marijuana for the first time, more than half were under 18.
- In addition to alcohol,

cocaine is the most common drug involved in alcohol-related emergency room visits.

- 80 percent of new hepatitis C infections occur among those who use drugs intravenously, such as heroin users.
- Nearly half of heroin users reportedly started abusing prescription pain killers before attempting heroin.
- Three out of every four overdoses caused by painkillers are caused by prescription

medications.

- Only 17 percent of prescription drug abusers were prescribed the medication. The rest obtained it from friends or family members.
- Studies show that methamphetamines release nearly four times as much dopamine as cocaine, making it much more addictive.
- 6.8 million Americans with an addiction also have a mental health illness.