



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 23, 2009
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DHS recognizes Red Ribbon Week

The Oregon Department of Human Services Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) division invites all Oregonians to take a stand against drugs by recognizing Red Ribbon Week from October 23-31, 2009.

Red Ribbon Week raises awareness of drug use and the problems it causes in communities across the state. It is also a time to encourage parents, educators, business owners and other community organizations to promote drug-free lifestyles.

“In the spirit of Red Ribbon Week, we would like to thank schools and county prevention coordinators for all their hard work in reducing alcohol and drug use among Oregon’s middle school youth,” said Rick Cady, AMH Prevention Manager.

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Red Ribbon Week

Cantu-Schomus

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The recently released 2008 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey shows three consecutive years of reductions in the use of drugs and alcohol among Oregon's 8th graders. In 81 schools surveyed throughout the state, 70 percent or more of the students were free from alcohol and drug use in the previous 30 days.

“While recent trends are going in the right direction there is still a serious need for more prevention in our communities. Substance abuse costs Oregon nearly \$6 billion a year or about \$1,600 per person,” said Cady. “We can do better.”

Red Ribbon Week was inspired by the death of one man. In 1985, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Enrique S. “Kiki” Camarena was killed by drug traffickers. Shortly after Camarena's death neighbors from his hometown began wearing red ribbons to remember him and commemorate his sacrifice. Congress established Red Ribbon Week in 1988 in honor of Camarena's sacrifice with hopes of preventing drug use nationwide.

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