

Red Ribbon Week 2010

Many wear Red Ribbons during the last week of October. But do you know why? The Red Ribbon Week campaign is probably the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the country. Yet, few know the story behind the campaign.

So, consider this Red Ribbon Week Basics. In 1985, Drug Enforcement Agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena was kidnapped and murdered. He had been brutally tortured. The 11-year agent was on the trail of one of Mexico’s biggest drug suppliers and close to unlocking a multi-million pipeline to this country. Then, his body was found. His death made national headlines exposing the international impact of drugs and the dangers of drugs.

Shortly after his death one of Camarena’s friends in California started “Camarena’s Club”, where hundreds pledged to be drug-free in Agent Camarena’s own commitment and memory. The pledges were presented to First Lady Nancy Reagan at a national parent’s conference focused on eliminating youth drug use. Soon, many affiliated with California’s state parent organizations began wearing red ribbons during the last week of October; the ribbons are symbols of a commitment to remain drug-free, honoring Agent Camarena. In just three years, 1988, the concept became a national campaign and it continues to grow.

In the coming week, Red Ribbons will be out in force nationwide and, we hope, right here in Lorain County. Communities That Care of Lorain County supports the effort. We have delivered thousands of red ribbons to educators who will distribute them to youth. We invite you to get your own and wear them proudly. **You can pick them up during Red Ribbon Week at the coalition’s Open House next Tuesday, October 26. The Open House will be held from 4:30-7 p.m. at the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board Offices at 4950 Oberlin Avenue in Lorain.** We’re unveiling our new Resource Library where you’ll find red ribbons and prevention information. Whether you’re an educator, youth, community leader, prevention professional or employer you’ll find something worthwhile.

The material and ribbons are free; what is priceless is your commitment to Lorain County. **So, come for the Open House and stay for the Community Meeting that will run from 6:30-8 p.m.** You’ll learn about the coalition’s efforts to prevent and reduce underage substance abuse. And, like Kiki Camarena, you can take a personal stand to combat drug use. It can be as simple as wearing a red ribbon.

So, we look forward to seeing you. If you can’t make it to the coalition Open House and Community Meeting and you’d still like Red Ribbons, contact Catherine Gabe, coalition coordinator, at cgabe@lorainadas.org or by calling 440-282-9920.