RED RIBBON WEEK FACT SHEET

LIVING DRUG FREE

RED RIBBON WEEK

OCTOBER 23-31

REMEMBERING SPECIAL AGENT ENRIQUE "KIKI" CAMARENA

Red Ribbon Week is the Nation's oldest and largest drug prevention program, reaching millions of Americans during the last week of October every year. Red Ribbon Week is celebrated annually October 23-31. By wearing red ribbons and participating in community anti-drug events, young people pledge to live a drug-free lifestyle and pay tribute to DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena.

SPECIAL AGENT KIKI CAMARENA:

- Special Agent Camarena was an 11-year DEA veteran assigned to the Guadalajara, Mexico, office, where he was on the trail of the country's biggest marijuana and cocaine traffickers. In 1985, he was extremely close to unlocking a multi-billion dollar drug pipeline.
- On February 7, 1985, he was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered by Mexican drug traffickers. His tragic death opened the eyes of many Americans to the dangers of drugs and the international scope of the drug trade.

HISTORY OF RED RIBBON WEEK:

- Shortly after Kiki's death, Congressman Duncan Hunter and Kiki's high school friend Henry Lozano launched "Camarena Clubs" in Kiki's hometown of Calexico, California. Hundreds of club members pledged to lead drug-free lives to honor the sacrifice made by Kiki Camarena.
- These pledges were delivered to First Lady Nancy Reagan at a national conference of parents combating youth drug use. Several state parent organizations then called on community groups to wear red ribbons during the last week of October as a symbol of their drug-free commitment.
- The first Red Ribbon Week celebrations were held in La Mirada and Norwalk, California.
- In 1988, the National Family Partnership coordinated the first National Red Ribbon Week, with President and Mrs. Reagan serving as honorary chairpersons.

HOW TO CELEBRATE RED RIBBON WEEK:

- The National Family Partnership estimates that more than 80 million people participate in Red Ribbon events each year.
- Red Ribbon Week educates individuals, families, and communities on the destructive effects of alcohol and drugs and encourages the adoption of healthy lifestyle choices.
- The campaign is a unified way for communities to take a stand against drugs and show intolerance for illicit drug use and the consequences to all Americans.
- Wearing a red ribbon during the last week of October has come to symbolize zero tolerance for alcohol, drug, and tobacco use and a commitment to substance abuse prevention.
- Schools, businesses, the faith community, media, families, and community coalitions join together to celebrate Red Ribbon Week in many ways, such as: sponsoring essay and poster contests; organizing drug-free races; decorating buildings in red; handing out red ribbons to customers; holding parades or community events; and publicizing the value of a drug-free, healthy lifestyle.
- DEA joins with community coalitions and prevention groups to plan and carry out Red Ribbon Week activities, ranging from classroom events to stadium-sized rallies.