

For Immediate Release  
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### **A Red Ribbon—the Symbol of Education, Courage, and Recovery of Substance Abuse**

Long before the ribbon became the symbol for every cause across America, the Red Ribbon Week Campaign used it as a symbol of **education, courage, and recovery**.

Red Ribbon Week started in a small town, after one of their local heroes, Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent, was murdered in the line of duty. His legacy has come to represent the belief that one person CAN make a difference in the fight against drugs. Red Ribbon Week was established by Congress in 1988 to encourage other communities to stand up to drugs, just as Kiki did. Every year, during the last week in October, communities across America celebrate substance abuse prevention efforts.

They wanted to **educate** people about the risky behaviors of substance abuse—whether it be marijuana use, binge drinking, meth use, or underage alcohol consumption. While a person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, a multitude of problems can arise—fights, domestic abuse, accidents, STDs, unplanned pregnancies, brain damage and legal troubles, just to name a few. The Red Ribbon Campaign has opened the door to communicate with others, to share the hurt substance abuse can cause.

They wanted to give people the **courage** to stand up to the “wrongs” of substance abuse. Communities need to set a standard of “no tolerance.” Allowing minors to consume alcohol, for instance, only sends the wrong message. If every community member pledges to the prevention of substance abuse and stopping current use, we would not have to deal with the problems after the fact—committing someone to treatment, having to fire an employee for coming to work drunk, or mourning a young person who overdosed.

They also want others to know that **recovery** is available and help is here. If you or someone you know has been involved in abusing substances, every community has treatment options. Groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, are available to get a person back on the path to sobriety, back to a more meaningful life, free of the artificial highs.

The Red Ribbon Week campaign simply encourages a drug-free lifestyle and involvement in drug prevention efforts. Won't you join us? For more information on local efforts to reduce substance abuse, contact Lynne Zoulek at 641-224-2271, or visit [www.kcstaar.org](http://www.kcstaar.org). For more information about red ribbon week and other prevention and recovery resources, visit [www.drugfreeinfo.org](http://www.drugfreeinfo.org).