



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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### Red Ribbon Week Scheduled

**Western Nebraska.** *October 21, 2014.* Local Red Ribbon Week committees will kick-off another year of activities designed to educate children and parents about the dangers of drug use. Last year Region 1 Behavioral Services provided Red Ribbon Supplies to nearly 50 schools in the Panhandle. Red Ribbon Week occurs in communities all over the nation and will be held in the Panhandle October 23-31, 2014.

According to the Panhandle Prevention Coalition, the health, legal and social consequences of underage alcohol, tobacco, and drug use cannot be ignored. Such activities have a direct correlation to:

- School problems, such as a higher absence rate and poor or failing grades.
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities.
- Unwanted, unplanned and unprotected sexual activity.
- Physical and sexual assault.
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide.
- Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning.
- Memory problems.
- Abuse of other drugs.
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects.
- Death from alcohol poisoning.

Locally, Red Ribbon Week is organized by countless volunteers from many different walks-of-life, including school officials, parents, non-profit agencies, elected officials, law enforcement, business owners, medical professionals, grandparents and many more. All share a commitment to educate children about the dangers of drug use and guide them to the choice of a drug-free lifestyle.

The community is encouraged to support Red Ribbon Week through active participation October 23-31. For more information about activities scheduled in your community, call Region 1 Behavioral Health Authority at 308.762.2545 or visit the Panhandle Prevention Coalition at

[www.panhandlepreventioncoalition.org](http://www.panhandlepreventioncoalition.org) on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/panhandlepreventioncoalition> or follow us on twitter @ItBeginsWithYou

What parents can do to reinforce prevention at home.

- Seize opportunities- Create opportunities to teach them about the dangers and consequences of underage drinking, and provide them with the tools necessary to say no to alcohol and drugs.
- Talk, don't lecture.- Listen without interruption. Use the moment to educate and instill confidence.
- Speak their language. – Join them on social media and use these mediums to send messages to her or locate videos about the effects of underage drinking.
- Be aware of their world and ever present in it. – Know his friends and friend's parents. Spend time listening, reading and watching what he does.
- Define your expectations. – Make sure your teen understands that alcohol and drug use is illegal, harmful and unsafe and most importantly that you have an expectation for him to be drug-free.

Parental influence is the #1 reason teens don't drink.

### **History of Red Ribbon Week**

Red Ribbon Week was founded 29 years ago after the death of Enrique Camarena, an agent with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration working undercover in Mexico to expose a drug cartel which was believed to include government officials. Camarena was killed as a result of the investigation.

Following Camarena's death in 1985, Congressman Duncan Hunter and Camarena's high school friend, Henry Lozano, launched Camarena Clubs in Camarena's home state of California. Hundreds of club members pledged to lead drug-free lives to honor the sacrifices made by Camarena and others who took a stand against drugs in America. They wore red badges and ribbons to symbolize their support. From this, the national Red Ribbon Week campaign emerged to what is now the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the United States.

Red Ribbon Week today is a United States initiative for the education and prevention of drugs, tobacco and alcohol abuse. During the last week of October each year, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, community groups and organizations focus their attention on the celebration of a drug-free life.

### **About the Panhandle Prevention Coalition**

The PPC is a part of the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services and is comprised of local community coalitions and a regional coalition united together by a passion and dedication to healthy and safe people across the lifespan. The PPC is supported in whole or part, by federal or state funds received from Region 1 Behavioral Health Authority, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), including Grant #93.243 under the Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success Grant. The PPC is also supported by the Tobacco Free Nebraska Program as a result of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

Our efforts include, but are not limited to, reducing underage drinking, binge drinking and drinking and driving in the Nebraska Panhandle. We do this by

- Seeking policy change at the local and state levels to reduce youth access to alcohol.
- Collaborating with law enforcement to facilitate, fund and standardize compliance checks, beverage server training, and sobriety checks.
- Educating and generating awareness about the dangers of substance abuse and consequences of minors in possession (MIPs) and buying/providing alcohol to minors.

Our community partners include concerned parents, health care workers, law enforcement, social service professionals, community leaders, elected officials, educators, business owners, volunteers and citizens both locally and statewide who seek safe communities for our children and families to live and grow.

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