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Contact: Garrison Courtney

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DEA Kicks-Off Red Ribbon Campaign

Thousands of events to be held throughout the U.S. this month

OCT 14 -- (Washington, D.C.) – The Drug Enforcement Administration will officially kick-off the National Red Ribbon Campaign on Wednesday, October 15th in a ceremony at its headquarters in Arlington, Va.

The National Red Ribbon Campaign, which is the nation's largest drug prevention effort, began after drug traffickers in Mexico tortured and brutally murdered Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena in March 1985. Officially, Red Ribbon Week will be celebrated nationally from October 24-31; however, several communities and school districts hold events throughout the month.

The Red Ribbon Campaign is dedicated to helping to preserve Special Agent Camarena's memory and further the cause for which he gave his life, the fight against the violence of drug crime and the misery of addiction. By gathering together in special events and wearing a Red Ribbon during the last week in October, Americans from all walks of life demonstrate their opposition to drugs.

"Red Ribbon Week honors one of DEA's bravest agents, Kiki Camarena, who made the ultimate sacrifice fighting drugs. The news of his death touched the nation 23 years ago, and today, an entire generation of kids born well after Kiki's death wear red ribbons and sign pledges to remain drug-free," said DEA Acting Administrator Michele M. Leonhart. "DEA will continue doing all we can to take drug traffickers out of our communities, and we are so proud when we see millions of young people across America join us in taking a stand against drugs."

Red Ribbon week started as a local effort in Camarena's hometown of Calexico, California when Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Camarena's high school friend, Henry Lozano, created Camarena Clubs to ensure fond memories of Kiki. The National Family Partnership (NFP) created a national campaign of observance, an eight-day event proclaimed by the U.S. Congress and chaired by then President and Mrs. Reagan. Approximately 80 million people participate in Red Ribbon events every year.

For news about events scheduled in your areas, please check the web at [www.dea.gov](#) or contact your local DEA Office.

For any further information, contact the DEA Office of Public Affairs in Washington, DC at 202-307-7977.



Dr. Stephen Sroka, keynote speaker at the DEA Red Ribbon Rally, energizes the audience with his energy talk about the "Power of One."



NBC's Justice Correspondent Pete Williams served as the emcee for the Red Ribbon Week kick-off at DEA headquarters.