



Charleston AFB plans Red Ribbon activities:

■ Millennium Calendar Contest, "A New Millennium without Drugs!" for ages 5–12, deadline to enter is Nov. 2. For more info contact the Drug Demand Reduction at 963-6849.

■ Anti-drug magic show, "Never give up!" will be performed by Midyette Magic at Lambs Elementary School Nov. 4. For more information, call the Drug Demand Reduction at 963-6849.

■ Halloween night, individuals will pass out anti-drug material to Charleston AFB Trick-or-Treaters.

■ The Youth Center is sponsoring a base wide Halloween Party Oct. 29 and 30. Stop by for face painting, pumpkin games, Straight Walk and refreshments. Three different times are scheduled. For information, call the Youth Center at 963-5684.

■ Dorchester County is sponsoring its 9th Annual Red Ribbon Festival Sunday from 1-4:30 p.m. at Azalea Park. Activities include lots of fun and games and educational displays. (Submitted by Staff Sgt. John West, ADAPT Program)

DoD leads by example during Red Ribbon Week

By Staff Sgt. Kathleen T. Rhem, USA
American Forces Press Service

One of the most important roles service members play in the fight against drugs is as leaders in their communities, Ana Maria Salazar said.

This is the message Salazar, deputy assistant secretary of defense for drug enforcement policy and support, hopes to send to service members during DoD's ninth annual Red Ribbon Week observance Oct. 18-22. The theme for this year's observance is "Leading by Example."

Salazar said Red Ribbon Week gives service members "an excellent excuse" to highlight drug abuse-prevention programs. "It gives you a reason to talk to your family about drugs, to talk to your children about how damaging drugs can be, and to encourage those around you to follow a drug-free lifestyle," she said.

"Red Ribbon Week Celebration originated to honor the work and memory of Drug Enforcement Agent Enrique Camarena who was murdered by drug traffickers in 1985," said Deborah Wheeler, Charleston AFB Drug Demand Reduction Program. "The Red Ribbon Celebration has become the annual catalyst to show no tolerance for drugs in our schools, work places and communities."

The benefits of Red Ribbon Week are extensive according to Wheeler. "It is a tool for involving all parts of the community in the process of prevention. It is to raise awareness by presenting a unified and visible commitment toward the creation of drug free community."

"Youth realize that many people are supporting them in a drug free lifestyle when they see the red ribbons displayed by

people around them. They realize not as many people use alcohol and other illegal drugs as they thought," Wheeler added.

Drug use within the military has been a readiness issue for decades, Salazar said. She explained that at the height of the Vietnam Conflict there was quite a bit of concern over increasing drug use among the troops.

Then, in May 1981, an accident aboard the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier killed 14 and injured 48 sailors, destroyed seven planes and damaged 11 others. The ensuing investigation revealed drug use might have compounded the problem. Six of those killed had traces of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, in their bodies.

DoD had tested service members before, but the Nimitz accident put new impetus into the effort. Today DoD deters drug use among its military members through an energetic testing program. In 1999, DoD has tested about 2.7 million urine samples for drugs, at a cost of \$26 million.

Not only does this catch those actually using drugs, Salazar said the high testing rate has a deterrent effect as well. Less than 1 percent of service members tested come up positive.

Active duty personnel have been authorized to display a Red Ribbon on the right breast pocket of the battle dress uniform shirt, under the name tag for those in blues, and under the command patch for those in flight suits.

**Safety is the first consideration when wearing ribbons (don't wear on the flight line, etc.).