

What is Red Ribbon Week and what does the ribbon signify?

Each year, individuals, schools and communities across the United States show their commitment to a healthy, drug-free lifestyle by wearing or displaying the red ribbon. Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 21 to 31, raises awareness of drug use and the problems related to drugs faced by individuals, families, and communities. This annual health observance encourages parents, educators, business owners, and other community organizations to promote drug-free lifestyles.

Red Ribbon Week started more than three decades ago, following the death of Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration who was killed by drug traffickers. Shortly after Special Agent Camarena’s death, citizens from his hometown of Calexico, California, began wearing red ribbons to remember him and commemorate his sacrifice.

The first official Red Ribbon Week celebration was created by the National Family Partnership in 1988. Today, NFP continues to coordinate the campaign for families, schools and communities across the nation each year. Since then, the red ribbon has symbolized a continuing commitment to reducing the demand for illicit drugs in our nation’s communities. Red Ribbon Week offers an opportunity for parents, teachers, educators and community organizations to raise awareness of the problem of drug misuse.

Residents are asked to celebrate Red Ribbon Week and show a commitment to a healthy, drug-free lifestyle by wearing or displaying a red ribbon or red lights. Light up a home or business in red, tie a red ribbon to a tree, mailbox, front door or porch. ITAC will be providing free ribbons at a location to be decided in early October. Businesses have also

committed to shining red during this week.

