

NEWS



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Orange County Executive

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For Immediate Release

10-27-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

This week it was my privilege to be a part of the Red Ribbon Week kick-off pep rally at Warwick Middle School. Decked out in red to show their support, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students, faculty, administrators, and guests gathered in the gym for this event coordinated by the Orange County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (ADAC). Together, we sent a message that drugs and alcohol have no place in our schools.

Red Ribbon Week is a national recognition event founded in honor of Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, a United States Drug Enforcement Agent that was killed by Mexican drug traffickers in 1985. Agent Camarena devoted his life to fighting illegal drugs and believed that one person could make a difference. His death served as a reminder that it is the responsibility of each of us to make a visible commitment to wiping out drug abuse from our homes, schools, and communities.

Through Red Ribbon Week we work to bring Agent Camarena's message of hope, inspiration, and encouragement to people of all ages throughout our community. Red ribbons are worn by young people, as well as adults, to show a commitment to living a healthy, drug-free life. This year's Red Ribbon week theme is "It's up to me to be drug free." This important message reminds each of us that we have a choice. I encouraged the students at Warwick Middle School to make the smart choice – to exercise their right to be drug free, stay healthy and fit, and stay in school. Education is the key that will open a world of opportunities for young people.

I also reminded the students that it is their job to be a good friend. If they have a friend who they fear is struggling with drugs, alcohol, or other issues, they need to talk with the friend, talk to a trusted adult, or bring the friend to speak with that adult. It's critical for young people to understand that when it comes to something as serious as drugs and alcohol, it's not tattling – it's about being a good friend.

Speaking of good friends, this week we wish a happy retirement to Mr. Matt Schleifer, a very good friend of Orange County Government. A dedicated and devoted public servant, Matt worked 21 years for the State of New York, and spent the last 42 years at the Orange County Department of Health. As Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Health, Matt has worked to ensure our health and safety are protected at restaurants, camps, and hotels, among other places, and that our public water supplies are clean and drinkable. Thank you Matt for your many years of service; we are very grateful for your outstanding commitment to the people of Orange County. We wish you the very best for a happy and healthy retirement.

Until next week,

Edward A. Diana, County Executive