

## Campaign is important in the fight against drug abuse

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### Photos submitted by CAASA

#### To the Editor:

There are many awareness campaigns but none more popular than National Red Ribbon Week (RRW), which is October 23-31. Promoted nationwide, the campaign focuses on educating everyone to the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.

The Red Ribbon Campaign® was started when drug traffickers in Mexico City murdered DEA Agent Kiki Camarena in 1985. At his funeral family and friends wore red ribbons and this began the continuing tradition of displaying Red Ribbons as a symbol of intolerance towards the use of drugs. The mission of the Red Ribbon Campaign® is to present a unified and visible commitment towards the creation of a Drug Free America (National Family Partnership, <http://nfp.org>).

In Calvert County, we kicked off Red Ribbon Week Oct.10 by hosting the Harvest Youth Rally at Serenity Farm (pictured above). This event featured youth focused activities and a kick-ball tournament. The campaign will continue during the week of October 23-31, as Calvert County Neighborhood Watch communities will post red ribbons on community signs and churches will distribute red ribbons to their congregations. However, the most popular activities are those implemented in the schools. With themes like "sock it to drugs" and "I'm too busy for drugs" to guest speakers and poster contests, everyone is encouraged to participate in Red Ribbon Week.

For the past 10 years, CAASA has promoted the "Plant the Promise" initiative during Red Ribbon Week. Providing red tulip bulbs for planting by students, the activity promotes teamwork and come spring a reminder of the importance of a drug-free life.

We encourage families to use Red Ribbon Week as a teachable moment. It's the perfect opportunity to talk with your children about alcohol and other drug abuse. As parents/family, we have far more influence than we think and talking honestly about alcohol and drugs can have a real impact. In fact, research has shown that kids who have conversations with their parents and learn a lot about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are 50 percent less likely to use alcohol and drugs than those who don't have such conversations (National Council on Drug).

Don't let the opportunity slip away. Participate in Red Ribbon Week by encouraging a family conversation about the dangers of alcohol and other drug abuse.

**Debbi Mister, President**  
**CAASA Board of Directors**

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