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Church of Scientology Sponsors Red Ribbon Week Forum on Strategies to Reduce Drug Demand

Washington, D.C.—Honoring Red Ribbon Week and its message of prevention and education, The Church of Scientology National Affairs Office in Washington, D.C. co-hosted the first annual anti-drug forum of the Foundation for a Drug-Free World on October 22.

Held in Chestnut Hall in the new National Affairs Office in Fraser Mansion at Dupont Circle, the forum focused on effective strategies to reduce the demand for illicit drugs. It was chaired by Jesse Morrow, Social Reform Director of the Church of Scientology National Affairs Office.

Red Ribbon week is a national drug prevention and education week, held in the last week of October each year to honor the memory of DEA agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, who was tortured and killed in 1985 by drug traffickers while working undercover in Mexico. October is also National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, as designated in 2011 by President Obama.

The panel featured John Redman, Executive Director of Californians for Drug-Free Youth (CADFY), the group that created the first statewide Red Ribbon Week Campaign in 1985; Peggy Sapp, President of the National Family Partnership (NFP), the organization that initiated the first national Red Ribbon Week and sponsors the campaign; Courtney Bennett, Community Organizer for Wards 5 & 6 of the DC Prevention Center; and Imani Walker, Executive Director of the Rebecca Project for Human Rights.

The consequences of drug abuse affect everyone at all levels of society, whether or not they or their friends or families are directly involved. For example, drug abuse kills more than 37,000 Americans each year, more than the number of annual traffic fatalities. Teen deaths from drugs doubled in the first decade of this century. This year, the National Drug Control Policy Office reported that illicit drug use in America contributed to \$193 billion in crime, health-related costs and lost productivity.

In his presentation, Redman pointed out that much of the public discourse on legalization misrepresents the issue. He debunked myths that promote drugs as harmless, showing they are far more potent now than in the 1960s and 1970s.

Bennet's presentation concerned synthetic marijuana, far stronger and more dangerous than marijuana. She covered its accessibility, the alarming effects of its use and its increased popularity among D.C. youth.

"Any successful drug prevention endeavor must include factual drug education at its base to empower individuals with the knowledge to decide for themselves," said Morrow, "Once they have that knowledge, they make the right choice."

The Church of Scientology National Affairs Office, opened Sept 12, 2012, at Fraser Mansion at Dupont Circle, was established to promote solutions to society's greatest challenges. The historic building is configured to host a wide range of functions, from human rights symposiums and drug education workshops to panel discussions, press conferences and awards ceremonies.

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Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote, "The planet has hit a barrier which prevents any widespread social progress—drugs and other biochemical substances. These can put people into a condition which not only prohibits and destroys physical health but which can prevent any stable advancement in mental or spiritual well-being."

The Church of Scientology sponsors one of the world's largest nongovernmental drug education and prevention campaigns. It has been conclusively proven that when young people are provided with the truth about drugs—factual information on what drugs are and what they do—usage rates drop commensurately.



John Redman, Executive Director of Californians for Drug-Free Youth (CADFY), at the first annual anti-drug forum of the Foundation for a Drug-Free World October 22 at the Church of Scientology National Affairs Office in Washington, D.C.



Jesse Morrow, Social Reform Director of the Church of Scientology National Affairs Office in Washington, D.C., introduces those attending the first annual anti-drug forum of the Truth About Drugs drug education and prevention materials.