

# Young Marines youth organization announces the Enrique 'Kiki' Camarena Division Awards program with DEA

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 18, 2012 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Young Marines youth organization and the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Demand Reduction Program have announced the Young Marines Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Division Awards program. The awards program highlights the exceptional efforts the youth membership of the Young Marines are doing throughout the nation to educate other youths to live and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle in their communities through drug demand reduction efforts. Drug demand reduction is reducing the demand for drugs through education.

As both organizations worked on developing criteria for the award, Drug Demand Deduction Resource Officer for the Young Marines, Joe Lusignan and the leadership of the Young Marines national organization suggested the award be name the Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Division award in honor of DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. Special Agent Camarena was a Marine and in whose honor Red Ribbon Week is celebrated in communities across the nation in October annually. Lusignan says building a relationship with the DEA is a "plus" for our program and the DEA's Demand Reduction Program.

"They are on the front line in our war against drugs and the scourge that influences all aspects of our society in a negative way," says Lusignan. "We respect that they take the fight to the enemy (drugs), and for them to encourage and work with our youth, validates what we do and the positive, drug free life we encourage our future leaders to live."

National Executive Director of the Young Marines, Mike Kessler says the Young Marines organization's recent work with the Drug Enforcement Administration has been a long time coming. "We are really excited. Our organization has embraced Red Ribbon Week for many years and were the first recipients of the Defense Department's Fulcrum Shield Award which recognizes the best youth programs for excellence in youth drug demand reduction," Kessler said. "We are pleased to continue to share our drug demand reduction education work with the DEA."

The DEA's Demand Reduction Program will select and present one Young Marines unit from each of the six divisions as recipients of the Enrique "Kiki" Camarena award on an annual basis for their hard work in the area of Drug Demand Education.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is a law enforcement agency; however, they also work to reduce the demand for drugs through the agency's Demand Reduction Program. Through the Demand Reduction Program, they educate the public about the dangers associated with using illegal drugs and increase their awareness about emerging drug trends, such as synthetics like K2/Spice and bath salts.

Tammy Simpson, Drug Prevention Program Manager, Demand Reduction Section, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs says the Deputy Chief of DEA's Demand Reduction Programs Eric Akers was so impressed with how much education and awareness that the Young Marines were doing during Red Ribbon Week and throughout the year promoting the anti-drug message their office wanted to bring recognition to the Young Marines organization's good work.

"It is so gratifying to see the Young Marines involved in community efforts like planning their own regional training, or participating in DEA's National Take Back Day," says Simpson. "The Young Marines organization definitely stands out for spreading the anti-drug message and for the positive impact that they are having on their communities."

Simpson says the DEA's Demand Reduction Program's mission aligns with what the Young Marines units are doing nationwide to promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. "We have to let our youth know how dangerous drugs are to their health and the best messenger for this is their peers. The Young Marines can get this message across in ways that adults can't – and they are the best role models for living healthy, happy, drug-free lives."

The DEA presented the first Young Marines Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Division Awards to the Shenandoah Valley (VA) and Tehama Valley (CA) units. The awards program will be expanded to all six Young Marines divisions in 2013.

**About the Young Marines youth organization:**

The Young Marines is a national non-profit 501c(3) youth education and service program for boys and girls ages 8 through completion of high school. The program focuses on teaching the values of leadership, teamwork and self-discipline so its members can live and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. The national organization is comprised of over 10,000 youths and 2,800 adult volunteers in nearly 300 units across the United States.

The Young Marines official website: <http://www.YoungMarines.com/> . The organization's motto is, "Strengthening the lives of America's youth."

**About the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Demand Reduction Program:**

The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Demand Reduction Program is to support the agency's drug control mission by enhancing prevention efforts across the nation. DEA's Demand Reduction Program supports national efforts to reduce the demand for drugs by collaborating with federal, state and local governments, as well as prevention and treatment organizations, community coalitions, and youth serving organizations.

In addition, through the Demand Reduction Program, DEA educates the public about the dangers associated with using illegal drugs and increases awareness about substance abuse trends. The program has two websites – one for parents/caregivers, and educators called [www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com) – and one for teens called [www.justthinktwice.com](http://www.justthinktwice.com) – which are full of facts about drugs, resources, and information about where to find help.

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