



**Red Ribbon Week** is October 23-31, 2021. Over the years, **Red Ribbon Week** has evolved in how it raises awareness regarding the need for alcohol, tobacco and other drug and violence prevention, early intervention, and treatment services. It is the largest, most visible, youth prevention awareness campaign observed annually in the United States.

**Red Ribbon Week** inspires communities and individuals to take a stand in protecting, promoting and cultivating the hopes and dreams of all youth through a commitment to drug prevention and education and a personal commitment to live drug free lives.

As we know, there are a multitude of reasons and circumstances that may lead someone down the path of drug use and addiction. Poverty, boredom, bullying, grief, depression, other mental health concerns are only just a few.

Here are a few examples of what schools and communities can do to help take a more active role in drug prevention efforts:

- Provide programming and resources to youth and their families who might be struggling with emotional, behavioral and/or mental health concerns.
- Volunteer to clean up a park or a neighborhood/community center. Take it a step further and raise money to purchase new equipment and games to be used in these parks and centers.
- Host a weekly game night at your school, community center and/or neighborhood at no cost to families. Raise money to pay for food, prizes and giveaways each week.
- Start and/or enhance a buddy and/or mentoring program in your school or community. Hold a ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of the buddies, mentors and mentees.

- Raise money to help pay for registration fees and other costs associated with youth activities, including possible travel costs, in order to make them accessible to more youth.

In addition, each year the National Family Partnership (NFP) holds a contest that individuals, schools and communities can enter that helps determine what the national **Red Ribbon Week's** theme will be. There are thousands of Red Ribbon Week theme ideas submitted each year by students, parents, school personnel and communities all across the country. The winning theme for 2021 is "Drug Free Looks Like Me." Marin Wurst, a 7th grader at Solon Middle School located in Solon, Ohio, was the winner.

NFP noted the chosen theme describes perfectly how each of us can and do make a difference by doing our part in keeping our communities safe, healthy and Drug-Free.

Many schools choose to center their **Red Ribbon Week** around the national theme but it's okay for a school to develop their own theme for **Red Ribbon Week**. Schools might even hold their own separate contests related to Red Ribbon Week among staff, classes and or individuals, which often helps create enthusiasm for Red Ribbon Week.

While the 2021 theme winner has been decided for this year, the 2021 **Red Ribbon** Photo Contest has not yet begun. The entry period for the **Red Ribbon Week** Photo Contest is October 1-November 1, 2021. There are multiple categories that schools, families and/or individuals can enter. Take a photo of your **Red Ribbon Week** decorations and activities (preferably include people in the photos) and then upload it to [www.redribbon.org/contest-2021](http://www.redribbon.org/contest-2021). Please note, you must be 18 years old to enter so parents, or for school entries, school staff or PTA members, must submit the photos. All winners will be announced on December 2, 2021. For more information, please visit <https://www.redribbon.org/contest>

For more general information about drug prevention and drug prevention efforts, please visit our website at <https://scipnebraska.com/>

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