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Mary Taylor, Lieutenant Governor
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prevention Works! A Guide for Red Ribbon throughout the Year Released to Ohio Schools

COLUMBUS, Oct. 23, 2012 – During 2012 *National Substance Abuse Prevention Month*, Ohio’s authorities on healthy, drug free lifestyles have created and released to the web a toolkit titled, *Prevention Works! A Guide for Red Ribbon throughout the Year*, full of practical and easy-to-use messages and tools to help teachers deliver prevention-focused information to their students. The annual Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 23-31, 2012, is a great time for educators and school administrators to talk to young people about the risks of underage drinking, illicit drug use and prescription drug abuse, and to emphasize the importance of making healthy decisions.

The Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) partnered with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Drug Free Action Alliance to develop the toolkit and activity guide (web link below) to bring drug free messages into the classroom. The theme for Red Ribbon Week 2012 is “We are the Majority,” which drives home the fact with students that a majority of their peers are alcohol and drug free.

Orman Hall, ODADAS director, commented, “We hope educators will use the materials to spread a prevention message with children and teens. One of the most important factors in achieving student success in the classroom, and later in life, is a student’s ability to stay drug and alcohol free.”

The 2011 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey highlights the fact that most youth DO NOT use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs:

- 76.4% of high school students did NOT use marijuana in the past 30 days
- 78.9% of high school students did NOT smoke cigarettes in the past 30 days
- 62% of high school students did NOT drink alcohol in the past 30 days

Everyone has a role to play in prevention. Teachers, counselors and all school staff can make a difference when sharing evidence-based information and activities with students and their parents. Research from The Partnership at Drugfree.org suggests that teens who hear a lot about the dangers and consequences of alcohol and other drug use are *50 percent less likely* to experiment with substance abuse.

“Red Ribbon Week provides the opportunity for everyone to collectively start the conversation about substance abuse prevention,” said Marcie Seidel, executive director of Drug Free Action Alliance. “By continuing the conversation throughout the year, we can help prevent the initiation and use of substances that too often stands in the way of student success.”

The National Prevention Strategy from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration emphasizes that prevention should be woven into all aspects of our lives, and most importantly that everyone has a role in creating a healthier nation. While October is *Substance Abuse Prevention Month*, all day, every day is a good time for modeling healthy behaviors and for providing education on making good choices for Ohio’s children and young adults. To learn how, check out the toolkit and a new “We are the majority” video at: <https://www.drugfreeactionalliance.org/red-ribbon-history>.

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