

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SD Guard Counterdrug program promotes drug education through coloring contest

By Sgt. Rebecca Linder
196th MEB Unit Public Affairs Representative

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – Soldiers of the Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) team, South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program, along with other sponsors throughout the Sioux Falls area, hosted its first annual coloring contest billboard unveil event on Monday, Sept. 26.

The billboard, at the intersection of Russell Ave. and Westport Ave., supports the upcoming drug awareness Red Ribbon Week, which is the largest, most visible awareness campaign in the United States.

London Van Sickle, a fifth grade student at Journey Elementary in the Harrisburg school district, won the contest with a colorful, powerful message behind it.

“The dragon is destroying the drugs,” said Van Sickle, age 10. “I really think bad drugs, like cigarettes and stuff, are horrible and a waste of money. Red Ribbon week is about telling the whole world that drugs are bad and they can hurt people.”

The coloring contest, which ran from Aug. 1 through Sept. 16, was put on in order to bring more awareness about drugs and alcohol to elementary students throughout the region.

The theme, “Drugs don’t fly me” gave kindergarten through fifth grade students a chance to get creative in order to win several gifts donated by the sponsors, including a pizza party for the entire school donated by CiCi’s pizza.

“We wanted to bring awareness of Red Ribbon Week and its message to Sioux Falls and the surrounding communities,” said Staff Sgt. David Hughes, Drug Demand Reduction noncommissioned officer for the Counterdrug program. “We decided what better way to do that than a coloring contest for kids.”

“This event was definitely a success and we hope to continue year after year,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Hurney, DDR NCO. “Without the help of our partners – CiCi’s Pizza, Lamar Advertising, Sisson Printing, Results Radio and Lewis Drug – this event couldn’t have been possible; we couldn’t be happier with the way these organizations have come together with us to support a drug free community.”

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PHOTOS: High-resolution photos for this release are available upon request or at:
www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



110926-A-5816L-021: Ten-year old London Van Sickle, a student at Journey Elementary in the Harrisburg school district, poses for a picture in front of a billboard with his winning coloring contest drawing on it at the intersection of Russell Ave. and Westport Ave. in Sioux Falls, S.D., on Sept. 26, 2011. The Red Ribbon Week coloring contest was put on by the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program to bring more drug and alcohol awareness to elementary students in the area. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder) (RELEASED)



110926-A-5816L-027: Ten-year old London Van Sickle, a student at Journey Elementary in the Harrisburg school district, helps land an OH-58 helicopter flown by members of the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program, during the first annual Red Ribbon Week coloring contest billboard unveil event on Sept. 26, 2011, in front of a billboard with his winning drawing on it at the intersection of Russell Ave. and Westport Ave. in Sioux Falls, S.D. The contest was put on by the SDNG Counterdrug program to bring more drug and alcohol awareness to elementary students in the area. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder) (RELEASED)



110926-A-5816L-081: Ten-year old London Van Sickle, winner of the first annual Red Ribbon Week coloring contest, poses with members of the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program. From left: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Barry Sullivan, Sgt. Rebecca Linder, Staff Sgt. Shawn Jensen, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Seth Mendel, Staff Sgt. Matthew Hurney and Staff Sgt. David Hughes. The contest was put on by the SDNG Counterdrug program to bring more drug and alcohol awareness to elementary students in the area. (Photo by Kory Van Sickle) (RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Brendan Murphy at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail brendan.murphy1@us.army.mil.