

South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: pao@sd.ngb.army.mil

Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>

www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard

www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard



October 21, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SD Guard Counterdrug program receives Fulcrum Shield Award

By 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

WASHINGTON – The South Dakota National Guard’s Counterdrug program received the 2011 Fulcrum Shield Award during the 21st annual Secretary of Defense Red Ribbon Week Awards ceremony at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C., Thursday, Oct. 20, for their support of South Dakota’s Youth-to-Youth (Y2Y) program.

The Fulcrum Shield Award was created by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counter-Narcotics to recognize youth organizations affiliated with the military that have made recognizable strides in spreading the anti-drug message throughout their communities.

South Dakota Y2Y is a youth-led and adult-guided program that harnesses the powerful influence of peer pressure by making it a positive force that encourages young people to live free of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

“It is an honor to win this award,” said Maj. Robert Dejong, SDNG Counterdrug coordinator. “We have an enthusiastic, dedicated Counterdrug team who are passionate about educating South Dakota’s youth about making good life choices.”

The Fulcrum Shield Award, first presented in 2002, is named in honor of five military personnel from Fort Bliss, Texas, who were killed in an aircraft accident in 1999 while on a counter-drug reconnaissance mission in Columbia.

South Dakota Y2Y focuses its programs on issues that teens are most likely to face while growing up today: alcohol and drugs, negative peer pressure, AIDS and sexuality, suicide, education and career concerns, self-concept and community responsibility.

The program also emphasizes the development of necessary life skills. Students attend training and workshops that establish and enhance communication skills, decision-making skills, and problem solving skills, so they will be better equipped to handle any situation.

Y2Y goes beyond merely presenting information on the dangers of alcohol and other drug use by capitalizing on the emotional involvement that comes from working in small groups. The program

encourages personal growth, teambuilding, teaches strategies that teens use to change their own environments, and provides alternatives to drug use.

“It is not just about the youth,” said Master Sgt. Kristi Palmer, SDNG Counterdrug, Drug Demand Reduction, “It’s about building communities we want the youth to live in.”

South Dakota Y2Y held its first high school conference in the Rapid City area twelve years ago with 60-70 students attending from five to six schools, and has grown to more than 200 students attending from 13-14 schools.

The SDNG’s Drug Demand Reduction program’s affiliation with Y2Y provides an opportunity for the program to grow by recruiting military youth members to become actively involved in the power of Y2Y.

This partnership has been invaluable to military programs, and has helped spread the message to communities all over the state of South Dakota through deployment events, unit Family Readiness activities, and SDNG Military Youth Camp.

The Y2Y program helps to build confidence in young people. Y2Y has numerous examples of eighth and ninth-grade students who started out being very shy and introverted. After being involved in the Y2Y program these young people are then willing to stand up on a stage in front of 200 of their peers and speak out for what they believe in, to educate and promote a drug free lifestyle.

“Being involved with the Youth-to-Youth program solidifies our drug-free message,” said Dejong. “The power of youth can take our drug free message and deliver it to their peers, making the message that much more powerful.”

The students who are part of Y2Y return to their home schools and have active Y2Y groups that have become part of their everyday life. These groups lead alcohol, tobacco and other drug use prevention efforts within their communities and schools. They plan and provide drug free alternative activities throughout the year within their communities to support a healthy lifestyle and for peer to peer support.

Since South Dakota’s first Y2Y event held in Sturgis in 1989, the program has seen a measurable impact in the Black Hills community as well as other communities in the state in several ways.

“In Rapid City we have seen the numbers of youth who are using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduce during the past 10 years,” said Palmer. “The South Dakota Y2Y program is one of the prevention efforts we do in the community that has an impact on those numbers.”

- Tobacco use from 2001 to 2009
 - 44 percent decline for high school students (from 36.7 in 2001 to 20.6 in 2009)
 - 69 percent decline for 7th graders (from 14 in 2001 to 4.3 in 2009)
- Alcohol use from 2001 to 2009
 - 57 percent decline for high school students (from 47 in 2001 to 25.8 in 2009)
 - 76 percent decline for 7th graders (from 18.2 in 2001 to 4.4 in 2009)
- Marijuana use from 2001 to 2009
 - 35 percent decline for high school students (from 27.8 in 2001 to 18.1 in 2009)
 - 32 percent decline for 7th graders (from 6.2 in 2001 to 4.2 in 2009)
- Huffing from 2001 to 2009
 - 73 percent decline for 11th graders (from 6.6 in 2001 to 1.8 in 2009)

- Other drug use from 2001 to 2009
66 percent decline for high school students (from 10.4 in 2001 to 3.5 in 2009)

Maj. Dejong said that part of the success of SDNG Counterdrug program is because of their direct involvement with local coalitions, law enforcement agencies and schools.

Sgt. 1st Class Palmer also accredited success to “the connection to our community coalitions that are striving to make the anti drug message an environmental change in the community.”

-30-

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



The South Dakota National Guard’s Counterdrug program received the 2011 Fulcrum Shield Award during the 21st annual Secretary of Defense Red Ribbon Week Awards ceremony at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C., Thursday, Oct. 20, for their support of South Dakota’s Youth-to-Youth (Y2Y) program. The Guam National Guard Counterdrug Drug Demand Reduction was the winner of the 2011 Community Drug Awareness Award - National Guard.

(From left) Lt. Col. John Holter, SD deputy chief of staff for operations, Maj. Robert Dejong, SDNG Counterdrug coordinator, Pam Teaney Thomas, president of SD Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention, Master Sgt. Kristi Palmer, SDNG Counterdrug, Drug Demand Reduction, Maj. Gen. David Harris, National Guard Bureau, director - Domestic Operations and Force Development, Staff Sgt. Tawnee Unsiog, Guam National Guard Counterdrug Task Force noncommissioned officer and 1st Sgt. John Pangelinan, Guam National Guard Counterdrug noncommissioned officer in charge, stand together after accepting their awards. The Department of Defense award program encourages service members to keep communities drug-free and recognizes outstanding outreach programs. (courtesy photo)
(RELEASED)

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