

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Students recognized for creative drug-free message

CUSTER, S.D. – Custer Elementary School students were recognized by two South Dakota National Guard helicopter pilots Oct. 25 for their creative drug-free message during the National Guard’s annual Red Ribbon Week campaign in October.

Pilots Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christian Frank and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dean Sueflow presented the students with an aerial photo of the students outside forming a Custer Wildcat paw, the school’s mascot.

“Since we are the Custer Wildcats we decided to design a paw,” said Joey Kortemeyer, physical education teacher. “Our theme for Red Ribbon Week was PAWS-itively drug free.”

Red Ribbon Week is the nation’s oldest and largest drug prevention program, reaching millions of American students every year. It serves as a vehicle for communities and individuals to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of their children through a commitment to drug prevention and education.

This year, the S.D. Guard’s Counterdrug program organized Red Ribbon Week events with 43 western South Dakota schools. One of the events is the drug-free flyover, where students make a design of a drug-free message with their bodies and then have the message photographed from the air by the Guard. The students also receive a briefing from Guard members on living a drug-free life.

Frank was one of the pilots who flew an OH-58 helicopter over Custer Elementary. Frank and Sueflow were asked by the Guard’s Counterdrug program to present the photo to the school, which also includes their sons.

“We saw it as an opportunity to make this presentation special,” said Frank. “I told the students that they did a great job of putting together the Wildcat paw. It takes teamwork to do what they did, and in life it is important to work as a team – whether that is sitting in the classroom or at home helping the family.”

“This was great for the students to meet the pilots, otherwise they never meet who is flying the helicopter,” said Kortemeyer. “To make this connection with the kids showed them that dads and regular people in our community are making positive choices. You do not have to be a superhero to be successful.”

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Additional stories and information are online at www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard



121031-A-AB123-001: Aiden Sueflow, left, 7, and Dylan Frank, 5, hold the Red Ribbon Week photo presented to their class by South Dakota National Guard pilots Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christian Frank and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dean Sueflow at Custer Elementary School in Custer, S.D., Oct. 25, 2012. The aerial photo is of the students lined up outside forming a Custer Wildcat paw to represent the school's mascot. The students formed the paw as part of the SDNG's Counterdrug Program Red Ribbon Week campaign in October. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)



121031-A- AB123-002: South Dakota National Guard pilots Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christian Frank, left, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dean Sueflow present an aerial photo to Custer Elementary School students in Custer, S.D., Oct. 25, 2012, thanking them for their Custer Wildcat paw design during the S.D. National Guard's annual Red Ribbon Week campaign in October. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)



121031-A- AB123-003: Custer Elementary School students create a drug-free message with their bodies on Oct. 5, 2012, in Custer, S.D., as a part of the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program's annual Red Ribbon Week campaign in October. S.D. Guard pilots conducted a flyover of 43 western South Dakota schools that presented a message and made a pledge to be drug free. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)

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