



**RED RIBBON
FOUNDATION**

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Press Release

Greenwich-based Red Ribbon Foundation promotes awareness of World AIDS Day

Greenwich, CT, December 1, 2009: The Red Ribbon Foundation (RRF), a Greenwich-based non-profit organization committed to winning the war against AIDS, and students from several local high schools have partnered to promote awareness of World AIDS Day. Established in 1988 by the World Health Organization, December 1st is internationally recognized as a day when governments, national AIDS programs, faith organizations, community organizations, and individuals can raise awareness and focus attention on the global AIDS epidemic.

Over a million Americans are estimated to be living with HIV. Worldwide an estimated 33 million people are said to be living with HIV.

The Red Ribbon Foundation's Youth Council was formed last spring with help of school AIDS Awareness clubs, and has been planning activities for this week over the past several months. Students from Greenwich High School, Greenwich Academy, Brunswick School, and King School in Stamford kicked off the week by tying red ribbons, the international symbol of AIDS, on trees down Greenwich Avenue. Because of the increased incidence of HIV among teens and young adults ages 13-24, involving youth in promoting awareness of the disease has been a key foundation priority. "We see local teens as key players in getting the word out to their peers about HIV," described Red Ribbon's Executive Director, Nicole Hazard. "Though we don't see it very often in the local news anymore as it relates to the US, living with HIV is a sobering reality for many young adults in the greater New York City area."

Involved schools will have assemblies this week that underscore the importance of remaining vigilant about the disease. Regan Hofmann, noted AIDS activist, author, and editor-in-chief of POZ magazine, the nation's leading website and publication on HIV/AIDS, will be speaking at Greenwich High School and Greenwich Academy on Friday, December 4th. The Youth Council's World AIDS Day program will culminate on December 11th with *AID for AIDS*, a fundraiser dance at Arch Street Teen Center in Greenwich. Over 300 local students are expected to attend.

"Planning the dance is a fun way to promote awareness of HIV, but we'll continue to show the serious side of the disease so that people will know why they are there," said Lucy Williams, Greenwich Academy junior and Youth Council member. Kate McCarty, Greenwich Academy senior added "We want (the dance) to show that AIDS is not just relevant to Africa. It's a problem

here too.” Youth Council students have taken the lead in every aspect of planning the event, from choosing the format, decorations, dj, and publicity, to make the dance a success.

The Red Ribbon Foundation raises money to fight AIDS through several fundraising events held each year. The proceeds of these events are then awarded as grants to organizations that demonstrate results as well as promising ideas for preventing the spread of AIDS. Red Ribbon’s grantmaking priorities are prevention education programs for high-risk individuals, cutting-edge research to eradicate the disease, and assistance programs for those living with HIV/AIDS. Red Ribbon, founded in 1994, has given over \$2 million to HIV/AIDS organizations over the past 15 years.

For more information about the Red Ribbon Foundation, visit www.redribbonfoundation.org.