

The Red Ribbon Campaign And Enrique Kiki Camarena



Since its beginning in 1985, the Red Ribbon has touched the lives of millions of people around the world. In response to the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, angered parents and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the killing and destruction cause by drugs in America.

Enrique (Kiki) Camarena was a Drug Enforcement Administration Agent who was tortured and killed in Mexico in 1985. When he decided to join the US Drug Enforcement Administration, his mother tried to talk him out of it. "I'm only one person", he told her, "but I want to make a difference."

On Feb. 7, 1985, the 37-year-old Camarena left his office to meet his wife for lunch. Five men appeared at the agent's side and shoved him in a car. One month later, Camarena's body was found. He had been tortured to death.

In honor of Camarena's memory and his battle against illegal drugs, friends and neighbors began to wear red badges of satin. Parents, sick of the destruction of alcohol and other drugs, had begun forming coalitions. Some of these new coalitions embraced Camarena's belief that one person can make a difference. These coalitions also adopted the symbol of Camarena's memory, the red ribbon.

In 1988, NFP sponsored the first National Red Ribbon Celebration. Today, the Red Ribbon serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities. Since that time, the campaign has reached millions of U.S. children and families. The National Family Partnership (NFP) and its network of individuals and organizations continue to deliver his message of hope to millions of people every year, through the National Red Ribbon Campaign™.

