

Arkansas Assoc. Leads Way in Promoting Red Ribbon Week

NATIONAL CHIROPRACTIC SUPPORT SOUGHT

Steve Kelly, managing editor

October 24 -- November 1, is the date set for the 4th annual Red Ribbon Drug Free and Proud program organized by the National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth (NFPDFY).

School children all over the country will soon be sporting the red ribbons that symbolize this week-long celebration dedicated to educating the nation's youth about drug and alcohol abuse and encouraging the commitment to drug-free lifestyles. Parades, speeches, and activities too numerous to chronicle will be taking place in every state in the union.

It is fitting that chiropractic with its ideology of drug-free care is becoming involved. In 1991, Karen Konarski-Hart, DC, DABCO, mobilized the Greater Little Rock Chiropractic Society to sponsor schools and participate in the Red Ribbon Parade.

In 1992, the Arkansas Chiropractic Association Auxiliary agreed to organize doctors across the state to support the event, and the Arkansas Chiropractic Association became a corporate sponsor. Chiropractic clinics sponsored schools across the state, donating red ribbons with the state chiropractic association logo that children, parents, and school staff wore during the week-long program. Ribbons were also given out in chiropractic offices. Some DCs attended school "Drug Free" rallies and did presentations, and the state association ran anti-steroid ads in the local newspaper's sports section.

For chiropractic, it was appropriate, albeit coincidental, that the logo for the 1992 Red Ribbon program was raised hands, which has since become the program's permanent logo.

As corporate sponsors, the Arkansas Chiropractic Assoc. marched at the head of the 1992 Red Ribbon Parade to the state capitol in Little Rock, wearing chiropractic t-shirts and carrying the banner "Chiropractic, the Natural State of Health" (the Arkansas state motto is "The Natural State").

A special VIP luncheon recognized the corporate sponsors, and Guy Hickman, DC, accepted a sponsorship award on behalf of the Arkansas Chiropractic Association.

After the 1992 event, state Red Ribbon organizers asked the Arkansas Chiropractic Assoc. to continue to support the program, which they have. The association remains the only statewide health profession that is a corporate sponsor.

This past February, Dr. Konarski-Hart was invited to the Red Ribbon national conference and was asked if chiropractic would get involved as national sponsors. Dr. Konarski-Hart thinks this is a marvelous opportunity to associate chiropractic in a broader role with the Red Ribbon program and the chance to reach thousands of young people with a positive drug-free message. Because of the

extensive press coverage of the annual event, a national chiropractic sponsorship would garner national media attention.

"It would be wonderful if a national chiropractic association would pick up the national corporate sponsorship in the general name of chiropractic," said Dr. Konarski-Hart. While she has contacted the national associations, she states the "wheels of policy making and budgeting turn slowly." She suggests that the best approach for chiropractic is at the state level, with each state association getting involved.

Dr. Konarski-Hart points out that the logo of raised hands and the drug-free message is one that "all chiropractors, regardless of philosophy, can rally around."

The Red Ribbon program has of course attracted the attention of many politicians, including a certain former governor of Arkansas named Bill, who along with wife Hillary were honorary chairpersons of the Arkansas Red Ribbon activities and hosted awards ceremonies at the governor's mansion.

Dr. Konarski-Hart made a final assertion: "I see no reason why all states couldn't have their chiropractic association at the head of their parades and have students wearing chiropractic logos on their red ribbons stating they are drug-free and proud."

Why not indeed.

Steve Kelly
assistant editor

Editor's note: Any regional, state, or national chiropractic association wishing to get involved in the Red Ribbon program may contact:

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