

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **St. James Academy Celebrates Red Ribbon Week**

#### ***The longest running and largest drug prevention campaign***

**Solana Beach, CA-** St. James Academy recently celebrated Red Ribbon Week, our nation's longest running and largest drug prevention campaign. Red Ribbon Week serves as a vehicle for communities and individuals to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of our children through a commitment to drug prevention, education and a personal commitment to live drug free lives. All Academy students took a pledge to live drug-free.

Red Ribbon Week commemorates the ultimate sacrifice made by DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, who died at the hands of drug traffickers in Mexico while fighting the battle against illegal drugs to keep our country and children safe. Academy students in grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> attended a special presentation detailing the history of Red Ribbon Week, as well as learning about drugs and their effects.

Opening the session was Deputy District Attorney and St. James Academy parent, Kimberlee Lagotta. Mrs. Lagotta shared with students an audio of President Ronald Regan speaking to Mrs. Enrique Camarena and her then 11-year old son, who now works with Mrs. Lagotta.

“Red Ribbon Week is an opportunity to honor law enforcement officers who battle the war on drugs, especially those who have lost their lives in this fight, notably DEA Agent Enrique Camarena. It also provides us with a forum to increase the students’ knowledge about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse which empowers them to make the right choices in their lives,” stated Mrs. Lagotta.

Students also learned about drug awareness and the importance of making smart choices from Detective Randy Avila, a detective with the San Diego Sheriffs Juvenile Intervention Unit. Detective Avila shared personal family history with the students detailing differences in choices made by himself and a brother. These choices involved drugs and ultimately took the brothers down very different life paths.

Rounding out Red Ribbon Week, Student Council members attended the Solana Beach City Council meeting. Michael McRoskey, Student Council president and Audrey Gascho, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Student Council representative, accepted a drug-free proclamation on behalf of the students of St. James

Academy from the councilmen at the meeting.

St. James Academy is a K-8 elementary school serving the North County communities of Solana Beach, Del Mar, Carmel Valley, Rancho Santa Fe, Encinitas, Carlsbad and La Costa. It is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and certified by the Western Catholic Education Association. For more information, please go to [www.saintjamesacademy.com](http://www.saintjamesacademy.com) or call 1-858-755-1777.