

School District Five News

Of Lexington & Richland Counties

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White House Awards Community Roundtable Drug-Free Communities Grant

WASHINGTON, DC--The White House announced this morning that its Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has awarded the Community Roundtable (CRT) of School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties a Five-Year Drug-Free Communities Grant totaling \$625,000. The funds will be used to continue the efforts of the Community Roundtable to prevent youth risk behavior, including the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

The CRT and its partners (faith community, educators, administrators, parents, students, service providers, law enforcement and the school board) have produced impressive results in the reduction of risk behaviors in our student population. Over the last four years measured, students report a reduction in 30-day use of: tobacco: down 44%, alcohol: down 25%, binge drinking: down 26%, marijuana: down 34% and other drugs: down 32%. (*source: School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties *Health Attitudes and Behavior Survey*, 2004, 2007. Dr. Pamela Imm, Mary Ellen Wall-Mitchell)

Keven Cohen, co-chair of the Community Roundtable, explained the results as “a tribute to an amazing coalition of educators, students, parents, law enforcement and service providers to create a community with unlimited potential for our students.”

The grant will help the coalition sustain these results “in order to save the lives and futures of our students,” Cohen said.

Mark Boone, Executive Director of the Community Roundtable agreed: “We are proud of our students and are determined to continue the work that has helped us achieve these results and to work across the Midlands to bring similar results to the entire community.”

The CRT collaborates closely with three other nearby community coalitions -- Lexington One Community Coalition, Richland One Community Coalition, and Richland 2Gether to establish media campaigns targeting underage drinking, prescription drug abuse, negligence, and illegal drug use. These coalitions formed a strong alliance to produce similar results for students across the Midlands.

“We’re seeing community-level change in the Midlands and our goal is to sustain not only what we’ve seen in District Five, but to see those results in all Lexington and Richland School Districts,” Boone said.

The CRT celebrates its tenth Anniversary this year. In February 2006, the CRT was honored during the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) national conference as the “Got Outcomes! Coalition of the Year” award for efforts to combat underage drinking. The efforts highlighted in the application were the Social Norms Campaign, the Alcohol Enforcement Team, Guiding Good Choices and the Youth Action Advisory Councils.

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