

Coalition Cites Victories In War On Drugs

BY ALEXANDER R. JONES
Special To The CAROLINIAN

Local antidrug activists from around the country shared success stories with the board and regional coordinators of "Lead the Way to a Drug-Free USA" during the organization's national annual planning conference held recently in Washington, D.C.

The "Lead the Way" conferees heard from local leaders from Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles, all detailing victories in the fight against drug abuse. The successes ranged from getting hundreds of guns off the streets in high-crime neighborhoods in Philadelphia to an award-winning after-school tutoring program for inner-city children in Washington, D.C.

"Lead the Way," a national anti-drug coalition founded and coordinated by the Church of Scientology, has chapters in major cities throughout the country.

According to spokesperson Susan Taylor, "The purpose of Lead the Way is to accelerate the handling of the drug problem in the United States by bringing groups together to combine resources, talents, and solutions. We felt it was important to hear directly from the organizers of local anti-drug programs in order to plan our actions for the next year."

"Lead the Way" board member James Mills from the Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti-Violence Network reported on an innovative program in Philadelphia which enticed residents in violence-ridden communities to turn in hundreds of handguns, rifles and shotguns, thereby lowering the number of gun-related incidents of violence.

Mills noted that the root of the drug problem came from changed social values and morals. "The '60s attitude has changed America's perception of what is right and wrong so that there is no distinction between the two. Our spiritual values need to be rekindled. This change must come from the home and community—from the grassroots level."

"Lead the Way" member Cynthia Melver, who is also assistant director of Washington, D.C.'s Community Service Guild, spoke on the guild's award-winning education program which is keeping kids off the streets with after-school tutoring. Melver was given a large ovation for her presentation showing the tutoring program's success in dramatically raising the reading and arithmetic skills of inner-city children. The program, which uses the educational methods of world-renowned author L. Ron Hubbard, delivered more than 11,000 hours of tutoring in the 1990-91 school year.

"A child who can read and apply what he has learned has self-esteem," Melver commented. "There is no child who cannot read. A parent who can assist in this process glows with pride knowing that their child and others have a future. Children who have a purpose in life do not need drugs."

Kit Figaro, "Lead the Way" coordinator from Boston, gave a

presentation to the conferees on her very successful "Boston Rocks Against Drugs" program. She noted that Boston has come alive with musicians coming forward with original songs which will be entered in the program's city-wide anti-drug song contest. Ms. Figaro commented that "The most heartening aspect of the campaign is when individuals call or knock on

your door to thank you for helping them to get off of drugs. People caring about people is what this is all about."

The conference also heard from "Lead the Way" board member Cedric Hendricks, top aide to U.S. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.). Hendricks spoke on H.R. 3259, a bill that authorizes funding for drug education and prevention programs.

"Any program that provides an alternative to drugs and drug involvement in Washington, D.C. and other cities is a step in the right direction," he said. He pointed out that it is important for those involved in the anti-drug effort to urge their congressmen and senators to vote for such legislation, as prevention programs are vitally needed to curb drug abuse.

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Ministers' Wives Plan Projects And Programs

The Interdenominational Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows Association of Raleigh and Vicinity met recently at the home of Ms. Josephine Wilkins. The meeting marked the beginning of the group's new meeting year, September through May 1992.

The newly elected president, Ms. Naomi Lovelace, greeted the group, conducted a business meeting, then outlined special projects and programs for the year. Among the projects are the senior citizens dinner scheduled for Dec. 6; the Upper Room Service scheduled for April 10, 1992; contributions to the Central Children's Home in Oxford; the United Negro College Fund; the North Carolina Ministers' Wives Scholarship Fund and several other outreach activities.

The group will present a black

history program during its regular February meeting and two workshops for ministers' wives during January and March meetings.

October is Recruitment Month. Ministers' wives wishing to join the association should contact Ms. Lovelace or any member for details. Regular meetings are held the fourth Monday each month.

Hostesses Ms. Josephine Wilkins, Ms. Susie Johnson and Ms. Rebecca Young served dinner.

Members present were Ms. Marjorie Allen, Ms. Darlene Batts, Ms. Carrie Brock, Ms. Naomi Debnam, Ms. Mae DeLaney, Ms. Jessie Henry, Ms. Susie Johnson, Ms. Naomi Lovelace, Ms. Josephine Wilkins, Ms. Berta Woodruff and Ms. Rebecca Young.

Club reporter is Ms. Carrie G. Brock.

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