



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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April 23, 2018
Log# 18-15

For Immediate Release

Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Task Force marches with Ohio youth to celebrate drug-free lifestyle

**Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Carden
Ohio National Guard Public Affairs**

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Fifteen members of the Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Task Force joined more than 2,000 youth from across Ohio who marched through downtown Columbus, Ohio, as part of the “We Are The Majority” rally on April 19, 2018, to show their commitment to living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

The members of the Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Task Force (CDTF) provided operational and logistic support as part of an ongoing partnership between the Prevention Action Alliance (PAA), the Ohio National Guard and Start Talking! — Gov. John Kasich and First Lady Karen W. Kasich’s program to give parents, guardians, educators and community leaders the tools to start the conversation with Ohio’s youth about the importance of living healthy, drug-free lives.

Soldiers, Airmen and students marched together from Genoa Park, up Broad Street across the Scioto River, to rally on the steps of the Ohio Statehouse where they heard Mrs. Kasich as well as speakers from the Ohio National Guard and the Ohio Department of Education talk about the importance of staying drug-free.

The rally’s goal is to provide encouragement and support to youth leaders across the state to speak out and promote healthy choices within their communities and social circles.

Celebrating its seventh year, the annual event takes its name from the fact that the majority of youth in Ohio are not taking part in substance abuse.

“It gives them a voice and an outlet to address their concerns about substance abuse,” said Tech. Sgt. Shelly Corbin, a CDTF civil operator. “It’s peer-led empowerment.”

CDTF civil operators partner with community-based organizations and drug-free coalitions in all 88 Ohio counties, providing resources and training to enhance and grow their outreach efforts to combat drug misuse across Ohio.

“Our partnership is fabulous, the skills and the knowledge they bring is beyond compare,” said Marcie Seidel, the executive director of PAA. “It enhances what we do, in coalition work and getting people involved, is just terrific.”

The Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Task Force has supported the fight on drugs through the work of its criminal analysts, as well as educating the youth and community on living a healthy, drug-free life. In 2017, CDTF criminal analysts supported the seizures of 352 pounds of heroin, 131 pounds of fentanyl and 20,143 prescription opiate pills. CDTF civil operators supported more than 2,000 youth-led prevention leaders and two prescription drug takeback events that resulted in removing 12,576 unused, unwanted pills from Ohio households. CDTF also annually supports National Red Ribbon Week in October, when the Soldiers and Airmen visit about 50 schools annually to distribute approximately 40,000 red ribbons printed with drug-free messages to students.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: High resolution photos to support this story are available on the [Defense Video Imagery Distribution Site \(DVIDS\)](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Stephanie Beougher, public information officer, at 614-336-7369 or stephanie.k.beougher.nfg@mail.mil.

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