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White House Drug Policy Office Awards \$625,000 to Local Coalition to Prevent Youth Substance Use in Southington

Grants Support Administration Efforts to Emphasize Public Health Approaches to Drug Policy, Reduce Demand for Drugs through Education

(Washington D.C.) ó Michael Botticelli, Acting Director of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), announced 680 Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grants, totaling \$84 million, to communities across the country. The grants will provide local communities funding to prevent youth substance use and support the Administration's *National Drug Control Strategy*, which treats our Nation's drug problem through a balanced public health and safety approach. The STEPS Coalition from Southington was one of the grant recipients and will receive \$625,000 in DFC grant funds to involve and engage their local community to prevent substance use among youth.

“Last week, President Obama designated October as National Substance Abuse Prevention Month because we know the best way to reduce youth drug use is to stop it from ever beginning,” said Acting Director Botticelli. “Today, I congratulate prevention advocates for their continuing hard work and dedication to young people many of whom are struggling with peer pressure and other challenges in today's society.”

“We are not powerless against the challenge of drug use among young people here in Southington,” said Sue Saucier. “Research shows that prevention is the most effective tool we have to reduce the terrible consequences associated with drug use among young people. This new funding will allow STEPS to help place more young people on the path toward success and enable them to live healthier and safer lives.”

“Drug-free coalitions across the nation are mobilizing to mount effective, coordinated prevention programs against substance use, especially among youth,” said Pamela S. Hyde, Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at the Department

of Health and Human Services (HHS). SAMHSA is honored to partner with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy in building these critically important community coalitions.

STEPS will specifically work to address reducing substance use within the community such as alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs.

The Drug-Free Communities Support Program is directed by ONDCP in partnership with HHS's SAMHSA. The DFC Program provides grants of up to \$625,000 over five years to community coalitions that facilitate youth and adult participation at the community level in local youth drug use prevention efforts. Coalitions are comprised of community leaders, parents, youth, teachers, religious and fraternal organizations, health care and business professionals, law enforcement, and media.

The DFC Program was created by the Drug-Free Communities Act of 1997 and reauthorized by Congress in 2001 and 2006. Since 1998, ONDCP has awarded over 2,000 DFC grants to local communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, Palau, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The rate of overall drug use in the United States has declined by roughly 30 percent since 1979. More recently, the number of current cocaine users has declined by more than a third (36%) from 2006 to 2013, and the number of current meth users has fallen by 19 percent over the same period. To build on this progress and support a balance of public health and safety approaches to drug control outlined in the *Strategy*, in FY 2015 the Obama Administration has requested nearly \$10.9 billion for drug education programs and support for expanding access to drug treatment for people suffering from substance use disorders.

For more information about the Administration efforts to reduce drug use and its consequences, or to learn more about the Drug-Free Communities Support Program, visit:

www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp

The Office of National Drug Control Policy seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

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