

NEWS



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DRUG CZAR JOHN WALTERS VISITS PHOENIX HOUSE SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR TEENS

- White House Official Honors Phoenix Houses of California with Distinguished Service Award -

SAN DIEGO, CA (October 10, 2007) The **White House National Drug Control Policy Director, John Walters**, made a special visit to San Diego's primary residential substance abuse treatment program for teens on October 4. At the Phoenix Academy of San Diego in Descanso, he met with teen residents, staff and supporters to observe firsthand the vital role that residential treatment plays in addressing the problem of drug abuse in Southern California. Recognizing the important work of the Academy and the role it serves as a valuable community resource, Walters presented a "Director's Award for Distinguished Service" to the Academy staff and leadership of Phoenix Houses of California.

"We were honored Mr. Walters took time to travel to Descanso to witness first-hand how youth in treatment can turn their lives around," said **Phoenix House San Diego Director Elizabeth Urquhart**. "For more than 20 years, Phoenix House has helped thousands of kids overcome the ravages of chronic drug use in San Diego, and we're committed to continuing to serve families in need," added Urquhart, who noted the short supply of adolescent residential facilities in Southern California and stressed the need to increase funding for treatment programs.

(more)

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Drug Czar Visit to Phoenix Academy in San Diego

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The Phoenix Academy of San Diego was established in 1987 as the area's first residential school and substance abuse treatment academy for teens. Originally located in Encinitas, the academy moved to a former ranch in Descanso and is now situated on a 90-acre campus.

Walters visited classrooms, toured the teens' living quarters, and met each resident in the program before participating in a discussion with some of the residents and their families who shared with him their experiences. Parents talked about the personal toll that a child's drug use can have on a family, the value of residential treatment specifically designed for youth, and the importance of providing continuing care once their teens leave the residential program.

Representatives from the San Diego County Alcohol and Drug Services, Child Welfare Services, and Probation Department were among the community partners who joined Walters for the visit, including Wendy Maramba, Assistant Director, Alcohol and Drug Services; Scott Countryman, Supervising Probation Officer for Drug Court, San Diego County Probation; and Thomas Alexander, Substance Abuse Manager, San Diego County Juvenile Probation Department. In addition, Henry Coker, Chief Public Defender; Yvette Davis, Principal at Rancho Del Campo; and Katherine Crow, Program Officer for the Alliance Healthcare Foundation also attended.

The Phoenix Academy of San Diego is one of 11 Phoenix House residential schools and treatment programs throughout the nation, which are recognized nationally for their treatment effectiveness. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention selected Phoenix Academy as a model program for adolescents, and the RAND Corporation, in a study published in *Psychology of Addictive Behavior*, cited Phoenix Academy's program for having brought about marked reductions in drug use and unlawful behavior, while improving psychological status for youth in treatment, as compared to youth being cared for in similar residential programs.

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Drug Czar Visit to Phoenix Academy

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Renowned for its effective long-term residential treatment programs, Phoenix Houses of California has touched the lives of adolescents, adults, and their families for more than 25 years, helping them overcome the problems associated with substance abuse and empowering them with the skills to lead healthy, productive and rewarding lives. More than 1,750 individuals each day receive treatment through 25 Phoenix House programs throughout Southern and Central California. Phoenix House serves Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties with facilities located in Lake View Terrace, Los Angeles, Venice, Monrovia, Santa Fe Springs, Santa Ana, Descanso, Point Loma, and Carlsbad.

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