



## **Drug Education For Youth**

### **A Partnership Promoting Positive Life Choices for Youth**

The Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) and the U.S. Navy have partnered since 1996 to provide the DEFY program in Weed and Seed sites across the country. DEFY is a comprehensive and multi-phased youth outreach program targeted at youth ages 9 to 12 years of age. DEFY utilizes military role models to promote positive life choices and reduce the demand for illegal drugs through 1) summer leadership training camps, 2) mentoring, 3) parent/guardian engagement, and 4) placement in follow up programs in their communities.

### **How Does It Work?**

DEFY is funded as part of the Weed and Seed grant, using flexible core funds or Special Emphasis funding in the *Anti-Drug/Alcohol Abuse Strategies and/or Mentoring Initiatives*. The Weed and Seed site has primary responsibility for implementing the DEFY program. This includes drafting and executing a memorandum of understanding with the prospective military partner, recruiting staff, arranging to use facilities, obtaining community resources, recruiting mentors, and adapting the program based on local facilities available. The local military command is responsible for providing the space necessary to ensure program implementation and a safe, secure facility for the children.

A military partner is necessary in order to keep the military character of the DEFY program. Phase I of the program (the summer leadership camp) should take place at a military facility. The DEFY curriculum is presented in two phases by volunteer instructors from the military and law enforcement. Drawing on the military's organizational skills, ethnic diversity, and drug-free image, the program has created a large pool of positive role models for its participants. Weed and Seed sites can tap into military program contacts, activities, and experience. The MOU spells out what the military partner will provide.

The DEFY program is overseen by a DEFY Coordinator, who is generally a Weed and Seed staff person. Sites leverage additional community resources to support all four phases of the DEFY program. That may include supplies and activities for the summer camp, the mentoring, and follow up programming; transportation, volunteers, mentors, training, facilities, etc.

### **What Does It Accomplish?**

The DEFY partnership:

- ◆ Provides summer leadership camps, mentoring, parent involvement, and additional programming for high risk youth in Weed and Seed sites.
- ◆ Builds positive relationships between military installations and the communities where they are located.
- ◆ Provides healthy, drug-free role models for high risk youth.

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