



WE'RE RISING

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**Ferguson Road Initiative & DISD Host Drug & Gang Prevention Conference**

Dallas (April 3, 2008) – The Ferguson Road Initiative (FRI) and the Dallas Independent School District will host an educational conference on Saturday, April 5, 2008 from 8:30am – 12:00pm at Harold W. Lang Sr. Middle School in Dallas. The conference, a first time event for FRI, will educate more than 8,000 families and 13 DISD schools about the crisis of drugs and gangs, while offering them preventative tools to help protect their children from drug use and gang violence.

The conference, which will be headlined by guest speakers in the areas of childhood education, is one of the many projects that FRI is undertaking in an effort to build a more productive community with less crime and with better programs for its area youth. This conference marks a two-year old vision for Kerry Goodwin, Weed & Seed Coordinator and Susan Walker, FRI Board Member that has finally come to fruition with the help of its community.

The objective of the conference is to raise awareness and funds to send area children to CAMP DEFY. This Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) program was developed as a self-esteem program for children ages 9 to 12 to assist them in building character, leadership, and confidence so they are equipped to engage in positive, healthy lifestyles as drug-free citizens.

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**Conference Agenda - Saturday, April 5, 2008 - 8:30am – 12:00pm**

**8:30am – 9:00am – Michelle Lanham – Texas Auto Burglary & Theft Prevention Authority**

*Understanding how Drug Use & Gang Enlistment Lead to Property Thefts and Felony Offenses*

**9:15am – 10:30am - Session I: Gateways to Drugs & Gang Enlistment**

- Shannon Graves, Community Outreach Coordinator – Drug Prevention Resources, Inc. – *Alcohol & Other Gateway Drugs*
- Steve Ota, Texas Youth Commission Dallas District Office – *Gang Intelligence Testimonials*
- Alfonso Herrera, CEP Herrera & Associates – *Why Do Children Join Gangs?*
- Q&A Session

**10:45am – Noon - Session II: Intervention & Prevention**

- Omar Jahwar, CEO Vision Regeneration, Inc. – *Preventing Gang Recruitment*
- Officer Carlos D. Cruz, CEO – “Think About It” Piensalo, Inc. – *Drug Paraphernalia & Hiding Places*
- William Peterson, PhD, Former President – *City of Dallas Crime Watch Executive Board (CWEB)* – *Understanding Graffiti*
- Q&A Session

**12:00pm – Conference Adjournment and Post Conference Lunch with Speaker**

**Jerry Rhodes – Dallas Police Department, Narcotics Division** – *What Happens to Children Arrested for Drug Possession, Drug Distribution or Drug Dealing?*

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“If we can make an impact on even a handful of our area children with this conference,” says FRI Executive Director Vikki Martin, “then we will have considered it a success. Being able to send children to CAMP DEFY is an added bonus to the good that the conference itself will be doing for parents, guardians and children in our community.”

**About Ferguson Road Initiative**

The mission of the Ferguson Road Initiative (FRI) is to transform White Rock Hills into a safe, beautiful, prosperous and proud community by inspiring hope and working together to achieve a shared vision. Through the support of its volunteers, staff and community, FRI has been able to impact the community with outreach programs, community clean-up programs, adult & youth education programs, economic development programs and more, and it continues to rank among some of the most proactive community associations in Dallas. For more information on the Ferguson Road Initiative, visit [www.fergusonroad.org](http://www.fergusonroad.org).

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