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## **DRUG CZAR AWARDS \$21 MILLION FOR LOCAL DRUG FREE COMMUNITY COALITION EFFORTS**

(Washington, D.C.) – Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), today announced the awarding of \$21 million in new Drug Free Communities (DFC) grants to 161 communities across the country. SOCASA from Orangetown was one of the grant recipients, and will receive \$125,000 in DFC grant funds to involve and engage their local community to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug abuse among youth.

“Efforts to keep our youth drug free are critical to healthy communities here in Orangetown.” “The Drug Free Communities Program recognizes the great potential of SOCASA to help save lives of youth. This new funding will allow SOCASA to mobilize and organize their community to prevent and reduce substance abuse.”

“The Drug Free Communities Support Program bolsters individuals and groups across the Nation that are improving their communities by preventing drug abuse,” said Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration Acting Administrator, Eric Broderick. “SAMHSA is honored to play a role in this innovative program, which has done so much to promote well-being, hope and feelings of empowerment among so many young people.”

Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and President Obama’s “Drug Czar,” said, “Evidence shows that communities receiving DFC funding have lower instances of youth using tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. I commend the coalitions like SOCASA, who work tirelessly to prevent and reduce youth drug use across the Nation with the aid of DFC grants.”

The Drug Free Communities program is directed by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The DFC program provides grants of up to \$625,000 over five years to community coalitions that facilitate citizen participation in local drug prevention efforts. Coalitions are comprised of community leaders, parents, youth, teachers, religious and fraternal organizations, health care and business professionals, law enforcement, and the media.

The 161 new grantees were selected from 417 applicants through a competitive, peer-reviewed process. To qualify for matching grants, all awardees must have at least a six-month history of working together on substance abuse reduction initiatives, have representation from 12 specific sectors of the community, develop a long-term plan to reduce substance abuse, and participate in the national evaluation of the DFC program.

The DFC program was created by the Drug Free Communities Act of 1997, and was reauthorized by Congress in 2001 and 2006. Since 1998, ONDCP has awarded approximately 1,500 DFC grants to local communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Palau, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands.