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## **UPPER BUCKS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES HEALTHY YOUTH COALITION SECURES A FIVE YEAR GRANT TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS ON POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

(Washington, D.C.) – Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the White House 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. The **Upper Bucks Healthy Communities Healthy Youth Coalition (UBHCHY) based in Quakertown, PA** was one of only four grant recipients in the state of Pennsylvania in this funding cycle, and will receive \$625,000 over five years 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 in the Palisades, Pennridge and Quakertown communities in Upper Bucks County”, said Lee Rush, **UBHCHY** Community Organizer and Executive Director of justCommunity, Inc. (the UBHCHY fiscal agent). “This award from the DFC program also recognizes and supports our work to increase the level of the 40 Developmental Assets in all youth. These assets are the essential building blocks for healthy youth to thrive throughout their lives and make smart decisions.” The **UBHCHY coalition** is a “model coalition” that was highlighted in the 2007 National Drug Control Strategy presented by the White House ONDCP. The **UBHCHY** was also awarded its second year of a two-year “mentoring grant” allowing it to mentor and coach another local coalition to become a highly functioning coalition. The mentoring grant is also awarded through the DFC program and is for \$75,000 per year.

“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 the 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 White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) said, “Evidence shows that communities receiving DFC funding have lower instances of youth using tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. I commend the coalitions such as the Upper Bucks Healthy Communities Healthy Youth coalition 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.