

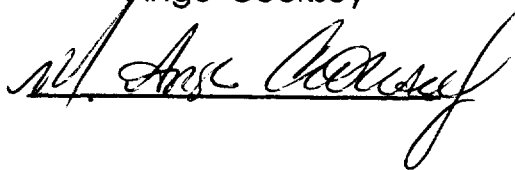
Ball State University--Golden Key National Honor Society's - Best of America  
Drug Awareness Program-1991-1993

An Honors Thesis (Honors 499)

By

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ange Cooksey", written over a horizontal line.

Ball State University  
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## Abstract

## Purpose of Thesis

This discussion of the **Best of America--Say No To Drugs Program** shows the efforts of an individual to develop a successful drug awareness program from its utter beginnings. Throughout the description of two subsequent programs, there are the focuses on the program creation on both the National and college levels, the ideals of the programs, and the concept of volunteerism. The discussion allows for the reader to become aware of the failures and successes in the arranging of a drug awareness or a similar program. Hopefully, this thesis may benefit the reader with his or her experience in the creation or planning of an awareness type program.

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### Training and Set-up Material

- Info sheet--Spring 1992
- Best of America Checklist
- Training Manual
- Volunteer Report
- Volunteer Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Summary of the 1992 Best of America
- Info sheet--1992-93 school year
- Article on Ball State Best of America training

### Correspondences

- Letter to Anna Lamb
- Letter to Jim Hanna
- Letter to Carolee Kramer
- Dr. Cathy Palmer to principals in Muncie Schools
- Letter to Hall Directors
- Letter to Sam Hanna
- Letter to Sali Eddlemon
- Thank You letters from National Headquarters to Best of America Participants

### Pamphlets and Posters

- Best of America Program Brochure
- Best of America Certificate
- Follow-up programs Brochure
- Articles on other Best of America Programs
- Posters and Sticker

### Bibliography

# **Introduction**

The phrase "Just Say No" has become one of the most common expressions in recent United States history. It is a phrase that became popular during the early years of the Reagan administration, and it is now seen and heard on television, in classrooms, and in advertisements in the. The "Just Say No" movement, inspired by Nancy Reagan, began twelve years ago, corresponding with the United State's all out war on drugs. Groups came into our schools to talk about drugs; what they were and what types of problems they could cause. Some groups that began this crusade against drugs and continue to do so today are *Project D.A..R.E.* (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) that focus on the upper elementary grades (third through fifth) with police officers teaching students for seventeen weeks about how to "Just Say No" during their "real-life" situations, and *M.A.D.D.* (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and *S.A.D.D.* (Students Against Drunk Driving) which focus more on the high school years informing the students not only about the effects of alcohol on their bodies, but also how to be responsible around it. These programs and the many others that have come and gone over the years have had wonderful intentions, but they only came into effect in limited areas of the U.S.. This occurred either because of money or time shortages in the schools, or the community's assumption that there were no drug related problems in "their" area. For these reasons the drug awareness programs couldn't reach all students. (1)

Many drug programs are still going strong today, especially the three mentioned above, and they are consistently developing new and more innovative ways to send the message of "Just Say No" to the youth of this country. From the same idea around which these programs were developed, a program called **The Best of America - Say No to Drugs** program came about with a slightly different twist. Sponsored by Golden Key

National Honor Society students from colleges around the nation visit the elementary and secondary schools in their area and talk about how they have learned to "Just Say No." This isn't a program to give out the facts about drugs or to tell stories that attempt to "put a scare" into the students. This is a program that places college students in a situation to tell their younger counterparts that there are things in life to get involved with and to get "high" on other than drugs. **Best of America** volunteers want to deliver the message that they are living proof that the concept "Say No to Drugs" is a beneficial one.

The following thesis is an account of my trials, tribulations, and ultimate successes in the implementation of this program during the years 1991 through 1993. Also, in the final section I will try to sum up the experience with criticisms and specific suggestions, and finally my own opinions.

**The History of The Best Of  
*America***



The program **The Best of America** was created by the Golden Key National Honor Society of Florida State University in September of 1986. After meeting with the FSU president Dr. Bernard Slinger and the athletic department, to discuss the idea and acquire the athletic department's support, the group was on it's way to creating this wonderful program. The athletic department agreed to help and began contacting school principals about allowing Golden Key members and student athletes to visit area schools and deliver a "Say No to Drugs" message to the students. The next step was then to obtain clearance to visit schools in the Florida State University area. The clearance was obtained, and as a result, Golden Key members and athletic department personnel met to establish a training format for the volunteers. The purpose of this training was to explain to the volunteers how to present to the students an effective and worthwhile message. The Florida State volunteers visited a total of sixty schools enrolling approximately 40,000 students. The message given focused on the importance of involvement, self-confidence and determination as alternatives to drugs.

By March of 1988 the support of the Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP) of the United States Department of Health and Human services was acquired, and a program implementation guide created. From this point the program grew to become more than just Florida State's. By the end of this semester nine chapters in addition to Florida State had implemented the program with success: Clemson University, the Pennsylvania State University, the University of Arizona, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Washington, West Virginia University, North Texas University, University of Miami, and Arizona State University. Each chapter developed styles of presenting a little different from the others, but they were all very successful for

a first year program. Throughout the next three years the number of chapters participating in **The Best of America** continued to grow to forty-five chapters including the volunteers giving the "Say No" message. As of the 1990-91 school year, 843 participants were reaching approximately seventy thousand students in 300 schools throughout the country.(2)

The 1991-92 school year arrived with new chapters participating in the spreading of this important message. This is the point in which the history of **The Best of America - Say No to Drugs** program came into our hands at Ball State University.

Early in December, 1991 the initiation of the new Golden Key members had occurred, and the election of new officers was to happen at our next official meeting. At this meeting the officer's positions were outlined (President, Vice President, etc.) along with a new position described by material in a blue folder placed out on a table. This program was called **The Best of America - Say No to Drugs** program. This program sounded very interesting and because of my previous experience with the DARE program and others of the sort it seemed to be something I could handle and enjoy. Through the introduction of myself as someone having the experience and willingness to take over such a program, I was elected and was given the responsibilities of being the Chairperson of Ball State's **The Best of America - Say No to Drugs** program.

**Spring Of 1992**

**Burris School**

Over Ball State's winter break (1991-92) I was able to look over the program and see all that was involved. In doing this I noticed the amount of work that would be necessary to make this program a success, and it seemed to be a lot. But I felt I was up to the task of ensuring our **Best of America** would be a success next year.

At our first meeting after break I explained the intentions of the program to the group and that I felt as a team working together and all pitching in we could make this program a real success. At that time we then discussed all the specifics of the program; what schools we would take this to and what age groups we would focus on. We decided to stay relatively small for the semester, and that we would focus on the fifth to ninth grades in one or two schools. Pulling the info together, I was able to create a program explanation to leave for reference during any meeting with administrators or supervisors.

On the 11th of February I met with our Golden Key advisor Angie Cooksey to discuss the specifics of the program and to discuss what routes we planned to take. She agreed on all of the group's ideas and felt that it was most important that we received our initial base this year and next year plan to build on that. We then discussed what steps should be taken to receive university and athletic support, and we agreed on trying the outline that the booklet had given in order to see how that would work. Cooksey then sent me on my way with a boost of confidence and the security of knowing that if any problems occurred she was there to help.

The route for university support was through our Dean of Students, Don Mikesell. I met with him on February 14th in order to discuss our program with him and ask about any possible ideas he could give from his own experiences or from the experiences of other groups, in order to help our program be a success. Our Dean felt that the program idea was a very good

and much needed one and that the route we were taking to accomplish our goals seemed to him to be the most successful. He offered to me some names of people I could contact in the schools along with the athletic department to get us started and he wished myself and our group the best of luck.

By this time in the planning process I had realized that this program was completely in my hands. Others in the group seemed too busy to help and it ultimately became impossible to get anyone to commit to much of anything, so in effect all the decisions about the program ended up being mine. I made my first major decision by switching the checklist order given in the instruction manual. The manual suggested receiving athletic support first, but I felt that when going to the athletic department or to the individual coaches, the main question would be when the program would occur in order to inform the players and check their availability. This new process began on February 24th when I met with the woman in charge of all special programs for the Muncie school district, Dr. Cathy Palmer. We talked over the program and she agreed with me on the necessity of it and that she thought it would work wonderfully in her district. I explained to her that this year we wanted to stay relatively small and only focus on Muncie's Grissom Elementary school and Burriss School (Ball State Lab school), and that any assistance she could give us would be greatly appreciated. Cathy said that during the next week she would approach both the school board and Grissom's principal, Doug Stewart with the program and that she would have him contact me as soon as possible. About two weeks later Mr. Stewart contacted me and explained that this year our program wouldn't be necessary because of four other drug awareness programs going on, but next year I should call him and see what the situation would be.

On February 26th I then met with the principal of Burriss School, Mark Meyer in order to discuss our program. He felt our program was a wonderful idea and could be utilized well in his school. Burriss' principal then gave me the name of the school's program coordinator, Melissa McDaniel, and told me to set up a meeting with her in order to agree on a time and date. On March 13th I had my first meeting with the Ms. McDaniel and again explained the program and informed her of all of the specifics which she agreed to as well as offered suggestions to approaching the students in the best possible way. She told me that she would then take this idea to the teachers to see if there would be any additional information that could be offered, along with the times of the day that would be good for them. Together we decided our target date would be Friday, April 10th, and if there were any problems she would contact me. The next step came in receiving our athletic support and setting up our training session.

In going through the process of getting the athletic support our group found nothing but problems. We eventually had to go directly to the coaches and found a little more success, but not until a week or so before the program. This provided us with a problem for our first training session (March 26th), too few volunteers.

Our **Best of America** training manual suggests that the University Drug and Alcohol Awareness Educator, a law enforcement official, and a counselor or teacher from the participating school(s) come to speak and participate in the training session. This is helpful in informing the volunteers of what types of things to think, question, and be able to talk about when they are finally out in the schools. The booklet also gives suggestions for the specifics each official should speak about in order to organize the session for the most success. I had contacted Anna Lamb, our University Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Educator, Jim Hanna, a retired police captain in Juvenile Narcotics, and Carolee Kramer, the guidance counselor at Burriss School to assist us in learning more about the drug situation and how to approach the students on this topic. The speakers presented in the order I have them respectively, but prior to their speaking I showed the **The Best of America** program videotape in order for the volunteers to really see what this was all about. Then after each presentation we asked questions and discussed any thoughts or ideas anyone had on the topic presented. This allowed for questions to be answered, and it also allowed for the volunteers to realize what kinds of issues are happening in the schools or what kinds of questions might be asked of them by the students.

As stated earlier, our first training session had a small turn out of only Golden Key members and no any athletes. The session was beneficial to all who participated, but from the amount of volunteers that participated I knew we were going to need quite a few more people and definitely another training session. We set a second session for April 9th, the day before the program. From the time the first training session was complete and the second was begun our Golden Key group had a few meetings at which I kept every one posted, and I tried to put together some committee meetings. These became very tough because of time conflicts and because of the lack of contact between the members and myself. This problem resulted from the fact that phone calls were not being returned and messages were not being relayed. This slowed our group program and really pushed us all to our limits, but we proved up to the task.

Our second training session came quickly, but we had a much better turn out. Going directly to the athletes helped out considerably and allowed us to easily have enough volunteers to fill the five presentation slots we had set for

the next day. At this session we were not able to get our speakers but we did again show the videotape and had a large discussion between the people who participated in the first session and the new participants at this one. Everyone seemed a little confused about what they were going to say and how to say it, but I felt that this was to be expected and if we went in and spoke honestly, *brought the students up to our level*, and remembered that we were simply volunteers going out of our way to care for our future everything would work out wonderfully. This is what we set out to do.

April 10th was upon us and I cannot speak for everyone else, but I was excited and very nervous. We had five-one hour blocks set up with the Burriss coordinator between the hours of 8am to 2pm, and each participant was to arrive at Melissa's office ten minutes prior to their presentation time in order to be taken to the area for the presentations. I participated in four of these five spots during the day, which was rewarding but very draining. It created a situation in which I could not give my full effort and enthusiasm to the students and my presentation. I would suggest speakers only participating in one to two presentations in order to keep everyone fresh. Each group went a little differently because for one, there were different volunteers for each, and two, we learned from our mistakes in our previous attempts. Some problems arose during each session because each of the volunteers did not know what the other volunteers were going to speak about, so a lot of modifying and ad-libbing went on as soon as you stood up to speak. Other problems came from the environment we were speaking in. We were in a gymnasium taking these students out of their gym classes (that little break or short stress-release that they get during the day), they were sitting on a hard wood floor, and we didn't receive a whole lot of moral support from the teachers. They just seemed to be somewhere else mentally and really offered us no assistance at all. I feel



that we overcame these problems very well and made the whole day a positive one. I must bring in a personal story here to explain fully what I mean by positive.

During the semester our group went to speak at Burriss School I had also been taking an Educational Reading class that used Burriss for it's lab. My class happened to be a seventh grade Language Arts class, and my group happened to have a couple of young men who thought they were very smart. One of these students I had removed from my group two times (out of four total visits) and he didn't seem to like the situation or me one bit. As I said earlier our drug awareness program focused on the grades fifth through ninth. This young man I spoke of just happened to be in this range and he happened to be in my last presentation of the day. I felt somewhat nervous and curious about his response during and after our presentation. I was shocked when he participated graciously during our talks and I was completely thrilled when he came up to me after the was over in order to talk to me. He asked me questions, wanted to take home one of the posters we brought, and just simply wanted to talk. It was the greatest feeling having him respond like this and see for himself that I was just a normal person with all the same types of problems and questions about life that he has and that I was someone who really cared. To anyone who will ever participate in the program or any other one like this, I can honestly say that any student acting in this manner or opening up to you in any way is all the gratification you will ever need to want to speak again and again.

In the effort to receive comments, ideas, and overall evaluations on our program we passed out both volunteer evaluations and teacher evaluations after the day is through. These forms allowed us to see our successes and shortcomings, and to make any changes if necessary on the overall program.

This also allows for us to have a past program record for ourselves and for the National Headquarters of the number of volunteers and the number of students with whom we came in contact. Of our volunteer evaluations we received many positive comments about our training sessions and also the information Golden Key provided for us (manual and video), but the participants all seemed to agree that they would like more time to prepare their talks and would like the ability to get with their speaking groups beforehand to see what other members are talking about. I understood these points fully, but because of the obvious time restrictions and our training session taking place only hours before our presentation time, these point were impossible to combat.

From our teacher evaluations we also received very positive marks, but a negative point made repeatedly was that the organization between speakers had to improve. One other comment was made which disturbed me a little. Teachers commented that they wished we could talk to the students about "A day in the life of a drug dealer, pusher, or addict," and that we should also have recovering addicts in our program. This comment was disturbing because it was explained to the coordinator and to the teachers, that our group was a group of students that have never had a drug or alcohol problem. That we did not need these things to enjoy and create a positive life for ourselves. Our purpose was to show the students that there are people out in the world living wonderful lives without the need of any drugs or alcohol. From this disgruntling comment I could tell the types of programs the schools were accustomed to having and the students and teachers were accustomed to hearing. These programs spoken of are the types containing real live "juicy" facts and stories that one might hear on the news or read in a

newspaper. I thought a lot about this comment, and as you will read in the next section I begin to integrate it into our program.

**Fall of 1992**

**Garfield and Longfellow Elementaries**

Early in the Fall semester of the 1992-93 school year Angie Cooksey and I met to discuss plans for the next **Best of America** program. We put together a timeline that would place our training sessions in the middle of November and the actual presentations the week after. During our chapter meeting on September 22nd, I presented the specifics to the group and asked for any suggestions or comments. The suggestion of having two training sessions on the same night seemed to be the only one, so the group agreed and then proposed a program date of November 13, and again we were on our way. That night I asked members for help in recruiting participants both from other campus organizations and athletics.

As with the **Best of America** of last semester, this one, too, would begin with phone calls, and again, I was making them. First I contacted the woman in charge of the special programs for the Muncie school district with whom I had worked before, Dr. Palmer. I attempted to reach her numerous times over a two week span with no response--other than an apology from her secretary. My next step was to go and speak with our Dean of Students once again to see if he could somehow put us in contact with this district or give us suggestions about alternative coordination plans.

I met with the Dean on October 12th, and he said he didn't understand the hold-up with the Muncie schools. He told me that he would see what he could do, and suggested that we either try to go back to Burriss school or possibly search for schools in Indianapolis. We also spoke on any other support that he could give the program and he offered assistance with transportation. He volunteered vans and a university voice in dealing with future problems. He told me to call him whenever I knew when we would be doing the program.

Finally, after weeks of trying to get in touch with the Muncie school districts, I received a phone call from the program director. She wanted to clarify the specifics of the program and the presentation date in order to send our proposal to the Muncie schools. She informed me that the proposals would be going out soon and to expect replies in a few days.

After speaking on the information about the Muncie schools and the proposed dates at our next general meeting, I could see we were not going to receive enough assistance from our own members to create a successful program. It became necessary for me to go out and recruit additional volunteers. I figured that since I have been a Resident Assistant for three years and I know what the job entails that maybe I should ask my counterparts to aid me in doing this program.

Resident Assistants are trained in diversity, leadership, and in being campus role models, so I saw this pairing as a perfect match. In the realm of the Resident Assistant job is the focus on making good choices for themselves and to assist in the creating of good choices by each and every resident on the residence hall floor. The R.A. on Ball State's campus works on a team of six to eight R.A.s including a Residence Hall Director and Assistant Residence Hall Director. This group together attempts to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, accepting, and of the building of a community. In this situation the R.A. becomes the epitome of correct choice making and fully realizes the power that comes from an incorrectly or correctly made choice.

I went to the Office of Housing and Residence Life to speak with Dr. Nick Nicklaus and Alan Hargrave to see if they felt my idea was a good one. Both approved overwhelmingly and said that they would be honored to have their Resident Assistants participating in such a beneficial program. I suggested in my meetings that the R.A.s be given some credit for doing this program, and in

agreement they suggested giving the R.A.s two R.A.I.S.E. (R.A. in service education) credits in return for participation. My Residence Hall Director then offered to send my program information letter to all the campus directors in order to get this information to the R.A.s. It took only about three days after this message went out through campus Vax-mail to begin receiving messages from interested R.A.s. During this same time, I received phone calls from representatives from both Longfellow Elementary and Garfield Elementary schools in Muncie. We agreed on the presentation date of November 20th and an audience of second through sixth grades at Longfellow, and the fifth through sixth grades at Garfield.

The next step was to contact speakers for our training session scheduled November 12th, a week before the presentation as planned. We offered two times, 7pm and 9pm, in order to get around time conflicts or night class. I contacted Anna Lamb again for this task and also an officer in charge of the project D.A.R.E. for Delaware county. In addition I asked for each school to send someone to inform our speakers of what types of schools we were going to , and what types of problems (drug or other related) their schools were experiencing. Anna told me that she wasn't positive she could help in our training, but she would at least send a graduate assistant in her place. The officer said that the date would be fine, and the schools said that there would be no problem in sending us a teacher to assist in our training.

We had our last Golden Key member meeting before the program on November 10th, the Tuesday before our training. At this meeting we discussed all the details of both the training and the actual program. This meeting worked very well to calm everyone's nerves about the program's readiness. From this point we moved on to our training sessions that Thursday. We had two training sessions on that Thursday, and as most things seemed to go with

this program, we were never left short of our share of surprises. Earlier Thursday evening our President Robin Schreiber received a phone call from Anna Lamb saying that she was not going to be able to do the training nor could she find anyone else. Luckily, Robin felt that she could take what she learned from last year's training session and from what she learned from speaking to Anna over the phone and put together an incredible presentation that helped us all learn wonderful things about ourselves. This one problem was not our only one to solve that night. Our officer did not respond to any phone calls or messages given during the previous week and we felt that he wouldn't show, but as usual we expected to deal with the problem as well as we could.

Our sessions both began by myself introducing our program and our speakers. Angie Cooksey then spoke to the group about the wonderful program that they are becoming involved with and basically opened up our training with some wonderful inspiration. Then Robin spoke and gave her incredible presentation and really brought us together as a group. During this presentation, some of our volunteers opened up to the group about the abuse problems that they had earlier in their lives. This seemed to fit in so well with our program and the training; it caused no problems and added a great deal more depth to our program. The program's ideals are to only have students participating who have never had any drug related problems, but sometimes to help a program, one needs to go against the ideals in order to bring in a different or better viewpoint.

Next was to come our officer in order to speak of the legal aspects of drug abuse, but in his place we were lucky enough to have a guest who arrived with the Longfellow teacher representative who works with people in business settings who have abuse problems. She talked about the effects these people have in their work atmosphere and in their homes with their



families. It helped give us an idea of what the home lives of these children might be. Also at this session was an art teacher from Longfellow Elementary to help us with any questions we had about the school and the students. At this first session we had about seventeen Resident Assistants along with a few Golden Key members, and overall the participation was incredible and very encouraging.

Our second training started at 9pm that evening, but there were some changes. Ange Cooksey wasn't able to speak and our first teacher had to leave, but we heard from a third grade teacher from Garfield Elementary. This training went well, but I think because of the time and smaller group of participants, it wasn't as intense or successful as the first. This is something that needs to be looked at in future programs.

The day of the presentation arrived and I was excited. I had put the speakers into groups that I thought would work well in terms of the personalities and presentation styles of the individuals involved. We had two separate groups, one going to Garfield and the other to Longfellow. About six speakers went to Garfield with our President Robin Schreiber, who would be leading the group. To Longfellow we took two cars and brought ten volunteers with us; five to present to fourth through sixth grades and five for the kindergarten through third grades.

Once we arrived at Longfellow I found out that the groups we would be speaking to had been changed; the kindergarten through third grade in one classroom and the fourth through sixth in the auditorium. This placed about a hundred students in each of these spaces, and the classroom we spoke in did not have this kind of capacity. Five of us, myself and four female Resident Assistants, took on this challenge, and a challenge it was. We first noticed that the room was too small for all these children, but there was no turning back. I

led off with an explanation of who we were and why we were there. I had to make sure that every word I said was at a level that all the students could understand. As I continued to speak I focused a great deal on the words "POWER" and "CHOICES", and that making the right choices can give you power in your life. I made sure that they knew it was all right to make a wrong choice, because they also have the power to do that, but that a person needs to learn from these wrong choices so later if that person needs to make the same choice again, he or she can make the right one. I seemed to have them under control at this time. I was having them yell the words "CHOICES" and "POWER" when I would ask them questions that required those responses. I did this for many reasons; one, to first get a little energy going, two, instill in them the words or topics to remember and that we would be focusing on, and three, to give my next volunteers something simple to build on in their talks. Our next four speakers did very well, especially for people doing this for the first time. I will admit that a couple were very nervous and a couple had some trouble with holding the students' attention and creating transition between points, but nothing that you wouldn't expect from a "rookie" (as I like to call them.) If things began to slow down I would jump in and bring the group back in with some questions or some more cheering.

We finished our talk and we then asked for the students to come up and talk to us if they wanted, or to just simply come up and pick out a sticker which had the **Best of America** words on it (These were included with certificates and posters in the program packet from the National Headquarters). For me this was the best part. I got down on my knees to talk to them; not to bring me down to their level, but to bring them up to mine. I said "hi" to the first little

young lady who came up to me. She must have been about seven and seemed very nervous, but without hesitation, she reached out and gave me a hug and said "Thank you for coming." For me I think it was one of the greatest gifts I had ever received in my life. I wanted to tell everyone in the room and the world what had just happened (later I think I actually did.) That gesture made this whole program worth it. That hug and thank you, along with the thirty to forty subsequent ones I received, told me that we reached all of these children and that they knew that we care. If there is anything I've learned in this program over the year and a half that I've been chairperson, it is that no matter if you do well or you completely flop, one message shows up above all the rest--you care. No one forces us to go out and speak to these students, we do it because we feel an obligation to hand down our knowledge of success, failure, love, hate, fear and a whole bunch of other things to the students so they can learn from us and we can help them, as the program says, to be **The Best of America**.

In the evaluations I received from this program (only from Longfellow), I read only negative comments. Neither group of teachers would recommend us to other schools or groups, and neither thought that our presentations were beneficial at all. For myself I think these negative responses were "the straw that broke the camel's back." All the trouble that my groups and myself had gone through seemed to have been lost as we received these types of responses. I became extremely hurt and worn down after this and I was ready to throw it all out the window. Then all of a sudden one day all the preaching I did to our volunteers about them doing a wonderful service to ourselves, these kids, and our country finally hit me. Why should I let these evaluations get me down? This was only our second attempt and personally, considering all the complications we had, I thought we all came together and did a wonderful

job. I then looked at the evaluations again, much more objectively this time, and made note of some of the comments made. More visuals, references to other programs done in the schools, and more small group discussion were some of these, but I will comment more fully on this topic in my next section summarizing my one and one half years of running this program and what kinds of things need to be looked to for the future.

Following our program I called the National Headquarters and asked Tina Lynn Cannon, the Associate Director of **The Best of America** program, if any chapter had ever sent out thank you letters to their **Best of America** volunteers. She said that no one had and asked if we would like to have the National Headquarters send out these letters with the Golden Key letterhead along with her and Stephen Pracht's, **The Best of America** National Program Director, signatures on them. I happily agreed to that and as soon as I had sent her a list of our volunteers, she sent those letters out. This, for me, became the final step in our Fall program for the 1992-93 school year, and next on my agenda was to assess and document the program.

**Spring of 1993**

**Sunny Heights Elementary School**

This semester our group took a trip to Indianapolis in order to present to the fourth through sixth graders of Sunny Heights Elementary school. The program was a very successful one with a group of Resident Assistants along with new Golden Key members speaking to this group of over 300 students. The lesson I and our group learned from this experience is to make sure that if the chairperson or a current Golden Key member is not doing the arrangements for the program, that whomever is doing this be in contact with them on a very regular basis. This problem of a lack of communication caused a great deal of stress on myself, our advisor, and the whole group that never should have occurred. In the end result the training session and the program were both probably the best we've had overall, but as always the stress is something we can do without.

***Problems with Volunteerism and the National  
Program Ideals***

During my experience as chair of the **Best of America** program I was challenged by many problems, but none more difficult than the recruitment of volunteers and the ideals set-up by the National Program of the types of volunteers to accept into the program. In recruiting volunteers for this program I saw a great lack of what is called Volunteerism. This would be described as the willingness to see something as beneficial to oneself or society as a whole and for this reason volunteering effort and support in it's cause. In our case this cause was the creating of an awareness of choices and the power of choices to young students, as well as a relationship between these students and college students that was primarily learning and supportive. In my eyes the program was not one in which a great deal was required of the volunteer; a one to one and a half hour training session and possibly the participation in one or more presentations given to the younger students. At times as chairperson I must have seen things too simply because I came in contact with this lack of volunteerism many times in my search for participants. This lack created a great burden not only physically, but emotionally, to the point of giving up, but because of my knowledge of this program's potential I kept on working. With the help of the Housing Department (Resident Assistants), some giving athletes, and some Golden Key members my excitement in this program was restored and some very successful presentations were done. This support showed me that we don't need a group of one-hundred to be successful, and that if I couldn't receive help from one group, go to the next and the next. Talk to your friends, advisors, or whomever else might have a suggestion or an idea. Yes, the volunteers will be hard to get, but once you have them they will see the purpose, the help it does, and the reactions it receives and never turn back. The word of your participants and supporters can be all you need in creating for the program a larger participant pool, and



overall a more successful program.

The second challenge came about through my search for volunteers, and this was how to deal with the National Program's ideal that the volunteers we accept into our program were individuals who have never had any previous drug problems or for that matter experimented with any drugs at all (including alcohol). This ideal not only restricted the volunteers we could search for and accept, but it restricted the quality of our program. With only volunteers who have never had any experience with drugs, we in a sense put ourselves above or away from people who have, or out of touch with students who have had family members with these experiences. A program like ours will go awry if it cannot make attempts to connect with all the individuals involved. Instead of the program showing that the decisions being made were bad, it was showing in a way that the people who made these decisions were bad. Deciding that the creation of these separations and wrong images about our program was something I did not want to do, I encouraged the participation of all people into our program removing the problem with any differences or past experiences. I needed the experience of all different types of people in order to relate to each individual being spoken to. I as certain type of person will have a student relate better to me if I have lived a life similar to his or her's and we come from worlds also similar. Another person in the program would be able to reach other students much better than I, and that is how it is supposed to be. The diversity strengthens the program and allows for all of the students to connect, but restrictions only close off the program to certain individuals and in the end results in a program doomed for failure.

**Summary and Ideas for the Future of  
The Best of America - Say No to Drugs program**

In looking back over the past year and a half of being the chairperson for **The Best of America**, I see a program that is possibly one of the greatest things I've been involved with in my entire life. This program and its ideals of the choices we make and the power of making choices are not only beneficial to the students we reach, but also to the communities in which we live. With this program we as college students give our time, knowledge, and experience to the college students of tomorrow, not to tell them exactly how to live their lives or to tell them what is right or wrong, but to give them examples of the choices that have been right for us and the choices that have enabled us to become the people that we are today. We want the students to learn to be responsible for themselves and the choices that they make because in the long run they are the ones who will be responsible for their choices.

For us as college students, this program not only allows us to develop our presentation skills, but to sharpen our ability to communicate clearly at an appropriate level for our audience. It furthers our self-realization and our sense of community service as we realize that we are doing something wonderful for our future. Being involved in the program can be something that you will remember all of your life.

The program the **Best of America** is not a finished program or something that ends with this paper. It is something that becomes a continuing learning experience with both set-backs and successes. In order to create a successful program people need to take upon themselves risks and follow some possible ill-fated dreams, but in the long run it creates an easier, more successful experience for the next group of participants. In reading this paper and in the creation of your program see the opportunities and the possibilities that are there to explore, and attempt to take the **Best of America** program to new levels and heights that at this time were not possible.

## Things to Remember when Coordinating The Best of America

1. Make sure to have assistants!!! (at least two beside yourself) These people are wonderful to delegate tasks to, bounce ideas off of, and each have two shoulders to cry on if necessary.
  2. Use anyone or anything you can to receive assistance physically; running errands, making phone calls, etc., or monetarily; receiving transportation, food for training sessions, matching Ball State apparel, or even funding. This all brings assistance and publicity to the program and will make the success much easier to accomplish.
  3. Before support for anything is reached make sure to put together an information sheet outlining the program, your goals for the year, and any necessary information (names, addresses, etc..)
  4. Always leave enough time in the planning of the program to allow for additional training sessions, changes in program date, or any other problems that might arise (cancellation of speakers, night classes, etc..)
  5. Attempt to make appointments early in the school year with administrators, principals, or teachers because many programs (drug awareness and other ) will be going on and there might not be any openings or any need for the program late in the semester. Also, there may be a chance to use our program to supplement others going on in the schools
- when going into these appointments have information sheets ready, what you want to say ready, and don't be afraid to ask for the things you want. Have some dates picked out and inform this person of your training sessions in order to receive a representative of the school at the session.
- make sure the person you speak to understands what this program is about and knows how this program will run.
- See about having the teachers of the participating classrooms come to a training session or have a meeting with them at the school. The teachers a lot of the time are the key to the program. They can be assistants, can speak to the students before and after the program about the topics focussed on, and they can give you ideas prior to the program of the things they would like to see happen.
- Make sure you have the complete administrator, principal, or teacher support because it can help out in the long run.
6. As I mentioned earlier get the things from the schools that you want and need. Do you want to do this in classrooms or the auditorium? Which grades will you target? How long will the program last? Do you need a microphone?

-See where you will be speaking and make sure you and your volunteers will be comfortable speaking there.

-Don't ever stop yourself from asking for what you want because you are providing a wonderful service to these schools for nothing.

7. Try to sit with each group of speaking volunteers prior to the program to talk about speaking ideas, possible skits, questions to ask, and to assist with relieving some of the nervousness the speakers are feeling.

8. Send out thank you letters to anyone and everyone who did anything for you. It will definitely pay back in the long run.

9. Document everything you and the group does (in case you would like to do a thesis like this, and for the chapter summary folder that goes to the National Conference each year.)

10. When searching for volunteers don't ever limit yourself to certain groups or even to just people who have never had drug problems. Each person can give a different aspect on choices and the power of choices that no one else can give. Also you want speakers that are related to the children racially, physically, and in their experiences. Diversity is the key to having a program that can contact everyone it is being presented to.

**11. MOST IMPORTANT-FOR YOU AND ALL VOLUNTEERS.** No matter what happens throughout this program always remember that you and your fellow volunteers are doing a wonderful thing. You are going out of your way to do something not for money, fame, or even a resume' filler. You are doing something for someone else, namely the kids. **ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT !!!**

## **Training and Set-up Material**

**The Best Of America**  
***The Golden Key Honor Society***  
***Ball State University***

**Introduction to the Problem**

Substance abuse is a major problem in our society. It exists at all income levels, all age levels and in every societal institution. Although drug and alcohol abuse affects all segments of society, it is children who are most vulnerable to its influence.

As the availability and potency of drugs is on the increase, drugs are now not only a dangerous problem in high school, but also in middle and elementary schools. Drug use is occurring at an earlier age and the percentage of students using drugs by the sixth grade has tripled over the last decade. It is also evident that television, movies and peers have a great influence on the temptation to use drugs, and, although it is consistently identified as among the top problems facing our nation, many Americans do not recognize the prevalence of drug abuse in schools.

All children should be considered "at risk" concerning substance abuse. At special risk are the children of drug/alcohol abusers who may have a predisposition towards the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

The road from initial drug use to dependency is not an inevitable one. Unfortunately, as time progresses, it becomes difficult to overcome drug dependency. It is imperative efforts are directed at children before they start using drugs.

The purpose of this program is to provide children with valuable life skills which will allow them to maintain a lifestyle of achievement. Volunteers serve as positive role models as they make presentations about decision making, goal setting, life planning and the value of an education.

**History of the Program**

The program THE BEST OF AMERICA was created by the Golden Key Honor Society of Florida State University in September, 1986. After meeting with FSU president Dr. Bernard Slinger and the athletic director, in order to get the athletic department's support, the group was on it's way. The athletic department agreed to help and began contacting school principals about allowing Golden Key members and student athletes to visit area school and deliver a " say no to drugs" message to the students.

Over the first three years, THE BEST OF AMERICA program reached over 350,000 students nationwide. During the 1990-91 school year, 45 Golden Key chapters participated, as 300 elementary, middle and high schools were visited by Golden Key members, varsity athletes and other student leaders who made presentations and distributed educational literature.

### **Ball State University's Involvement**

We here at BALL STATE UNIVERSITY have now, in 1992, been given the challenge and the opportunity to create our own program and show our greatness in the effort against drugs and in keeping kids in school. Our Golden Key Honor Society has an energetic and inspired group of students ready to begin this challenge, and this challenge is one we will focus on a great deal for this year and for years to come. But this year we are just beginning and we will need as much support from the administration, faculty, and students of Ball State University as they can muster. This is why we are presenting this program to you. We can use your experience, participation, and advice a great deal in our effort and we would appreciate it greatly. As the chairman of The Best of America program, I will be contacting you to discuss this program and answer any questions you may have. I am looking forward to talking with you and I appreciate the time that you are taking away from your schedule to do so.

Rick Karmik



Chairman *The Best of America* program  
phone # 285-4801  
Hurst Hall Resident Assistant

Robin Schreiber  
President of The Golden Key Honor Society

Angie Cooksey  
Advisor to Golden Key



## THE BEST OF AMERICA CHECK LIST

Use this check list to make sure that all of your planning steps have been covered. The program coordinator should fill it out and use it as a reference when discussing their local program with their chapter advisor, chapter officers, regional director or with the director/associate director of the national program.

<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
_____	University Support Secured (University President, Vice President, etc.)
_____	Athletic Department Participation Secured
	Contact: _____ Phone: _____
_____	Access to Area Schools/Agencies for Presentations Approved
_____	Presentation Date(s) Set
	Date(s): _____
_____	Volunteers Identified (Golden Key members, varsity athletes, other students)
_____	Training Date and Location Set
	Date: _____
_____	Presentation Assignments Set (Presenters, Times, Contacts)
_____	Training Session Speakers Confirmed
_____	Training, Educational and Promotional Materials Received
_____	News Media Contacted
_____	Presentations Conducted
_____	Evaluations Completed

**THE BEST OF AMERICA  
VOLUNTEER REPORT**

COMPLETE THIS REPORT AND TURN IT IN IMMEDIATELY UPON YOUR RETURN FROM YOUR PRESENTATION. PLEASE PRINT.

1. Name of College or University: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date of Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of School/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of School/Agency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_
6. School/Agency Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of Presentations: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If you go classroom-to-classroom)
8. Grade level(s) or ages of students: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number of students in attendance: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Time of arrival at the school/agency: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Time of departure from the school/agency: \_\_\_\_\_



Presentation

10. Describe your presentation.
- a. When did you conduct your session?  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Where did you conduct your session?  
School: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Grade Level(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Number of Presentations: 1 2 3 4 More
  - e. Number of students in each presentation: 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
4) \_\_\_\_\_ 5) \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Reaction

11. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being unsuccessful and 5 being very successful, how successful did you feel your presentation was?

Unsuccessful			Very Successful	
1	2	3	4	5

12. Using the same scale, how successful was your partner's/team's presentation?

Unsuccessful			Very Successful	
1	2	3	4	5

13. What presentation techniques (e.g., question/answer, short stories, etc.) worked best for you? Why?

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14. What would you do differently if you were to do it again?

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15. What additional help did you need?

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## The Best of America Teacher Evaluation

**Instructions to the Presenter(s):** We appreciate your participation in The Best of America program and your interest in serving as a positive role model for young people. Please fill out the name, address and phone number of the local program coordinator in the space provided on the back of this form. Give the form to the classroom teacher at the conclusion of your presentation.

**Instructions to the Teacher:** We hope the Golden Key Best of America program was beneficial for your students. We welcome and appreciate your comments and feedback. Thank you for your assistance.

Please circle the number which best describes your reaction to each statement. Return the form to the person listed on the back.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Presenters' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The program was on time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The program was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The presentation content was informative.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The presentation content was age appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The presenters were well prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The presenters were knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The presentations were beneficial.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Audience interest was evident.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The handout materials were beneficial.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The handout materials were appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I would recommend this presentation to other schools/groups.	1	2	3	4	5

Continued on Back

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY GOLDEN KEY HONOR  
SOCIETY  
THE BEST OF AMERICA-1992

In early December the new members of the Golden Key met with the current executive members in order to elect the new executive council and talk about the group as a whole. Prior to the election a new program was discussed and a chairperson position was announced to go along with it. The Golden Key "Best of America-Say No to Drugs" program was this and I was elected it's chair. That night I received the information folder, received names of people willing to help and was on my way.

Over Ball State's winter break I was able to look over the program and see all that was involved. In doing this I noticed the amount of work that would be necessary to make this program a success, a task I felt our chapter could accomplish or at least begin to accomplish in order make a success next year. At our first meeting after break (January 16, 1992) I explained to the group the observations I made when looking through the informational booklet, but I said that I feel as a group working together we could make this program a success. At that time we discussed all the specifics of the program; what schools we would take this to and what age groups we would focus on. We decided to stay relatively small this semester, one or two schools, and that we would focus on the fifth to ninth grades. With this information along with the informational booklet I was able to create a program explanation for any meetings I had with administrators or supervisors that would be for them to keep for reference and for an explanation of what our objectives were for the year.

On the 11th of February I met with our advisor Angie Cooksey in order to discuss the specifics of the program that the group discussed and what routes we wanted to take. She agreed on all of the group's ideas and felt that it was most important that we received our initial base this year and next year went on from there. We then discussed what routes should be taken to get university and athletic support and we agreed on trying the outline that the booklet had given and see how that worked. Cooksey then sent me on my way with a boost of confidence and the safety of knowing that if any problems occurred she was there to help.

Our route for university support was our Dean of Students, Dean Mikesell. I met with him on February 14th, discussed our program with him along with what kinds of ideas he could give us to help this program be a success. Dean Mikesell felt the program idea was a very much needed one and that the route we were taking was probably the best to take. He gave me the names of the people I needed to contact in the schools and the athletic department and wished me and our group the best of luck.

On February 24th I met with Dr. Cathy Palmer of the Muncie school district in order to make our first step with the schools of involvement. Cathy and I talked over the program and she agreed with me on the necessity of the program and that she thought it would work wonderfully in her district. I explained to her that this year we wanted to stay relatively small and only focus on Muncie's Grissom school and Burriss school (Ball State Lab school), and that any assistance she could give us would be

greatly appreciated. She said that during that next week she would approach both the school board and Grissom's principal, Doug Steward, with the program and that she would have Mr. Steward contact me as soon as possible. About two weeks later Mr. Steward contacted me and explained that this year our program wouldn't be necessary because of four other drug awareness programs going on, but next year I should call him and see what the situation was then.

On February 26th I then met with the principal of Burriss School, Mark Meyer, and discussed the program with him. He felt that this was a wonderful idea and could be utilized well in his school. Mr. Meyer then gave me the name of the school's program coordinator, Melissa McDaniel, and told me to set up a meeting with her to agree on a time and date. On March 13th I had my first meeting with Ms. McDaniel and again I explained the program and informed her of all the specifics. She liked the ideas and explained the situation in Burriss and gave some suggestions on approaching these students. She then told me that she would take this idea to the teachers to see if there is any additional information that could be offered our way along with what times of the day would be good for them. Together we decided our target date would be Friday, April 10th, and if there were any problems she would contact me. The next step came in receiving our athletic support and setting up our training session.

In going through the process of getting the athletic support our group found nothing but problems. We eventually had to go directly to the athletes and found a little more success but not until a week or so before the program. This provided us with a problem for our first training session (March 26th). I had contacted Anna Lamb, our University Drug and Alcohol Awareness Educator, Jim Hanna, a retired police captain in Juvenile and Narcotics, and Carolee Kramer, the guidance counselor at Burriss School to assist us learning more about the drug situation and how to approach the students on this topic. Our problem resulted from a small turn out of participants that only consisted of Golden Key members without any athletes. The session was still beneficial to all who participated, but from the response we knew we were going to need quite a few more people and definitely another training session. We set a second session for April 9th: the day before the program.

From the time the first training session was complete and the second was begun our Golden Key group had a few meetings at which I kept everyone posted, and I tried to put together some committee meetings. These became very tough because of time conflicts and because of the lack of contact between the members and I. This problem resulted from the fact of phone calls not being returned and messages not being relayed. This slowed our group program and really pushed us all to our limits, but we proved we were up to the task.

Our second training session came quickly, but we had a much better turn out. Going directly to the athletes helped out considerably and allowed us to easily fill the time slots we had set for the next day. At this session we showed the video tape provided to us and had discussion between the people that participated in the first session and the new participants at this one. Everyone seemed a little confused about what they were going to say and how to say it, but that we felt was expected and if we went in and spoke honestly, brought the students up to our level, and gave full effort everything would work out fine. This is what we did.

April 10th arrived and I cannot speak for everyone else, but I was excited but very nervous. We had five hour blocks set up with Ms. McDaniel between the hours of 8:00am to 2:00pm and each participant was to arrive at her office ten minutes prior in order to be shown to the speaking area. We spoke during the students' gym classes and allowed time after each session to talk one-on-one and to pass out posters and stickers. Each session brought up new adventures but I think we did O.K. with them. The key for each of us seemed to be the message we carried and wanted to give to the students and that we were willing to be here for these students to show in person the choices that we've made, where we are in life, and that we never needed drugs.

Since the time we did our program we have been asked back by Burriss School for next year and also asked by the Indianapolis Colts to do this program with them next year in the Indianapolis city schools. We are very excited about these opportunities to work with these great people and give our message on a larger scale. And again I'm sure that when everything is scheduled and ready to go for next year we will do our best to relay the "Best of America" message to these youth letting them know that there are people out there who care enough about them to come to speak to them, talk to them, and help them on their way to a good life away from the falseness of drugs focussing rather on the building of their minds.

Best of America Chairperson  
Rick Karmik



# **The Best Of America** *The Golden Key Honor Society* *Ball State University*

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We here at BALL STATE UNIVERSITY have in the 1992-1993 school year been given the challenge and the opportunity to improve our previous program from the spring and again show our greatness in the effort against drugs and in keeping kids in school. Our Golden Key Honor Society has an energetic and inspired group of students ready to begin this challenge, and this challenge is one we will focus on a great deal for this year and for years to come. This year we are trying to make improvements over our beginning last year and we will need as much support from the administration, faculty, and students of Ball State University as they can muster. This is why we are presenting this program to you. We can use your experience, participation, and advice a great deal in our effort and we would appreciate it greatly. As the chairman of The Best of America program, I will be contacting you to discuss this program and answer any questions you may have. I am looking forward to talking with you and I appreciate the time that you are taking away from your schedule to do so.

Rick Karmik



Chairman *The Best of America* program  
phone # 285-4790  
Hurst Hall Resident Assistant

Robin Schreiber  
President of The Golden Key Honor Society

Angie Cooksey  
Advisor to Golden Key

# Organization moves against drugs

## Golden Key talk with school kids

By TRICIA GEDEMER  
Staff Reporter

The Ball State Golden Key Honor Society will travel to Garfield and Longfellow Elementary schools Friday as part of their national alcohol and drug abuse prevention program.

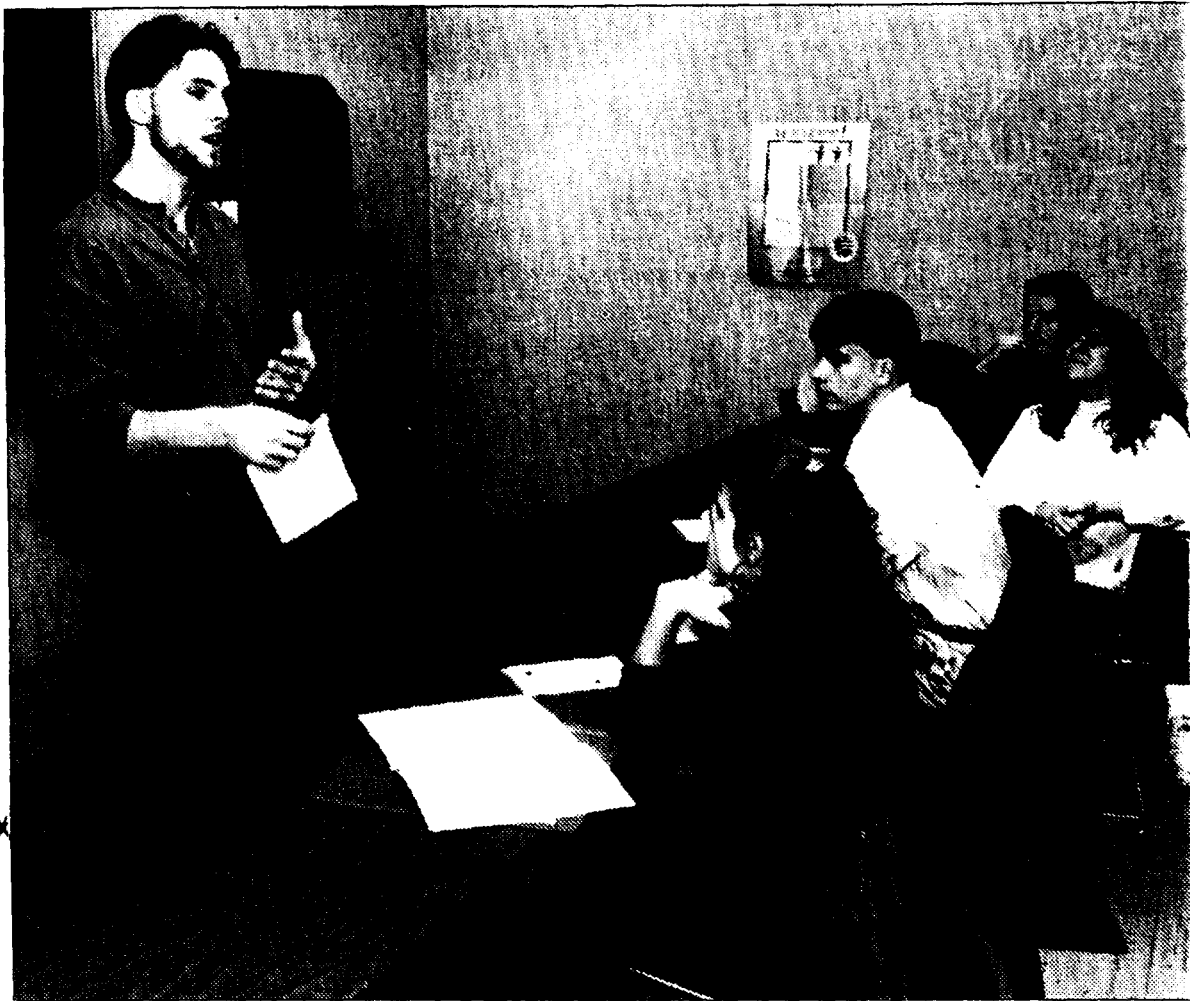
"We will be holding sessions to talk to the kids at these schools about saying no to drugs but we are going to try to gear towards educating the children about making choices in their lives and making the right ones. One of them being to say no to drugs," said Rick Karmik, chair of the program.

"The people visiting the schools have never had a drug problem. So the kids won't be getting the usual recoverers stories," said Karmik.

Karmik said in order for drug programs to be effective they must be interesting and understandable to their audiences.

"We may have skits performed for the children to watch and get the idea of what we're telling them. We will probably have to do this with the younger children so they can fully understand what we are trying to tell them," said Karmik.

Seventeen Ball State stu-



Senior Rick Karmik addresses Golden Key Honor Society members from Ball State.

dents will also talk with the children.

"We are also going to let the children feel that they can talk to us about anything. That we are at the same level they are. We are not teachers but friends to them," said Karmik.

This is the second year

that the organization has done the program. Last year they travelled to Burriss School and talked to students in the fifth through ninth grades.

"We do our own training and transporting of volunteers which is a benefit for us," said Karmik.

By STEVEN KING°Chief Photographer

The Golden Key Honor Society promotes scholastic achievement among college students and encourages voluntary service.

For more information about speaking, participating or getting involved with the society please contact, Rick Karmik at 285-4790.

## **Correspondences**

Rick Karmik  
Hurst Hall  
March 30, 1992

Ms. Anna Lamb  
Alcohol Education Educator  
Health Center

Dear Anna,

I just wanted to write you in order to thank you for your help last Thursday night. You helped create what I felt to be a very successful training session for us in the Golden Key Honor Society. I think you made each one of us really think about what we're going to this school for and what we need to say in order to get this message across to the students.

Again, I want to thank you for your help, and I'll make sure to keep you up to date with the situation of our program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rick Karmik", with a horizontal line underneath.

Rick Karmik  
Chairman of The Best of America

Rick Karmik  
Hurst Hall  
March 30, 1992

Mr. Jim Hanna,

I just wanted to write you in order to thank you for your help last Thursday night. You helped create what I felt to be a very successful training session for us in the Golden Key Honor Society. I think you assisted us greatly on a lot of the real facts about the drug situation today and how to approach relaying these facts to the students in the school.

Again, I want to thank you for your help, and I'm sure either Mrs. Cooksey or I will keep you up to date with the situation of our program.

Sincerely,



Rick Karmik  
Chairman of The Best of America

Rick Karmik  
Hurst Hall  
March 30, 1992

Ms. Carolee Kramer  
Assistant Professor of Guidance & Counseling  
Burris School

Dear Carolee,

I just wanted to write you in order to thank you for your help last Thursday night. You helped create what I felt to be a very successful training session for us in the Golden Key Honor Society. I think you assisted us greatly in our attempt to understand the types of students we will be speaking to and how to approach them with our message. I also would like to thank you for your assistance in getting this program accomplished in the Burris School.

Again, I want to thank you for your help, and I'm sure I will be seeing you again very soon.

Sincerely,



Rick Karmik  
Chairman of The Best of America

# Muncie Community Schools

2501 N. OAKWOOD AVENUE • MUNCIE, IN 47304-2399

*Prepare Now -- Anticipate the Future*

TO: All Principals  
FROM: Cathy Palmer *Cathy*  
SUBJ: Golden Key Honor Society  
Drug Free Program: The Best of America  
DATE: October 19, 1992

I have been contacted by Rick Karmik, Chariman, "The Best of America" an anti-drug program sponsored by Golden Key Honor Society at Ball State University.

If you would like to request a college student to come and speak to your students, please call Rick Karmik at 285-4790. Rick presented last year at Grissom.

I have attached a brochure explaining the program.

Thank you.

pc: Heller  
Danglade  
Karmik



Dear Directors and Assistant Directors,

Please relay this information to your Resident Assistants! We now have an opportunity for you to receive two RAISE credits for this semester. Rick Karmik, and RA at Hurst Hall is the Chairperson of "The Best of America-Say No to Drugs" program and would like RAs to be speakers.

Speakers will be required to go to a training session and sign-up for a time to speak in order to receive the credits. The speakers will speak about how they have said "no" to drugs, along with possibly answering questions about college life, what it's like growing up, and what life in general is like as you grow and become an adult. The speaker must be prepared for anything and for a lot of fun.

The training session is set for November 12th (Thursday) at 7pm and 9pm in the Korina Room (Student Center), and the date for the program is November 20th (Friday). Transportation to the schools will be provided.

Please encourage your RAs to participate in this program. It is very helpful for our youth and in getting the RAs and the Department of Housing and Residence Life the credit it deserves.

Please, if you would like to participate call Rick Karmik at 5-4790 so he can explain the program more fully, and if you have any questions please do the same.

March 22, 1993

Mr. Sam Hanna  
Anderson Police Department

Dear Sam:

I want to thank you so much for your presentation given to us in Golden Key last Thursday night on the effects of drugs on the user and the people around the user. You helped us see what drugs really can do to all of the people around the user, not just the user him/herself. Also the confidence you instilled in us about our program and the message we are giving, helped our program result in a large success.

Again, I'd like to thank you for your help and the little boost I think we at Golden Key needed to make this message of "saying no" a good one. We came in contact with a great deal of kids last Friday, and I hope with the words we spoke and the stories we told we gave a message that will in the future help make your job a little easier.

Sincerely,

Rick Karmik  
Chairperson of The Best of America-Say no to drugs program

March 22, 1993

Ms. Sali Eddlemon  
Health Services  
Ball State University

Dear Sali:

I want to thank you so much for your presentation given to us in Golden Key last Thursday night on presentation skills and techniques. You helped us more than you could ever know. The confidence level alone from our group and from myself, because of your presentation, helped our program result in a large success.

We chose as a group to use the "key words", "choices" and "power". We had the kids screaming these each time they heard them, and boy could they scream! You would have been proud.

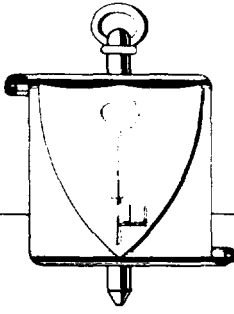
Again, I'd like to thank you for your help (especially on such short notice) and the little boost I think we at Golden Key needed to make this message of "saying no" a good one. Anything we can ever do to return this favor please contact us because we would definitely be glad to.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rick Karmik", with a horizontal line underneath.

Rick Karmik

Chairperson of The Best of America-Say no to drugs program



# Golden Key National Honor Society

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS 1189 PONCE de LEON AVENUE ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30306-4624 (404) 377-2400

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Dr. Walter R. Herndon  
Distinguished Professor, Botany  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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Bradford W. Rainey, CPA  
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Dr. Kenneth Shaw  
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Dr. Patricia S. Terrell  
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National Vice President  
California State  
Polytechnic University, Pomona

Dr. Lawrence A. Tanzi  
National Secretary  
University of Central Florida

Peter Hartigan  
National Student Representative  
Ike University

February 1, 1993

Dave Baker  
Resident Assistant  
Clevenger Hall  
Muncie, IN 47306

Dear Dave:

I'm writing to thank you for serving as a volunteer for The Best of America program which was hosted last semester by the Ball State University chapter of Golden Key National Honor Society. The time and energy you spent training, planning and making presentations to local elementary and secondary students is greatly appreciated, not only by the national headquarters but by those at the local level as well. Your participation in this activity is a strong indication of your commitment to better our universities and communities.

Over the next few years we hope to see the affects of your positive influence through lower drug use among our nation's youth. However, for now, we have received strong positive feedback from the students which tells us that your presence was effective and that the students learned from your presentation. You should be congratulated for the part you played in making this program successful.

Thank you again for the commitment you made to this worthwhile program. I encourage you to participate in future Best of America opportunities or any other programs which will allow you to use your abilities and talents to benefit others.

Sincerely,

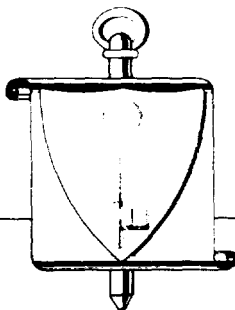
*Steve Pracht*

Stephen C. Pracht  
National Program Director

*Tina Lynn Cannon*

Tina Lynn Cannon  
Associate National Program Director

cc: Angie Cooksey, chapter advisor  
Rick Karmik, Best of America chairperson



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Dr. Lawrence A. Tanzi  
National Secretary  
University of Central Florida

Peter Hartigan  
National Student Representative  
Duke University

February 1, 1993

Theresa L. Kleck  
611 N. Tillotson  
Muncie, IN 47304

Dear Teri:

I'm writing to thank you for serving as a volunteer for The Best of America program which was hosted last semester by the Ball State University chapter of Golden Key National Honor Society. The time and energy you spent training, planning and making presentations to local elementary and secondary students is greatly appreciated, not only by the national headquarters but by those at the local level as well. Your participation in this activity is a strong indication of your commitment to better our universities and communities.

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Sincerely,

*Steve Pracht*

Stephen C. Pracht  
National Program Director

*Tina Lynn Cannon*  
Tina Lynn Cannon  
Associate National Program Director

cc: Angie Cooksey, chapter advisor  
Rick Karmik, Best of America chairperson

## **Pamphlets and Posters**

# The Best of America

This certifies that I,

Want to be the best that I can be.

I will make decisions which will determine the quality of my life.  
Therefore, I pledge that I will maintain a drug free lifestyle. I will do my  
best in school and will be involved in activities that promote good health.

I will encourage my friends and peers to do the same so that they, too,  
may be the best that they can be.

*Gray D. White*

Golden Key National President

*Stephen Racht*

Program Director



Teacher

Parent or Guardian

*Sponsored by Golden Key National Honor Society*



Phil Coale/Democrat

FSU football player LeRoy Butler signs autographs for students at Griffin Middle School on Monday

# Students help students 'Say No'

By Arthur R. Brown Jr.  
and Kristy L. Collins  
Democrat staff writers

Florida State University athletes and members of the Golden Key National Honor Society teamed up Monday in a battle much tougher than athletics or academics.

"Say No To Drugs" was the plea from more than 135 student athletes and honor students to 58 area elementary, middle and high schools. The students visited schools in Leon, Gadsden and Wakulla counties as a part of the fourth annual anti-drug campaign.

"Our purpose is for FSU students to become involved in a significant way with younger people in the Tallahassee community, hoping to influence them to be achievers and not substance abusers," said Sherrill Ragans, Golden Key adviser at Florida State.

Ragans said the program is a national model to bring athletes and other

The kids really look up to college athletes and honor students. We really should set an example.  
— Bianca Stevens, FSU volleyball player

students together. It was started in Tallahassee in 1986 by Board of Regents Chancellor Charles Reed.

Dave Roberts, a junior tight end for the FSU football team, told an audience at Godby High School that "they need to be responsible enough to say no."

"There are going to be choices that they have been, or are going to be confronted with," Roberts said.

Bianca Stevens, an FSU volleyball player, spoke from the heart as she spoke to an estimated 600 students at

Ruediger Elementary School.

"I was shocked at the amount of things first-, second-, third- and fourth-graders knew at their age," Stevens said. "They were really educated and really aware of different drugs. ... I didn't know these things about drugs at their age."

Stevens said she and other athletes have a responsibility to the younger generation.

"The kids really look up to college athletes and honor students," she said. "We really should set an example."

Roberts said he thought he got through to some students.

"I've never been swarmed like that for autographs after the (anti-drug) presentation," he said. "If one person listens and we can sway his opinion not to use drugs, the program is worthwhile."

Stevens echoed Roberts' sentiments: "I think if you help one kid say no, you really are making a difference."



State of Florida

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Resolution 3787

By Representative Rudd

A resolution commending the members of the Florida State University Golden Key National Honor Society and Athletic Department for the success of their "Say No to Drugs" program.

WHEREAS, the "Say No to Drugs" program has had 4 extremely successful years getting the message across that drugs are dangerous and can destroy students' lives forever, and

WHEREAS, the Florida State University Golden Key National Honor Society and Florida State University Athletic Department have instituted the "Say No to Drugs" program which has reached 70,000 students at 50 schools annually, and

WHEREAS, the "Say No to Drugs" program has been wholeheartedly supported by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and has been the model for a national program of the Golden Key National Honor Society entitled the "Best of America Say No," and

WHEREAS, the "Say No to Drugs" program goals have been to educate first through twelfth graders in the importance of setting goals and making decisions which have a positive impact on these students' lives and to keep drugs out of this process, and

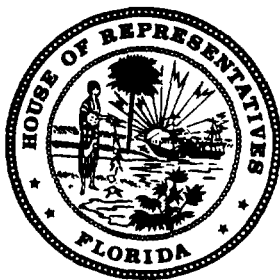
WHEREAS, Golden Key members and athletes showed enthusiastic support of the "Say No to Drugs" program, and school children responded positively to the Florida State University students' visits and related this enthusiasm through personal contact and letters, NOW, THEREFORE,

*Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Florida:*

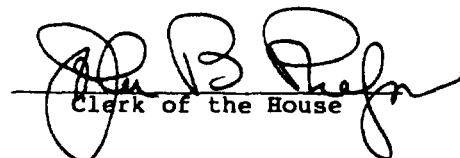
That the House of Representatives of the State of Florida hereby commends the athletes and Golden Key National Honor Society members of Florida State University for their contribution to educating the youth of Florida concerning the drug problem and encourages them to continue their good work in the program while also encouraging other educational institutions to adopt similar programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be presented to Florida State University President Bernard Sliger, Athletic Director Bob Goin, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Advisor to the Golden Key National Honor Society Sherrill W. Ragans, members of the Florida State University Golden Key National Honor Society, the student athletes, and the National Council of Golden Key National Honor Society.

*This is to certify the foregoing was adopted on May 23, 1990.*



  
Speaker

  
Clerk of the House



Students at North Cache Middle School listen intently to a presentation on drug abuse by USU volunteer students. / Mark Rugg photo

# USU students tell kids to say no



By **MICHELLE KINSEY**  
assistant features editor

"When someone asks you if you want to do drugs, you're supposed to say no," said Brian De Gasser, sixth grader at North

Cache Middle School. "They are harmful to your body."

Classmate Travis Ravsten said although he has never been pressured by anyone to do drugs, he would say no because "I just don't want to do drugs. I learned they are bad from TV, my parents and my teacher, Mrs. Roe."

Dannette Ludwig, secretary of Utah State University's Gold Key Honor Society, is committee chairman for "The Best of America Says No" program. She said Gold Key has been educating children nationwide about the dangers of using drugs.

"Gold Key has had a nationwide program that has been going on since 1986, but this is only the second year we've done it at USU," she said.

The program used over 200 volunteers from USU this year, who traveled to local public schools to warn the students of the potential problems of drug abuse. The greatest share of the support, she said, was from the football team, which provided 40 volunteers for the program.

Wednesday, four USU football players: Eric Salter, Steve Robinson, Mo Hall, and Keith Roberson volunteered to help with Gold Key's "Say No" program by speaking to sixth graders at North Cache Middle School.

"Pretty soon you'll be at the age where you'll

be tempted by people to try alcohol and drugs," Salter said to the students. "You just have to find other ways to keep yourself up and going without alcohol and drugs."

Robinson said he was approached by a person wanting him to do drugs when he was in third grade.

"I was lucky to have had the teachings at home that drugs were bad," he said, and related an experience from his personal life.

"My brother had an athletic scholarship and a really bright future in front of him but he lost it because he got into drugs," Robinson said. "He is so strung out he can't even pay the rent. My father has to take care of him. It has really affected him physically, too. He is so skinny now and unhealthy."

"You'll get approached — it doesn't matter what age you are," Hall said. "But you can be cool and not go along with the crowd. What it all comes down to is what you end up doing with yourself. It's all up to you."

Salter explained that though many people might not realize it, alcohol is a drug.

"Alcohol takes a toll on your body," he said. "It affects your liver, your mind and other parts of your body."

"I used to drink, but the coach told us, as football players, not to, so I had to make the decision of what was more important to me," he said. "I could take a football scholarship that would pay for my education, or I could drink. I decided my future was more important than drinking."

Salter said he found that being a football

player, drinking and doing other drugs contradicted what his athletic training was doing for him physically.

"It doesn't make sense to tear down your body when you're trying to become stronger," he said, and talked about steroids specifically.

"Steroids are really dangerous. People think when they take steroids they will become better, stronger, faster people — Wrong," Salter said. "Ben Johnson was considered the fastest man on earth until it was found out that he had been using steroids. Steroids are illegal so his gold medal was taken away. I imagine his coaches and all of Canada were really upset."

He said side effects of steroids can make people fat after they've stopped taking them and are also responsible for sterility in some cases.

Roberson said he thought young kids had a good chance of being approached to get into drugs because they are considered to be naive about their bodies and about drugs.

"People also might be jealous of you and want to tear you down," he said. "They just want to take you down to their level. But you're response is easy — just walk away."

Hall said he hasn't been asked recently to do drugs because anyone knowing the type of person he is knows he wouldn't be interested.

"You have to stand up for yourself and let people know what you believe," he said.

"It is sad. You should want to be like you are now — you should be happy, having fun. Alcohol and drugs aren't going to help you achieve that," Hall said.

## **Bibliography**

1. Pilkin, Wilma, *Chemical Dependency and How Society May Reduce the Problem*—Term Paper, Indiana University, Spring 1992.
2. *The Best of America Program*—Manual, Golden Key National Honor Society, Atlanta, Georgia, October 1991.