

NEWS RELEASE (REVISED)
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Contact:

Bill Deiz, Oregon Partnership/CARSA...503-244-5211

Bridget Roemmich, CARSA...503-244-5211

Tammy Stringham, Oregon State Police.....503-378-3720 X 4436

Kathy Verger Muscus, Soroptimist.....541-267-5540

**TEDDY BEAR/BACKPACK CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED FOR DRUG
ENDANGERED CHILDREN PLACED IN FOSTER CARE**

Even as home meth labs have declined in Oregon, the need for foster care for drug endangered children continues to strain Oregon's foster care system. Reports from around the state confirm that children rescued from homes in which drugs, especially methamphetamine, are used, continue to be placed in foster care at very high levels.

According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, alcohol and drug issues, including methamphetamine, represent the largest, single, family problem when abuse and neglect are present.

Often these drug-endangered children face a double trauma: Not only do they suddenly lose their parents, they also too often lose everything with which they are familiar: their toys, their clothing, even their school supplies, when drugs, such as methamphetamine, contaminate their home environment.

With the cooperation of state, county and local law enforcement, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the SOROPTIMIST clubs statewide and CARSA, (Community Action to Reduce Substance Abuse), a campaign has been launched to provide Teddy Bears and other new toys, and backpacks filled with clothing and school supplies, to these drug-endangered children placed in foster care.

For the younger kids, a Teddy Bear can be a comforting connection to help them in their transition to a new life. For all of the kids, backpacks filled with new clothing and other needed supplies can mean the difference between losing everything and having something to hold onto.

The Oregon Narcotics Enforcement Association has stepped up with a donation that SOROPTIMIST is using to buy new backpacks and distribute them to their clubs, statewide, to help kick-start the campaign.

From June 5th – 10th, Oregon State, County and local law enforcement personnel are offering their offices as drop sites for people who want to bring in Teddy Bears and backpacks. A complete list of office locations and of items needed in the backpacks is attached.

KOBI Television, NBC, in Medford, and Fox 12 in Portland will highlight the campaign on their stations' news programs in early June. American Teen Television will also promote the campaign on its news programs in Northern Oregon. We hope to enlist the support of other media partners as well.

We encourage your participation in this very worthy campaign...and thank you!

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