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Scottsdale Charros and Scottsdale Schools partner to raise awareness about anabolic steroid use

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (November 6, 2008) — The Scottsdale Charros, a volunteer organization dedicated to supporting youth and education charities, and the Scottsdale Unified School District are working together to raise awareness among high school students about the dangers of anabolic steroid use.

On November 18, the two organizations will support a national steroid awareness effort by welcoming Don Hooton and his associates from the Taylor Hooton Foundation to speak at school assemblies in all Scottsdale Unified School District high schools. Freshman and Sophomores will learn about the dangerous effects of anabolic steroids on the male and female body and mind. A special event for parents and coaches also will be held that evening with former Major League Baseball player Kevin Young.

"It's critical to us that our students and community understand the importance of being substance free," says Charros president Mike Turner. "We are honored to support steroid awareness in cooperation with The Taylor Hooton Foundation and Scottsdale Unified School District. Students need to know that it can lead to violent behavior, aggression, crime and even to depression and suicide."

According to the 2008 Arizona Youth Survey, steroid use by students in Maricopa County is higher than the statewide average. As many as 2.5 percent of Arizona's high school Seniors report that they already use performance-enhancing drugs.

"When my own son died at age 17 following steroid use, his friends revealed just how prevalent steroid use was among their fellow teenagers – where they were getting them, what they were paying and how much they were taking," says Don Hooton, president of the Taylor Hooton Foundation. "No one is talking to our kids about the dangers, and we want to change that by bringing our 'Hoot's Chalk Talk' program to every major high school in the United States."

Scottsdale USD is the first district in Arizona to support this national steroid awareness program.

"The Scottsdale Unified School District and the Scottsdale Charros, who support our youth in a variety of ways, believe it is imperative that our students be aware of the dangers of anabolic steroid use. This is a serious problem in our society across the country and it deserves our attention and action," says Clif McKenzie, executive director of Exceptional Customer Experiences for Scottsdale Unified School District.

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In addition, Governor Janet Napolitano has declared Nov. 18 as “Steroid Awareness Day” in Arizona to help raise awareness statewide.

The Taylor Hooton Foundation was formed in 2004 in memory of Taylor E. Hooton, a 17-year old high school athlete from Plano, TX. Taylor took his own life as a result of the abuse of anabolic steroids. This non-profit foundation was founded by the parents, family and friends of Taylor after his death when the founders became aware of the magnitude of a growing problem among high school athletes across the country – the illegal use and abuse of anabolic steroids as a performance enhancement drug. They discovered that this is a serious problem among young athletes; and that young people and their parents are generally ignorant of the real dangers of this powerful drug. The Taylor Hooton Foundation for Fighting Steroid Abuse was founded to attack the general wide-spread ignorance of anabolic steroid use; and to educate the public to its potential as a powerful killer drug. www.taylorhooton.org.

The Scottsdale Charros are a volunteer group of local business and civic leaders dedicated to promoting Scottsdale education and youth programs, including “The Charro Future Teacher Scholarship” program and “Student/Educator of Year Award and Banquet” program. The Charros accomplish this through fundraising activities such as Western Heritage and Spring Training baseball at Scottsdale Stadium. www.charros.com

Scottsdale Unified School District is one of Arizona’s most Excelling school districts, with 22 schools earning the state’s highest rating–Excelling–for the sixth year in a row. All Scottsdale schools are rated as Excelling, Highly Performing, Performing Plus or Performing by the Arizona Department of Education. For more information about Scottsdale Unified schools, please visit www.susd.org.

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