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City of Downey

Press Release

DOWNEY RECOGNIZED FOR COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING CHARACTER IN YOUTH

The City of Downey in partnership with the Downey Unified School District and over 40 local businesses improve students' Character by focusing on the Six Pillars throughout all aspects of their lives

Downey, CA, October 12, 2010: The City of Downey, along with the Downey Unified School District, received the "Golden Bell Award" from the California School Boards Association. The award is presented every year to outstanding programs in school districts throughout California to recognize and support "sustainable, innovative or exemplary programs which have been developed and successfully implemented by California teachers and administrators.

In 2006, Dr. Wendy Doty, DUSD Superintendent, instituted the Character Counts Program in Downey schools. The coalition set out to improve students' character by focusing on the Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship) and integrating the CC! message throughout all aspects of life in Downey. The coalition encouraged all citizens, corporate and individual, to model these traits of good character in an ongoing commitment to promote character development and ethical behavior in the youth of our community. Specifically, the City encouraged all employees to seek out opportunities to emphasize these core ethical values in their work with young people in park-and-recreation activities, child-care programs, community events, and intern and employee training.

The results have been impressive and include a 5.12% improvement in the districts API scores, dramatic decreases in suspensions and expulsions, and crime has decreased each and every year since the program was implemented. "Although we know many factor impact the crime statistics of Downey, I believe the implementation of the Character Counts throughout our city has had a direct impact on the quality of life in Downey," said Councilmember Guerra when asked about the program.

On going efforts include display of the Six Pillars in the Downey City Council Chambers and a proposal to name city roadways after the six pillars.

For Immediate Release