

More than 2 years ago we established this President's Drug Advisory Council. America was lucky, very, very fortunate to gain the wisdom and vision of these distinguished American leaders who share our goal of ridding this Nation of the devastation caused by illegal drugs. I want to give very special thanks today to our Council members who work tirelessly to mobilize the enormous power the private sector can wield in the war against drugs. Look at this head table, look around, look at the names of the people, the men and women who are serving, and you'll see we've got very busy, successful people giving of themselves to help others.

In addition, every one of you here today are frontline soldiers in our war. You lead this country's local efforts to reduce drug use in the workplace, schools, and neighborhoods. We've got a good program. I was briefed by Al Casey and others not so long ago, and Jim was up there, in Camp David on this drug-free workplace concept. And we're making headway. Still a ways to go, but a very fundamental and important part of our work.

You organize your communities into coalitions. The key to healing this Nation is found at the grassroots level, being what I call a Point of Light, holding your hand out to a neighbor. And this audience today certainly exemplifies in the finest sense the willingness of one American to reach out and help another.

As Americans hear your stories, they realize that there is an alternative to drugs, and its name is hope. They hear stories of people like Brad Gates, the sheriff in Orange County. So concerned was he about drug deaths that he created the "Drug Use is Life Abuse" program. With the business community, he launched a massive drug education effort targeted at area youth. And the program works because it changes people's attitudes, gets to the fundamental attitude change towards drugs.

And so does Tad Foote's. When he saw how drugs were destroying his community, he gathered top business leaders like Alvah Chapman and others, the busiest, the most successful, and they formed the Miami Coalition, a broad-based community organization. And it was dedicated to tackling every

aspect of the drug program, divided it into eight task forces. They've convinced over one-third of all Miami businesses to adopt drug-free workplace policies and employee assistance programs, and they have closed down 1500 crack houses. Now, that is success, and that is due to the voluntary effort all the way.

The point is simple: No community, none at all, has to accept drug abuse. Americans don't have to live in fear. Drugs and so many other social problems can be driven from every community, if every community cares enough to reach out and try.

Americans deserve a lot of credit for their individual and collective efforts. But we still have much to do. There are casualties in this war. We live in an age when tens of thousands of drug-affected babies are born each year. Therein is the real tragedy. Hold in your arms one of those babies, and you just can't help but have a broken heart. We live in an age when one out of every 4,000 American teens dies by his own hand or at someone else's, and too often drugs play a part, a fundamental part, in these tragedies. We live in an age when the scourge of drugs has cheapened life and threatens to erode the moral fabric of this great Nation of ours.

Well, you've set an example, summed up by the antidrug banners created by citizens in Albuquerque that read, "It's easier to build a child than repair an adult." With that kind of tough-minded dedication, we will win. We will make a difference. Each and every one of you is making a difference, and may God bless you all for that.

Thank you very, very much. And thanks for that warm welcome.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. at the J.W. Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Burke, chairman of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America; Alvah Chapman, Chairman of the National Coalition Committee of the President's Drug Advisory Council; and Albert V. Casey, Council member.*