

Reach Out Partners With Ontario Fire and Police for Medication Takeback Initiative

by ASHANTE-RA
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The amount of unneeded or unused prescription medication in households can be staggering. California alone recorded over 18 tons of disposed of medication on the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) 23rd National Prescription Drug Takeback day, held on October 29, 2022. Credit: fda.gov

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Inland Empire-based non-profit Reach Out partnered with the Ontario Police Department and Ontario Fire Department to install two Medication Drop Boxes to help mitigate the opioid crisis in the region.

One Drop Box is located in the lobby of the Ontario Police Station, and the other is at the Ontario Fire Station on 425 East B Street, Ontario. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on February 1st to mark the occasion. These boxes will provide the community with a year-round outlet to safely dispose of unneeded or expired prescription medication.

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"This is a huge investment in our community to have these boxes," Reach Out Executive Director, Diana Fox said. "We want to see these boxes everywhere, to make it easy for our residents so that pills don't fall into the wrong hands."

Fox also shared that Reach Out has a long partnership with the City of Ontario. "They were the first to have a 'deemed approved ordinance' which means that sellers of alcohol must abide by specific rules and guidelines if they make any changes to their premises. Additionally, they were also the first to implement the 'social host ordinance' which means that people who throw parties and serve alcohol to minors can be held accountable."

City of Ontario Mayor Paul Leon spoke about his 14-year relationship with Reach Out and the positive impact these boxes will have on the community. Public Information Officer Richard Gonzalez, spoke on behalf of the Ontario Fire Department, saying, "It is great to be involved on the front end to help prevent someone from overdosing or perhaps being exposed to medications in the wrong way, and we are very happy to be a part of something on the preventive side," said Gonzalez. "We look forward to working with Reach Out in this program and we are excited to have this box installed at our fire station."

Other speakers included Senior Field Representative Karen Haughey with the office of San Bernardino County 4th District Supervisor Curt Hagman, and Field Representative Nadya Behena with the office of 52nd District Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, both of whom expressed their gratitude and talked about the impact of these boxes in their districts. Proclamations were handed out to Reach Out, Ontario Police Department, and Ontario Fire Department from these representatives.

The ceremony was closed by Karen Nutt, director of the Community Health and Policy department, who thanked all the community partners and staff who helped make this program possible, including Mayor Paul Leon, Ontario Police Chief Mike Lorenz, Ontario Fire Chief Ray Gayk, Fire Captain Dave Loomis, and others.

Reach Out is a non-profit organization that has been serving the Inland Empire for 52 years and is committed to strengthening communities through various programs aimed at addressing issues such as the opioid crisis. The



Reach Out Executive Director Diana Fox boasted that the City of Ontario's partnership with Reach

organization is overseen by Executive Director, Diana Fox, and has three locations in Upland, Jurupa Valley, and Yuca Valley. For more information, visit their website at we-reachout.org or contact 909.982.8641.

Out has resulted in the launch of many ordinances and programs, thus setting the pace for surrounding cities. (source: act-news.com).
