

D.A.R.E. Program for Youth

Deputy Sheriff Gilfallen (Guido) spoke to the Optimist Club on 12 July about his 18 years teaching the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program. He has been in law enforcement for 23 years and enjoys working with youth.

The D.A.R.E. program changes every few years. Originally it was a very structured program developed in California. However, some aspects of the program were more applicable to California than local areas. The current program is much more flexible, although he still does some things the same as he did in the beginning.

Guido said that drug and sex education, along with standards for life, should be taught in the family. The D.A.R.E. program is meant to reinforce correct principles taught in the family.

The good news is that drug use is going down and smoking is becoming taboo. Guido has never had a parent tell him that they want their children to drink. However, example is the best teacher.

The bad news is that alcohol is the #1 drug problem. It has not changed much in 20 years. There are an estimated 20 million alcoholics in the country. Fetal alcohol syndrome is the #1 birth defect in the country. It is also the #1 drug problem for teenage deaths. On TV there is no balance in alcohol; everyone is using it. About 2000 college students die every year for an alcohol overdose.

Since he began teaching, about 7000 fifth grade students have been through the D.A.R.E. program. The best way to prevent drug and alcohol problems is through community service. For example, a service group could obtain a list of people in the city that need assistance and team youth with them to provide that assistance.
