

## IT IS A NEW D.A.R.E.

Few logos of not-for-profit organizations in the United States are more recognized than that of the D.A.R.E. program. Familiarity with the D.A.R.E. logo, however, doesn't necessarily translate into an understanding of D.A.R.E.'s mission and programming. Today's D.A.R.E. may not be the D.A.R.E. with which you are familiar.

Since 2003, D.A.R.E. America has engaged in a total organizational renewal:

- New leadership
- An expanded organizational mission
- A five year strategic plan developed with the UCLA Anderson School of Business
- Increased research activities to maintain program efficacy
- New science-based curricular components
- New training model and instructional methodology
- Comprehensive programming with greater flexibility at the local level
- Reinvigorated advisory groups, such as the prestigious and active Law Enforcement Executive Board
- Funding opportunities for local D.A.R.E. programs

The new D.A.R.E. K-12 curricula focus upon the abuse of gateway drugs (tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and inhalants). The program offers a preventive strategy to enhance protective factors - especially bonding to family, school and community - which research has shown to foster development of resiliency in students who may be at risk for substance abuse or other problem behaviors. The program employs the use of the D.A.R.E. decision making model in which students are provided skills to use in developing and assessing choices they make in life. Students build skills to:

- D** Define problems and challenges
- A** Assess available choices
- R** Respond by making a choice
- E** Evaluate their decisions

The D.A.R.E. Instructor, using techniques of facilitation – gone are the days of the didactic lecture – guides students as they work in small cooperative learning groups using the D.A.R.E. decision making model to apply to real life situations.

The new D.A.R.E. elementary curriculum has been reduced to 10 lessons and a menu of enhancement lessons implemented. The enhancement lessons provide local jurisdictions the ability to customize their D.A.R.E. program to meet identified needs. Many enhancement lessons will be developed, among those currently offered are: gangs, methamphetamines, internet safety, bullying and cyber bullying. The most recent addition is the D.A.R.E. Rx/OTC (prescription/ over-the-counter) Drug abuse materials. The D.A.R.E. Rx/OTC Drug Abuse materials include lessons for elementary and middle school, high school and community presentations.