

Parents, grandparents and little brothers and sisters gathered at Jonathan Jennings Elementary School Thursday afternoon for a great celebration. Walking into the school one would know something special was going on and they would have been correct. Last Thursday Jonathan Jennings Elementary School celebrated the first D.A.R.E. Graduation. The 72 fifth grade students of Mrs. Day, Mrs. Doherty and Ms. Hostetler were taught the 10-week D.A.R.E. Program by Charlestown Police School Resource Officer Tim Wolff.

“This is my first time ever teaching in my life and you guys made it a great experience,” Wolff stated during the graduation ceremony.

The students were taught the program “Keepin It Real” about safe and responsible choices. During the 10-week program students were asked to write an essay, after week seven, about what they had learned during the program. During the graduation ceremony two classroom winners for the best essays were honored along with an overall winner. The winners were awarded with a D.A.R.E. Medal, presented by Charlestown Police Chief Keith McDonald, and a small Daren Lion stuffed animal presented by Officer Wolff. Daren is the mascot of the D.A.R.E. Program and is very popular with the students.

The essay winners from Mrs.

Beth Day’s class were Nick Bussey and Hannah Sillings. Winners from Mrs. Aimee Doherty’s class were Ryne Bruce and Jensen Stumler and the winners from Ms. Ronda Hostetler’s class were Andrew Berry and Carli Booth.

The overall essay winner, Tyler Woodward, a student in Mrs. Doherty’s class.

The D.A.R.E. Program also offers a poster contest in the Spring and Fall each year. Jonathan Jennings had 15 fifth graders chose to participate in the poster contest. Students designed a poster on 8 ½ x 11 paper. Posters were then submitted to the state level for a friendly competition. The Indiana D.A.R.E. Program offered an iPod for winners and an iPod Shuffle for students receiving Honorable Mention at the state level.

Officer Wolff was pleased to announce that one student received Honorable Mention and earned an iPod Shuffle. A very surprised Naydelin Carrillo-Rodriguez was pleased to accept the iPod Shuffle from Wolff.

Officer Wolff also hosted a raffle where every fifth grade student’s name was in a jar. Mrs. Day drew a name and the lucky student was able to chose from a table full of D.A.R.E. prizes including a Daren, basketball, football, soccer ball, lunch box, baseball caps and draw string bags. Names were drawn until the prize table was empty.

Students graduating from the D.A.R.E. Program included:

Mrs. Day’s Class

Abby Brummet, Braiden Bryant, Nick Bussey, Franchesca Canales, Jordan Doherty, Xuan Dong, Hallee Hamilton, Grace Jong, Westan Lamkin, Devon Lloyd, Kolby Mappins, Heather

Orcutt, Manuel Ordorica, Taylor Peterson, Gavin Pollock, Trevor Richey, Juliana Roberts, Marcelino Sanchez, Hannah Sillings, Aaliyah Smith, Christine Smith, Aliyah Tague, Becca Webb and Eric Wigginton.

Mrs. Doherty's Class

TJ Bonner, Ryne Bruce, Emily Coursey, Emily Cox, Julia Crace, Kyle Craig, Devlyn Davis, Macy Eldridge, Maddie Foley, Michael Gillooly, Lilly Glaspie, Matthew Henning, Melvin Hunter-Williams, Ayat Jassim, Matthew McCoy, Tenley Moore, Megan Rawlings, Amber Ray, Brianna Roberts, Clayton Rothbauer, Jensen Stumler, Ashton Walden, Wyatt Webb and Tyler Woodward.

Ms. Hostetler's Class

Anthony Abbott, Bryson Andasol, Autumn Atkins, Andrew Berry, Shaylee Bishop, Jennifer Bolanos- Gudino, Carli Booth, Lakyn Carder, Naydelin Carrillo-Rodriquez, Andrew Craig, Brayden Crawford, Alisiana Downs, Pascual Gonzalez, Kristin Hagan, Karina Hernandez-Perez, Ethan Lewis, Alec Long, Lucia Lopez, Justin Moore, Jada Oglesby, Austyn Ramirez-Wilkerson, Hanna Spellman, Gage Tevis and Kaylee Zimmerman.

The D.A.R.E. Program was founded by then Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates and the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1983. There was a need for a program to teach youth about the dangers of poor choices as many youth were choosing to use drugs in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The D.A.R.E. Program was launched as "an unprecedented and innovative substance abuse prevention education program," according to the D.A.R.E. Website. Today, D.A.R.E. is an international program taught by local police officers in the schools.

The D.A.R.E. Mission is "teaching students good decision-making skills to help them lead safe and healthy lives."

The D.A.R.E. Vision is "a world in which students everywhere are empowered to respect others and choose to lead lives free from violence, substance abuse and other dangerous behaviors."

Jonathan Jennings Principal Adrienne Bach was grateful for the opportunity her fifth grade students were given through the D.A.R.E. Program.

"We would like to extend our gratitude to Mayor Bob Hall and Chief Keith McDonald for the support of the D.A.R.E. Program in our schools. We appreciate all of the funding and resources donated to make this program possible for our kids," Bach stated in the D.A.R.E. Graduation program. "We would especially like to thank Officer Tim Wolff for this time and dedication to D.A.R.E. He has been a tremendous asset to our school."

Wolff concluded about teaching the students the D.A.R.E. program, "I'm extremely proud of all my JJ (Jonathan Jennings) fifth grade D.A.R.E. students. They were excellent to have in class and really took in the material. I look forward to seeing them next year at the middle school using what they have learned in D.A.R.E. to make safe and responsible choices."