

Clark County DARE Essay winners honored with banquet

Written by Janna Ross

Thursday, 28 May 2009 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 May 2009 08:43

Many fifth graders across Clark County have recently graduated from a program that will help them make the right decisions and choices for the rest of their lives.

The D.A.R.E. program was taught in 11 different elementary school across Clark County by two D.A.R.E. Officers, Jeffersonville Police Department's Jason Jackson and Clark County Sheriff's Deputy Joe Waters. The officers and students came together on Thursday evening, May 21 at the Clark County REMC community room for a beautiful banquet.

Jackson taught the program at Bridgepoint, Maple, Northaven, Sacred Heart, Springhill, Thomas Jefferson and Wilson Elementary Schools in Jeffersonville as well as Utica Elementary School.

Waters taught the program at Borden, Henryville and New Washington Elementary Schools.

After several weeks of learning the program, which teaches students about drug and alcohol abuse and how to make the right decisions, even if they are the hard choices, the students' last assignment with the program is an essay.

Each student writes an essay about what they learned from the program. The essays are then judged. Three winners were chosen from each elementary school including an overall school winner.

The overall school winner from each of the 11 schools were honored last Thursday evening with a D.A.R.E. banquet. The students and their parents and siblings were treated to a nice meal before the ceremony to honor each student.

The students received a D.A.R.E. tote full of goodies including a D.A.R.E. sweatshirt, \$10 gift certificate to Walmart, a one day pass to the Jeffersonville Aquatic Center and tickets to the Louisville Bats game on June 9, for writing the best essay at their school. Each of those winning essays were then judged for the best overall Clark County winner.

After the students received their individual awards, the time had come for the announcement of the county winner.

A very special guest, Daren, the D.A.R.E. mascot, brought the secret, envelope with the overall winner's name sealed safely inside.

After a great drum roll, Waters announced the winner as Henryville's Alyssa Daulton. She is a student in Mr. Norrington's class.

Along with the goodies, she also received a \$25 gift certificate to Walmart and will have a very special duty to begin the Bats game on June 9. Daulton, along with Daren, will throw out the ceremonial first pitch when the Bats face Lehigh Valley Ironpigs.

Daulton's essay will now go on to the state contest.

The other finalists for the county winner included: Borden's Nancy Coats from Mr. Ray's class; Bridgepoint's Emily White from Ms. Parker's class; Maple's Whisper Rupp from Mrs. Horn's class; New Washington's Carli Holland from Ms. Cook's class; Northaven's Lionel Nasby from Mrs. Sauer's class; Sacred Heart's Amanda Barney from Mrs. Smith's class; Springhill's Destiny Deck from Ms. Wunsch's class; Thomas Jefferson's Dewey Cardwell from Ms. Kovert's class; Utica's Tori Ogden from Mr. Keith's class and Wilson's Hailey Lacy from Mr. Parr's class.

"I remember when my kids went through the program and they came home and began teaching me. It was Dad you shouldn't do this, Dad you shouldn't do that," Clark County Sheriff Danny Rodden stated. "I know these kids will do the same."

Jackson was quick to praise the efforts of the kids.

"These kids deserve a round of applause. They have done a great job. We also need to thank the school principals and teachers for allowing us to come in and teach the program," Jackson stated. "I have truly enjoyed seeing these kids progress through the program. They

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take everything so serious and truly eager to learn with each new topic.”

Jackson continued, “I look forward to teaching the program every year.”

Waters agreed with Jackson.

“If it wasn’t for the teachers and principals being so supportive it would be hard to make this program so successful. It is all about the kids, they are the foundation. We have taught them to make the right decisions with this program. I am so proud of all of the kids. The essays were great. I am just glad I did not have to make that decision,” Waters laughed.

The judges for the essay contest were Dawn Daniel of Henryville Elementary School; Jennifer Korfhage of Thomas Jefferson Elementary School and Molly Riddle of Wilson Elementary School.

“I know my teacher said it was a really hard decision to make. The students really took the assignment seriously and put their best effort forward,” Waters stated.

Waters and Jackson wanted to thank the people and businesses that made this year’s D.A.R.E. program such a success.

The following people and businesses contributed to the success of the program and the recent banquet: Clark County Sheriff Danny Rodden, Jeffersonville Police Chief Tim Deeringer, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #100, Clark County REMC, Subway of Charlestown, Louisville Bats Baseball Organization, Jeffersonville City Parks Department and Walmart of Clarksville.

Jackson concluded, “If it wasn’t for the support of the local community, it would be very hard to make this program a success.”

The students enjoyed the special banquet as they were honored for their work.

“It was nice. I think they enjoyed the banquet. I seen a lot of smiling faces,” Waters concluded.