



# D.A.R.E.

## Drug Abuse Resistance Education

By SGT. GREG EVANS

As I look back over the past year, and even further back into history I am reminded that D.A.R.E. has been a big part of that history. Starting in Los Angeles in the early 80's it didn't take long for D.A.R.E. to find its way to Missouri and to Lamar. Has it been a good history? I believe I can speak for all of the former D.A.R.E. instructors when I say that it has been a very good history for the school kids in Lamar.

Going far back into Lamar's history, I wonder if Wyatt Earp would have made a good D.A.R.E. officer? I don't think he would have been a very positive role model, if you believe some of the books, movies, and T.V. shows that depict him as a hard drinking, two-fisted, shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later lawman. I'm not sure there was even a minimum drinking age when he was here walking Lamar's streets. In those days anyone with the price of a drink could belly up to the bar.

Earp never had to deal with a meth lab, but there were addictions even in his day. Heroin and opium addicts were fairly common, especially after the Civil War. Have you ever heard of laudanum? It was also called tincture of opium. It was sold as a cure all for any disease you could name and was addictive. Sometimes the doctor prescribed it for you when he wasn't doctoring horses, burying people, or giving haircuts. Early settlers carried marijuana with them to their new homesteads but it was used for different purposes other than as a recreational drug. You have probably heard of a hemp rope. Hemp ropes are made from the fibers of the marijuana plant.

We have come a long way from those days and, I think, most of us would prefer modern times to those very difficult early frontier days. "Where's the cable? Where are the paved streets? How about indoor plumbing?"

We pay the price for our modern conveniences with advances in all areas, including drugs. Times change but people basically remain the same; they fall to temptations and end up making some poor decisions. As a result we have programs like D.A.R.E. Would D.A.R.E. have been successful in the Roaring 20's during the time of Prohibition? They would have certainly felt a bit of success but as we all know Prohibition was a tremendous "experiment". The use of alcohol returned stronger than ever and I haven't heard of a Temperance Union in years, though they may exist.

But back to today. Through the D.A.R.E. program I have been fortunate enough to see some of the young boys and girls in the fifth grade go on to become successful young adults. I would like to think that D.A.R.E. played a small role in some of their success.

One of my favorite lessons that we present to the fifth grade is the 'Role Model Lesson' where older students return to the fifth grade and speak to the current students. It is not uncommon for the role models to say that they made a conscious decision to stay away from harmful drugs when they were in the fifth grade while in D.A.R.E. class. Yes, it is a lot of work, but the next generation of young people is worth working for.

