

# **What D.A.R.E. Means to Me**

*By Stephanie B*

**D.A.R.E. has meant a lot to me ever since I've been in the program. I started getting the D.A.R.E. treatment since second grade. Our class was having trouble with the concept of "If it's not yours don't touch it." That year I learned many things; that everyone is special, everyone should be treated nicely, it isn't hard to be nice, and I learned what happens when Officer Jeff sings "Pretty Woman" to your teacher. I remember walking down the hall on Wednesdays and seeing Officer Jeff going to the fifth grade classes to go teach. Now that I'm one of those fifth graders I get to be taught by Officer Jeff. This year I've learned a lot more things than I did in second grade. I learned all the things smoking and drugs do to you. Over 400,000 people die from smoking every year. There are 200 poisons in a cigarette. People that smoke also have more colds and upper respiratory problems. Marijuana causes similar problems but it also affects your brain. You may lose your memory for a short time (short term memory loss), have**

**trouble concentrating, and it slows you down. I also learned that drinking isn't cool, it just makes you look stupid and once you start it's hard to stop.**

**Officer Jeff made this year of D.A.R.E extremely fun but I'm sad this is his last year. D.A.R.E. is more to me than Officer Jeff playing his guitar. It is an entertaining way to learn what drugs do to you and why not to use the wrong kind in the wrong way.**

**Out of the many things I learned in D.A.R.E. is the eight ways of saying no.**

- 1. Just say no thanks.**
- 2. Give a reason not to.**
- 3. Say no over and over again.**
- 4. Walk away.**
- 5. Change the subject.**
- 6. Just avoid the situation.**
- 7. Give them the cold shoulder.**
- 8. Strength in numbers, hang out with the right people.**

**All of these things are important to know so I won't make the wrong choices and so I won't get myself into trouble and won't end up ruining my life. D.A.R.E. has meant a lot to me and I think it always will.**