

DARE for your kids

By Valerie Arnold-Judge

This column is the first of many to report on and inform you about DARE Caledon (Drug Abuse Resistance Education).

This program is delivered in 52 countries around the world and is a cooperative effort between schools, parents, the police and the community. We are fortunate to have this outstanding program in Caledon.

Each year, the DARE program is delivered to 1,200 Grade 6 students in our community and is taught by an OPP officer. This year, we are excited to introduce Officer Pablo Perreira, who will be delivering the program to our children. Officer Perreira's DARE training will take place this summer and he is looking forward to starting the school year as the new DARE officer.

The DARE program is made possible by a dedicated group of volunteers on the DARE committee, along with the support of the OPP and our schools. Who are we? Valerie Arnold Judge (VMA Enterprises), Vera Robinson (The Naked Vine), Karen McDonald (McDonald Mechanical), Karin Casey (retired teacher), Trudy Westhaver (corporate wear), Sarah Fleming (Fleming Realty) and Pablo Perreira (OPP). Our committee of volunteers work to raise money to make the DARE program possible in our community. What does the program address? DARE works to educate the children in our community about making healthy choices in their lives regarding the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and dealing with peer pressure. The program is delivered to Grade 6 students and runs for eight weeks. It is the only school based, curriculum driven prevention program that is taught exclusively by a highly trained OPP officer. DARE officers undergo a rigorous 80-hour training course conducted by mentors with more than 10 years of experience in the program.

The DARE program is currently in our Caledon schools and we could greatly use your help to keep the program alive and thriving. We hold fundraising events throughout the year and ask that you consider helping out by getting involved and support our efforts. Monies raised go toward classroom workbooks, graduation certificates and the classic Canadian DARE T-shirts.

I look forward to updating you regularly on this important program and sharing information about DARE and some of the challenges being faced by children in our community regarding drugs, alcohol and violence prevention.

Please join us Oct. 14 for our Murder Mystery Dinner, lots of fun, raffles and prizes to be held at Glen Eagle Golf Club. This is our annual fundraiser to raise money for this important program.

For more information, please contact me at any time at 416-518-2358/905-838-2125 or email at vjudge@rogers.com about how you can get tickets for the event or to help support this important program for the children in our community.