

Since the mid 1980's the OCSO in a partnership with the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) has provided School Resource Officers (SROs) in the middle and high schools as well as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) deputies in the elementary schools. In this partnership, the OCPS contributes \$20,000.00 from the Florida SAFE and Drug Free Schools grant monies for each DARE/SRO deputy.



The Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) is committed to making our communities and school campuses safe. Research has proven that a safe school environment makes for a better learning environment. Therefore, the Orange County Sheriff's Office DARE and SRO programs are dedicated and committed to assist in creating those safe school environments as well as building positive relationships between students, parents, and school staff members. By building better relationships with students and by mentoring, counseling and instructing them in drug and violence prevention and gang resistance education, we hope to build the solid minded citizens of the future. To this end, the Orange County Sheriff's Office has a three-pronged approach to accomplish these goals.

High school SROs may teach the OCPS Life Skills Management class or any other related topics to the students. Middle school SROs teach the nationally recognized Gang Resistance Education Training (GREAT) program to the 6th grade students, while DARE deputies teach both the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program to the 5th grade students as well the GREAT program to the 4th grade students.

DARE/SRO deputies' duties also include school crossing duties, school security and traffic plan assessments, school and community liaison as well as attending PTO/PTA meetings and other school/community issue meetings.

Deputies are also role models, mentors, coaches and counselors and participate in parent/teacher meetings if requested.

Deputies selected for this program must possess a college degree or four years of law enforcement experience before they may be considered for acceptance into the OCSO Youth Services Section. They must pass a special unit-based interview board, personnel file review and psychological examination.

Elementary Schools

The OCSO believes in positively impacting children at a young age. DARE deputies begin this rapport in grades K through 5 with safety-based curriculum and programs. In grades K through 4, children will be instructed in personal safety ("Danger Stranger", and "Good Touch, Bad Touch"), gun safety ("Eddie Eagle"), and 20 other safety programs. DARE deputies also teach the GREAT program, which is a six week gang prevention curriculum aimed at the 4th grade student. The curriculum also includes violence prevention and decision making games.

The 5th grade students are instructed in the DARE program which is a 10-week curriculum that concentrates on alcohol and drug prevention as well as violence prevention. The program will teach the students about peer pressure, decision making and problem solving related to substance use and abuse.

DARE deputies are assigned from two to four elementary schools per week based on 5th grade student population. Currently, we have 26 deputies covering 73 elementary schools with a total student population of 53,631.

A Few DARE Facts...

In 2006, DARE deputies presented the contracted and required DARE 5th grade curriculum to 8,740 students. They also provided the contracted and required DARE visitations to 44,891 students in grades K-4.

During the 2006 school year, DARE deputies wrote 384 reports, confiscated seven knives and two guns, and assisted uniform patrol deputies 4,562 times. In addition, DARE deputies counseled over 18,115 students and parents. They instructed 6,798 DARE/GREAT classroom presentations, 4,748 DARE K-4 visitations and 782 Eddie Eagle gun safety presentations. The DARE deputies graduated 8,334 students or 99% of the entire 5th grade student population. The DARE Unit conducted 122 Early Truancy Intervention meetings and transported 53 truants to the Alternative Center for Truancy (ACT).

Total arrests for 2006 in the DARE Elementary Unit were 26 felonies and 39 misdemeanors. DARE deputies wrote 296 traffic citations, 25 parking tickets, issued 12,487 verbal warnings and worked 1,476 school crossings. They also handled 566 school related complaints.

Middle Schools

The OCSO continues its positive and preventative efforts in our children's lives by assigning a deputy to each of the 20 middle schools in unincorporated Orange County. The middle school SRO is dedicated to building rapport and trust between the students, their parents and their community as well as providing a safe environment in which to learn. These SRO's teach the nationally recognized GREAT program to 6th grade students as well as counsel and mentor students, attend parent/teacher conferences and provide a positive role model for students. The middle school SRO is also responsible for investigating crimes and maintaining high visibility in and around any campus problem areas. The SRO spends approximately 70% of his/her day with school related activities such as teaching, student/parent counseling and staff assistance and the other 30% with law enforcement related activities such as school crossings and criminal investigations.

High Schools

There are nine high schools and three ninth grade centers in unincorporated Orange County. Two deputies are assigned to each high school and one deputy to each ninth grade center. Building upon the foundation laid in the elementary and middle schools, the high School Resource Officer (SRO) provides an additional four years of education as well as positive interaction. Their goal is to guide and develop students into responsible citizens who will positively affect their communities as they move into adult life. The high school SRO will act as a teacher, role model, mentor, coach and counselor. They guest lecture on many different law-related and social topics such as drug awareness, domestic violence and gang resistance.

The high school SRO is also involved in peer mediation, student government and Students Against Drunk Drivers (SADD) chapters at their schools. Many SRO's assist in coaching various sports on their campuses throughout the year.

Additionally, the SRO provides safety programs for the school community as well as a law enforcement presence on campus and during extracurricular activities and events. The high school SRO is involved in law enforcement investigations and intervention to a higher degree than their colleagues in the elementary and middle schools. In addition to the high school SRO's, the Sheriff's Office also provides SRO's to two special needs schools.



For more information on the D.A.R.E./S.R.O. program, visit us at: www.ocso.com or call the Community Policing Division, Youth Services Section 407-254-7351.

For information **specific** to the DARE/SRO programs contact: 407-254-7365 (Middle & High School SRO) 407-254-7355 (Elementary School DARE)

D.A.R.E.

G.R.E.A.T.
Gang Resistance Education And Training



**ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF**

Sheriff Jerry L. Demings



**In Our
Schools:
DARE,
GREAT &
SRO's**