

“Crucial Years”

I can remember in fifth grade having a police officer come into school to teach us about the D.A.R.E. program, to resist drugs and violence. At the time I had no idea what the officer was trying to teach us. What were drugs? As an oblivious fifth grader, I had no idea why we were learning about such a foreign topic. As I progressed through next few years, I became familiar with the names of drugs and what they had the power of doing. If this program would have been a few years later and if more had been done to keep drugs out of the school area on a daily basis, more kids would less likely to use and abuse drugs.

Drug abuse is partially due to the legality and acceptability of some drugs, and now is more popular in more settings, not just the Friday night parties (Groshman, 2007). Since every type of drug is being abused, both over the counter and illegal, everyone in society needs to be more cautious about drugs in general. The types of drugs that can be received with a prescription and without need to be monitored, and should be on record at every pharmacy so that the computer is an easy reference when selling the drugs to the consumer. Also, if someone suspects another of using or abusing drugs, no matter the relationship, that person needs to report the suspicions to the proper authorities so that correct actions may be taken. If the legal drugs became monitored, maybe the illegal would fall to the wayside among teens and young adults as well. The key is for every member in society to speak up, so that young adults are not hurt in the process.

The mission of the D.A.R.E. program is to teach students to make good decisions to help them avoid high-risk behavior when they grow up (Drug Abuse Prevention Among Youth Works, 1996). While this may occur, timing is crucial to every situation. In my case, I learned about resisting drugs up until fifth grade, but received no reinforcement after that. Where was

the D.A.R.E. officer when the tough decisions needed to be made in middle school or high school? He was long out of the minds of the students, and can partially be the reason for the bad decision made by the teenager. If only a few years later, I feel the program would be much more effective.

Sometimes all the motivation required for young adults to get rid of some drugs is the threat of being caught. If the school did more to keep drugs out of school, the teens wouldn't have the substances with them as much, and therefore would be less likely to abuse the drugs either during school hours or directly after school. If the dogs were to smell for drugs on a more consistent basis, maybe that would make a difference for those few kids. If by every action the school does, like bringing in the dogs, just one teen chooses against drugs, then the job is worthwhile. Actions such as these can be performed to keep students focused on their future rather than drugs.

I can still remember Charlie on the bus, always making me laugh and, yes, always testing Donna, our favorite driver. Where was society in the most crucial times of his life? It makes me mad knowing that a few years later the D.A.R.E. program could have been even a tiny bit more influential, and that if more had been done on a daily basis to keep drugs out of school maybe everyone would have been less likely to test their luck with drugs. When society sees a problem, though, and turns the other way, that is where the problem truly lies. All in all, more efforts need to be done to stop these harmful substances from entering the bodies of these young adults in order to give them a future to look forward to.