

HENNEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

News Release



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Hennepin County Sheriff's Office announces pilot program with Minnesota D.A.R.E.

February 25, 2010 (Minneapolis) – Hennepin County Sheriff Rich Stanek has announced that the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office is the first law enforcement agency in the nation to work with Minnesota D.A.R.E. on a new pilot program. The program will allow retired deputies to teach D.A.R.E. to students.

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons taught from kindergarten through 12th grade. Because of budget cuts among law enforcement agencies and schools across the country, it's been challenging for D.A.R.E. to keep up with the demand for licensed peace officers to work as classroom instructors. For the first time, the national leadership of D.A.R.E. has granted permission for a pilot program that allows a retired peace officer to be hired to work part-time as D.A.R.E. instructor in schools.

"I'm proud that our agency is taking the lead in the pilot program that will make D.A.R.E. programs more cost-effective and accessible," said Sheriff Stanek, "It is essential that we educate kids about resisting drugs and violence."

Sheriff Stanek made the announcement yesterday during a D.A.R.E. graduation for fifth graders at St. Vincent De Paul School in Brooklyn Park. Minnesota D.A.R.E. Executive Director Kathi Ackerman presented the Sheriff's Office with 600 D.A.R.E. workbooks. Ackerman said that the pilot program may serve as a model for other D.A.R.E. chapters nationwide.

"We're going to keep searching for innovative ways to get our prevention message to children," said Ackerman, "I'm certain this common-sense approach will allow us to bring the program to many more classrooms."

Retired Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Deputy Todd Lundgren will use the materials to teach students in schools throughout Hennepin County. Deputy Lundgren is currently the sole participant in the pilot program. During his 19 years of experience he has instructed more than 11,000 students. The D.A.R.E. curriculum includes topics such as school violence, over-the-counter drug abuse, and cyber bullying.

Ackerman plans to send surveys to schools and law enforcement agencies across Minnesota. The surveys will help determine where it would be appropriate to locate retired officers who could teach D.A.R.E.

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