



*Teaching Students Decision Making for Safe & Healthy Living*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **18 Students Graduate The Calverton School D.A.R.E. Program!** *Deputy Andrew Clas taught students good decision making while Building trust between community & law enforcement*

Students at The Calverton School celebrated their D.A.R.E. graduation on November 11, 2002, culminating a 10-week long program that the fifth-graders completed in the semester. The course has been taught in the Huntingtown, Maryland school for more than 12 years.

Children in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms throughout the country today face a multitude of high-risk circumstances including the temptation to use drugs and alcohol, violence, bullying, and internet safety, not to mention the fear of school violence.

The D.A.R.E. program teaches students decision-making skills that equip them to lead safe and healthy lives. Lessons include the dangers of drug abuse, how to resist and refuse peer pressure, and how to take a stand against bullying. The D.A.R.E. program is designed to boost students' social skills, enhance self-esteem, and provide tools to help them make responsible decisions.

As a graduation requirement, the fifth graders are asked to write an essay describing what they have learned from the D.A.R.E. program. The essays are often narratives of personal experiences of bullying or peer pressure and explain how the students will use or have used the D.A.R.E. Decision Making Model to overcome those challenges. There were three D.A.R.E. essay winners from this class. Essay winners Jonah, Camila, and Braden, read their essays aloud to the attendees, sharing the personal impact that D.A.R.E. had on them.

During the graduation ceremony, Deputy Clas held a brief overview of the program with the students telling their parents and guests about what they learned. Deputy Clas tossed a neon green koosh ball to his students as they covered a few health effects of alcohol and tobacco, explained the D.A.R.E. Decision-making Model, and the concept of risks and consequences.

Deputy Clas shared with the audience that the class average for the pretest score was 69% and that they learned a lot during the program, bringing the class average for the posttest to 99%. Mr. Jamey Hein, the Head of the School, and Mrs. Heidi Merryman, Head of the Lower School at the graduation both encouraged the students to continue to use the skills they learned in D.A.R.E.

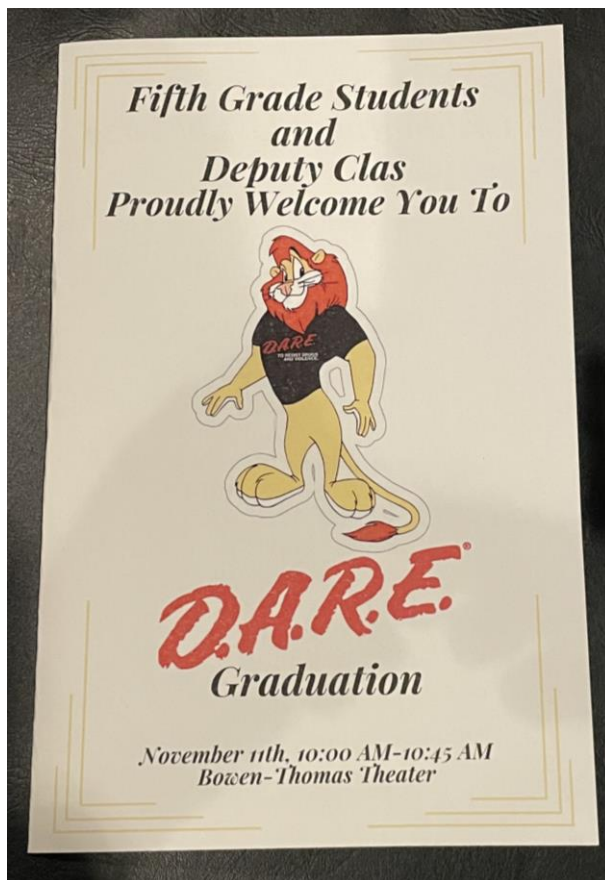
Calvert County Sheriff's Office teaches the program to more than 800 students in seven different schools during the school year. Funding for the D.A.R.E. program is typically provided in part through fundraisers and grants. In Maryland, the student workbooks are provided through the State D.A.R.E. Coordinator's Office.

### About D.A.R.E.

Launched in 1983, D.A.R.E. is a comprehensive K-12 education program taught in thousands of schools throughout America, as well as in 52 other countries. D.A.R.E.'s official mission today is to teach students good decision-making skills to help them to lead safe and healthy lives.

D.A.R.E. education programs are a collaborative effort of the essential components of a community – students, parents, schools, law enforcement, and community leaders. D.A.R.E. places specially trained law enforcement officers in classrooms who deliver science and evidence-based curricula that teach students good decision-making skills that will help them lead safe and healthy lives. While D.A.R.E. curricula address drugs, it also focuses on violence, bullying, internet safety, and other high-risk circumstances that could be a part of the daily life of students.

For information on D.A.R.E. education programs, visit [www.D.A.R.E..org/education](http://www.D.A.R.E..org/education)





Deputy Clas and Mr. Hein



The Graduating D.A.R.E. Class with their teacher, Mrs. Thompson



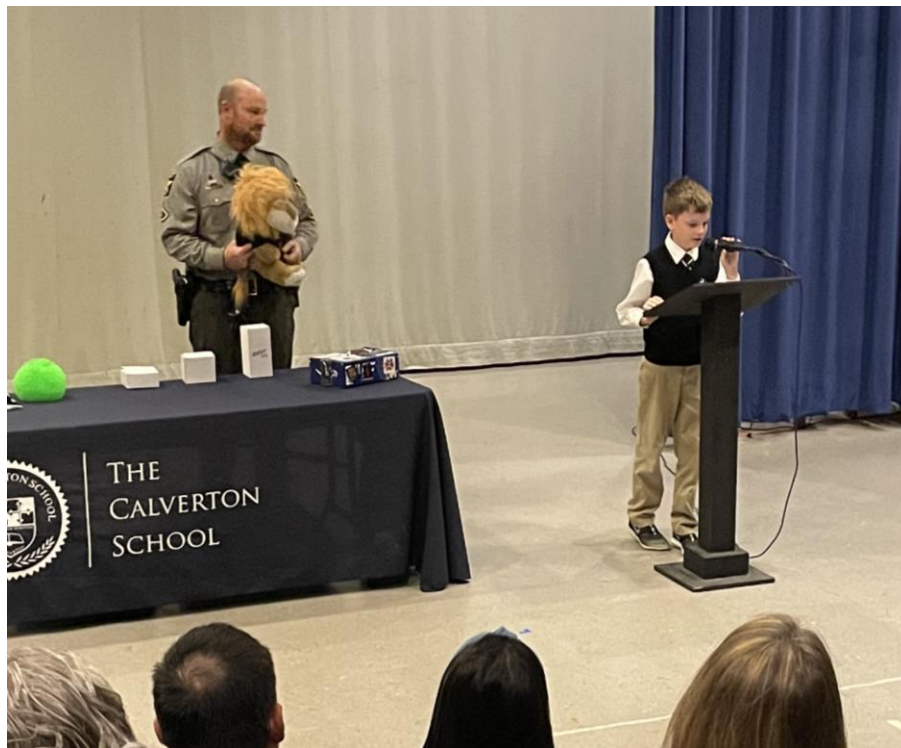
Mrs. Thompson has a few remarks for her class and the attendees



3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner, Braden



2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner Camila



1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner, Jonah



Mrs. Merryman with closing remarks



D.A.R.E. Graduates pose with Deputy Clas for photos for their parents and guests.

Photos were authorized and courtesy of The Calverton School