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11/02/18  
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## DARE Essay

Have you ever heard of DARE? If you're wondering what DARE stands for it stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Those four simple words can really make a difference. It also stands for Define, Assess, Respond and Evaluate which is a decision making model that students learn within the program. This model teaches us how to slow down and make the best decisions for ourselves. Both meanings can help students and myself throughout our formative years ahead of us and the rest of our lives. It is a program that can change a life for the positive and keep students successful and headed in a positive direction. DARE can help you make decisions or come up with a compromise to any problem or situation. It is a universal program and once you have gained the knowledge, you can take the knowledge with you as far as you can grow.

There are so many things that I have learned through DARE but I cannot talk about all of them. But, I will talk about a few of them. One of the things that I learned in DARE is communication. There is verbal communication and nonverbal communication. Verbal is when you use words to show your emotions and nonverbal is when you use body language. They can both be powerful. I communicate with my words and I know that I can communicate my confidence by the body language I exhibit. I was reminded of important things from DARE. I got reminded to be able to say "no to drugs and alcohol." This is so important for the future when I will need to remember it is ok and smart to just say no. DARE has taught me some things are not ok and even illegal, I learned these before I made a poor decision. It is not only the DARE program that helps, what has also helped me was our wonderful officer, "Officer Cooter"! He

has made me understand that our police force is here to help us, answer our questions and help students to make wise decisions. The Derby Police Department wants us to be successful and be a positive part of our community.

The DARE decision making model is represented by the four words - Define, Assess, Respond, Evaluate. It has and will help me to make decisions. For example, I had to choose between playing a computer game with all my friends or to work on a project that was an important part of my grade at school. I knew the simple steps of define, assess, respond and evaluate. These steps let me take the emotion out of my decision making and to do what was best for myself. I finished the project and then had fun with my friends. That is one of the things that DARE teaches and can be used in any situation. But the program is so much more than that. It could be life-threatening decisions as well. Do I take the drugs offered by people at a party or do I listen to friends and drink the alcohol? No, I define the situation, I assess what will be best for me and the choices available, I respond with my choice and I look back and evaluate the situation and see what I can change or do better in the future.

I plan to use DARE for the rest of my life. I want to be the role model to help my friends to say no to drugs and alcohol. I want them to know we can have fun without drugs and alcohol. I want them to know I will stand with them and say no to drugs and alcohol. I have amazing friends and I want them to be the best person they can be. I don't want to watch them make poor choices and go down the wrong path. We will walk the right path together. I don't want them to start a habit that can lead to terrible addictions. I will help them to walk away and make the best decisions for them. I use DARE to teach others, to do the right thing for myself and others, and to communicate in a positive manner. I am going to use DARE to help myself and to be able to

help others.

One of my favorite things thing that I learned in DARE is standing up to bullies. We learned there are bystanders, a person who watches a person get bullied but does not do anything about it. You can help the person who is getting bullied by telling a trusted adult like a teacher or a parent. We learned the difference about someone getting bullied and someone just getting teased. When someone is getting teased it is just a one time thing and someone getting bullied is when it is repeated behavior. I think everything we learned in DARE is important but I think bullying is something that we need to be aware of and stand against the bullies.

DARE is so important. It is a life changing program. It has given me confidence to stand up for myself and my friends. DARE has fostered a positive relationship with our local police department. DARE has taught me how to make smart decisions. So if you ever need help with the things I talked about maybe you should think about DARE. I know I will think of DARE and what I have learned often. If you do not have a DARE program, try contacting you own local officers. Thank you for listening to why I think DARE is so important!

I, Lauren Wilson, pledge never to smoke, do drugs or use alcohol.