



Halton Regional Police Education Services Officer Constable Laurel Barnett speaks to Grade 8 students at Stewarttown Middle School as part of the Active 8

program to give Grade 8 students a fresher course, like D.A.R.E., in which they learn about the social drugs available on the street today. *Photo by Ted Brown*

# Motive 8 program provides refresher course to Grade 8 students on perils of illegal drug use

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Staff Writer

For several years now, Grade 6 students in Halton have been taking part in the D.A.R.E. program, (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), which gives students the information and skills to avoid involvement with drugs.

When students make it to Grade 8, they sometimes need a refresher to remind them of the many perils in society, again, mostly related to illegal drugs.

The Motive 8 program is a follow-up to D.A.R.E., addressing drug abuse prevention at the Grade 8 level. The program was developed to support students at a time in their lives when they are vulnerable to negative influences.

Originally developed in 1998, the Motive 8 program was revamped in 2002 and again in 2005, to provide that 'refresher' before they head off to high school. The program involves seven lessons, some taught by the teachers, and others by police and public health nurses.

Locally, Halton Regional Police Education Services Constable Laurel Barnett visits all the schools in Halton Hills to remind the Grade 8 students that there are some dangers to be faced out there.

"For the first lesson, I come in and talk about things like marijuana, ecstasy, date-rape drugs and katimine," said Barnett, "And I also show a video about club drugs or designer drugs, and it also covers the misuse of prescription drugs in society."

Barnett says the second part of her presentation covers the new laws that kids going into Grade 9 might face.

"When they are in Grades 7 and 8, the students are coming into an age— 12 and 13— where they can be charged criminally for their actions. The Grade 8s need to know before they head off to high school, that their responsibilities, under the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the Criminal Code, have increased dramatically."

Suddenly, these students have become old enough to be charged with some adult crimes.

"Once in high school, their peer group also becomes four years older than them," continued Barnett, "they go from being the oldest at school, to being the youngest in high school."

"It's our 'last chance' to give them a little bit of a lesson in responsibility," says Barnett.

Barnett says the rest of the program involves a public health nurse coming into the classroom to talk about dealing with stress, and the teachers give the students lessons on decision-making and drug use.

Although Barnett looks after all the schools in Halton Hills, only the schools with Grades 6 and 8 have D.A.R.E. and Motive 8, of which there are nine.

But Barnett is also responsible for other police programs with the remaining schools, of which Halton has many, throughout the various grades.

In Grade 1, police officers introduce themselves to students so that children learn at a very young age that police are helpful and approachable.

Grade 4 and 5 students learn about Internet safety, bullying, vandalism and other topics that directly affect them, while Grade 7 students learn about harassment, bullying, and other issues that affect pre-teens and teenagers.

(Ted Brown can be reached at [tbrown@independentfreepress.com](mailto:tbrown@independentfreepress.com))

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