

NPD D.A.R.E. car takes second in national event

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The Nicholasville Police Department's D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) car placed second in a national competition in Cincinnati, Ohio, in July.

Sgt. Scott Harvey, one of the department's D.A.R.E. officers, said the car, a 2010 Chrysler 300, received many touch-ups that were donated by various businesses.

"It's about a \$1,500 graphics package to get this, and it was completely donated by Federal Signal (based out of Lexington)," he said. "S&S Tires in Hamburg donated the wheels and rims."

Harvey said the reason for the car is simple.

"We're wanting to do a lot more of it because we're wanting it to be something that kids are going to remember and that kids want to be around," he said. "The bottom line is we're wanting to show them that you don't have to be a drug dealer to have a cool car."

Harvey said the car — a Dodge Charger — that beat his during the July competition earned the win.

"The car that beat this in the national competition had an entertainment system in the back, complete with TVs in the trunk, complete with Nintendo Wiis," he said. "The kids at the car show spent the whole time playing the Wii and talking with the officer that was there. And that's the type of relationship we want this car to have with the kids."

Harvey said the NPD was going to continue to enter the car in shows, but the message of the department's D.A.R.E. program would not change.

"We look forward to showing videos on it, once we get that system up, once we get the classroom presentations out and show the videos that we have in the car and build the relationships with the students even further," he said.

D.A.R.E.

D.A.R.E. is the number-one drug prevention program in the world, Harvey said.

"It's in all 50 states and in 54 countries around the world," he said.

It started as a joint effort between the Los Angeles Police Department and that city's school system in 1983.

"It's been going strong ever since," Harvey added.

The NPD teaches curriculum on a fifth- and seventh-grade level at Nicholasville schools.

"Between Kevin (Grimes) and I, we reach 1,500 kids a year with an anti-drug message," Harvey said. "Mostly what we teach is good decision-making practices. And we apply that to everything from drug use to violence and bullying."

Harvey said the program also allows officers and children to interact, thus breaking down barriers.

"That breaks down the 'bogeyman' mentality that some of them were raised with in that we're just there to arrest them and hurt them," Harvey said. "One of the biggest things the program does is it puts a police officer in front of a kid every week and let's them realize that we're not just a uniform. We're dads; we're moms; we're people that are just trying to help our community."

Car purchase

The D.A.R.E. car was purchased indirectly from drug forfeiture money.

"We were able to purchase this because of all of the money we've been able to use out of the drug forfeiture account," Harvey said. "Because of being able to purchase the Tahoes out of drug forfeiture money, that left enough budget money to get this."

For more information about the D.A.R.E. program or the car, contact Harvey at 885-9467.