

**D.A.R.E. has adopted *keepin' it REAL* (kiR)
as the NEW D.A.R.E. junior high/middle school curriculum**

D.A.R.E. America and The Pennsylvania State University have joined forces for D.A.R.E.'s delivery of "kiR." "kiR" is designated as a model substance abuse prevention education program on the SAMSHA National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

"kiR" was developed by Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and the Arizona State University (ASU) with funding provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Implementation of the D.A.R.E.-"kiR" curriculum will commence following introduction of the program during the D.A.R.E. International Training Conference, July 2009.

The D.A.R.E.- "kiR" curriculum represents over 20 years of research by the Drug Resistance Strategies Project about why our youth use drugs. Out of this research a school-based substance abuse prevention program, "*kiR*", was developed collaboratively by PSU and ASU. Grounded in cultural norms and values, the program provides youth the skills to live drug-free lives confidently, drawing on their strengths and the strengths of their families and communities.

Within "kiR", the acronym REAL is its central message, providing students with skills to employ in refusing offers to use drug and engage in other high-risk behaviors -- Refuse, Explain, Avoid, and Leave. These strategies help youth stay away from drugs by preparing them to act decisively, confidently and comfortably in a difficult situation.

The curriculum teaches students *how to say no* by presenting practical drug resistance strategies that are easy for them to remember and use. Students also learn how to recognize risk, value their perceptions and feelings, and make choices that support their values.

kiR" an innovative, culturally-grounded, multicultural curriculum was developed to allow students to recognize themselves in the prevention message. The objective of the "*kiR*" curriculum is to reduce substance abuse by teaching students and allowing them to practice risk assessment, decision making, as well as valuable communication and life skills.

The "kiR" curriculum is organized as a 10-week, 10 lesson program. Each lesson requires one 40 - 45 minutes class period and is designed to promote interaction between students and officers. Fun activities are included to involve students in their learning and allow them to exercise REAL resistance strategies. The program's key learning tool is a series of videos involving high school youth and based on students' real stories. The videos demonstrate how students have used REAL strategies to resist drugs in real life situations.

Efficacy of "kiR" was established during a rigorous scientific evaluation of program implementation in 35 middle schools in Phoenix, Arizona. Over 6,700 students participated in the evaluation, the results of which document that "*kiR*" reduces alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use, teaches anti-drug norms and changes attitudes and expectations.

As a result, "kiR" is designated an evidence- based program by SAMHSA and is listed on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Based on the effectiveness of the program D.A.R.E America is partnering with PSU and "*kiR*" to bring the curriculum to students in classrooms throughout the nation and around the world.