

G.R.E.A.T. NEWS

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GANG RESISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING **SOUTHEAST REGION**

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BENTON COUNTY (AR) SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANNOUNCES TWO NEW G.R.E.A.T. DEPUTIES

By Deputy Doug Gay, Benton County Sheriff's Office, Arkansas

Benton County Sheriff Keith Ferguson announced that two deputies with the Benton County Sheriff's Office, Arkansas returned on December 14, 2007 from two weeks of training to become G.R.E.A.T. certified. G.R.E.A.T. is the acronym for Gang Resistance Education And Training, a federally funded program that was first introduced in Phoenix, Az. in 1991. Since that time the program has spread to all 50 states with more than 4,500 Law Enforcement personnel being trained, who in turn have taught the program to over 2.5 million students.

The program is set up to teach elementary and middle school students as well as a summer and family component. It teaches life skills of how to set and achieve goals, refusal skills, conflict resolution, anger management and overall good decision making to help students cope with every day stresses surrounding school and home life. The GREAT program is a model that kids can pattern their lives after that will, if followed, teach them techniques on how to resist the pressures of everything from smoking to joining gangs.

Sheriff's Office Deputies Doug Gay and Sgt. Paul Newell are the only two (2) certified Law Enforcement Officers to have this training in NW Arkansas and the BCSO is one of only a hand-full of agencies in the entire state to adopt this program. At this time there is only one (1) school in NW Arkansas that will host the thirteen (13) week middle school curriculum.

Bentonville's Old High Middle School principal Marilyn Gilchrist accepted the offer to present the GREAT program very enthusiastically. Scheduling Details are still being worked out but hopes are to start presenting the program to Old High's sixth grade class sometime this spring.

Sgt. Newell and Deputy Gay have been certified through GREAT, to teach the elementary, middle school, and summer components of the program. They also plan on attending the GREAT National conference in St. Louis next July where they will pick-up the Family Component certification.



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance