You ARE making a difference.” — This is the message that was promoted at the 2006 G.R.E.A.T. National Training Conference. This statement was reiterated during workshops and keynote presentations and the final presentation made by three G.R.E.A.T. students at the closing plenary.

The three young ladies spoke to the audience about the impact that their G.R.E.A.T. officers had on their lives—Corporal Donald Fernald and Corporal Tyler Kennedy from West Covina, California. Hearing the youth speak from their hearts, addressing Corporal Fernald and Corporal Kennedy was truly an awesome and emotional closing to a G.R.E.A.T. conference.

This 2½-day conference, held in La Quinta, California from July 26-28, 2006 was the first G.R.E.A.T. Conference sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The conference was attended by 633 G.R.E.A.T. officers, representatives of government and youth organizations, law enforcement agency heads, and others. There were 38 different workshops, most of which were offered twice to give attendees more flexibility within the workshop schedule.

Dr. Tim Elmore with Growing Leaders, Inc., concluded the conference with a very motivational presentation that focused on the impact that G.R.E.A.T. officers have on the children. He discussed how officers who teach the G.R.E.A.T. curricula are helping to shape their G.R.E.A.T. students into leaders and helping them discover their true potential. Using a very poignant video, he demonstrated how it only takes one person to change a child’s life.

Continued under national news, page 2.
CONTINUED, G.R.E.A.T. NATIONAL CONFERENCE...

Plans are underway for the 2008 G.R.E.A.T. National Training Conference. The suggestions for improvement, submitted by 2006 conference attendees, will be considered during the planning process. Please make plans to attend your G.R.E.A.T. Regional Conference in 2007 and the next National Conference in 2008!

It is critical that G.R.E.A.T. officers keep the contact information in their officer account on the G.R.E.A.T. Web site up to date. The account information in the database will be used to announce the 2008 Conference date and site. Officers can access their account through the G.R.E.A.T. Web site at www.great-online.org. If help is needed to access the account, contact the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office at (800) 726-7070 or information@great-online.org.

G.R.E.A.T. OFFICER IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLET) is sponsoring regional in-service training programs for G.R.E.A.T. officers who have taught G.R.E.A.T. for at least one year. Examples of topics that are addressed during the 2½-day training include classroom management strategies, gang issues, interacting with students with special needs, how to address bullying behaviors, and how to transition from “the streets” to the classroom. Attendees will also receive updates to the G.R.E.A.T. Program.

Tuition is free, and lodging will be provided for those commuting over 50 miles, one-way. Officers are eligible to attend only the training that is offered in their region. G.R.E.A.T. grant funds may be used for other related expenses.

A pilot of this training was conducted in the Northeast region resulting in very positive comments, including requests that more of these classes be conducted. A second pilot is being scheduled in the Western region the week of January 29, 2007. Future course offerings will be posted on the G.R.E.A.T. Web site.

STUDENT HANDBOOKS

Since January 2006, officers have ordered student handbooks by submitting their form to the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office, either by facsimile or through the G.R.E.A.T. Web site. When orders are placed, it is important to include the data requested on the Usage Report. This data must be documented in order for officers to maintain their certification. If an officer is newly certified and has no data to submit, the officer should check the box for “New Officer” and leave the remaining data fields blank.

Recently, officers experienced longer than usual delays in receiving their orders. We at the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office apologize for the inconveniences this caused. The issues that contributed to the problem have been resolved.

Officers are strongly encouraged to place their orders at least one month prior to the start of classes to avoid delays. For questions about orders or help with the order form, contact the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office at (800) 726-7070 or information@great-online.org.

If you have problems with shipments, please contact the print vendor, A Graphic Resource, Inc., at (800) 500-4110, and have your confirmation number available. A Graphic Resource cannot accept orders directly, but will assist you with delivery problems or shipment errors.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR G.R.E.A.T.

SUCCESS & SUSTAINABILITY

As we continue to implement 2006: G.R.E.A.T. & Beyond, we encourage our G.R.E.A.T. leaders to look beyond their current resources and establish new community partnerships.

How do we plan new partnerships? First, we must reflect upon our own definition of community: a group sharing common characteristics or interests. What agencies in your surrounding community share similar characteristics or interests as the G.R.E.A.T. program? Do not limit yourself to traditional local law enforcement partners. You are encouraged to survey Federal, state, and local government agencies, faith-based institutions, non-profit organizations, corporate, and academic institutions. As you research your options to expand your network, you will undoubtedly find other community partners that are focused on providing life skills to youth to help them avoid delinquent behavior, gang membership and/or violence to solve problems. Solidifying additional community partnerships will lead to greater sustainability, allowing you to increase target population and maximize the impact we make. Remember, “We are all in this together.”

Suggested resources or partners: Boys & Girls Clubs, Professional Sports Organizations’ Community Relations Departments, Department of Children and Family Services, County Juvenile Probation Offices, City Recreation Centers, Cultural Arts Centers, Academic Diversity Programs, Civic Foundations, Business Associations, Mass Media and Teen Clinics

2007 G.R.E.A.T. MIDWEST REGIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars to attend what will be an enlightening regional training conference. The 2½-day conference is tentatively scheduled to be held during the week of June 25. Specific sites are still being negotiated.

Through funding provided by the Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, the conference registration fee will be waived. Attendees will only be responsible for expenses such as travel, lodging, and meals/incidentals. G.R.E.A.T. grant funds may be used for these expenses.

It is critical that G.R.E.A.T. officers keep the contact information in their officer account on the G.R.E.A.T. Web site up to date. The account information in the database will be used to announce the finalized conference dates and sites. Officers can access their account through the G.R.E.A.T. Web site at www.great-online.org.

G.R.E.A.T. COMPUTER-BASED TRAINING (CBT)

Online training is now available through the G.R.E.A.T. Web site! Introduction to National Gang Trends was developed and funded by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLET). This course serves as prerequisite training for the G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training (GOT) and is also available as refresher training for certified G.R.E.A.T. officers. Certified G.R.E.A.T. officers can access this course through the G.R.E.A.T. Web site after logging into their officer account. Completion of the course will be documented in the officer’s database account, and officers can print a certificate for their personal training files.

If officers have any problems accessing the CBT, please contact the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office at (800) 726-7070 or information@great-online.org.
Deputy Peggy Moore from the Will County Sheriff’s Department in Joliet, IL, decided to encourage her G.R.E.A.T. students to work as a team on a joint effort for their last G.R.E.A.T. lesson – “Making My School a G.R.E.A.T. Place.” Deputy Moore challenged her two classes to sketch out murals on paper and vote on two winning designs. The winning sketches were then given to local artists for review.

To finish out their project, the students were guided by the local artists to paint the winning murals on two walls designated by the school. This section of the school is now appropriately named “Mural Hall.” Deputy Moore added that local hardware stores donated all of the supplies.

As you prepare for the upcoming holiday season, please allow me the opportunity to thank all of the G.R.E.A.T. Officers who make our program successful. These officers are in many ways the unsung heroes of our struggle to strengthen our communities and improve the lives of kids.

One of the enduring truisms of our program is this: no program can transcend the people in it. In other words, a program can only be as good as the people implementing it. Curricula, even thoughtful, well written curricula, succeed or fail based upon the ability and passion of the people delivering them. When the right people do the right things, good things will happen. You exemplify these basic truths.

We know that you cannot do it alone. Community support, internal support within your own agencies, and the willingness of schools to allow time for G.R.E.A.T. in their classrooms are each prerequisites of our program.

At the National and Regional levels we are working to do our part, too. We want to ensure that the training and assistance we offer to G.R.E.A.T. Officers, their agencies, and communities provide effective, cost-efficient solutions to the problems of youth violence and gang involvement. Each G.R.E.A.T. Region is operated by a law enforcement agency that is committed to preventing youth violence. We don’t just promote G.R.E.A.T., we believe in G.R.E.A.T., and we believe in our ability to help kids enjoy positive, crime-free futures. As such, we share the challenges you face as law enforcement agencies.

Our Federal partners, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, provide vital support and guidance to maximize the positive impact of G.R.E.A.T. Even though each of these organizations has many other significant responsibilities, they have demonstrated their commitment to G.R.E.A.T. in many ways: each has provided senior management representatives to our national board and committees, each has provided staff and financial resources to G.R.E.A.T., and each has worked without hesitation to ensure that more kids in more communities will be able gain the valuable life skills G.R.E.A.T. teaches.

This partnership between Federal and local agencies is unique within the law enforcement world because it involves more than money, more than policies and bureaucracies – it is built upon ongoing relationships, and a vast network of people who share a vision of a safer future for our kids and our communities.

As 2006 comes to a conclusion and 2007 opens, Teri, Roger, Stephanie, and I look forward to our 9th year of serving you and your communities. Please do not hesitate to offer your comments, ideas, and suggestions for improving G.R.E.A.T. to us by phone: 1-877-TO-G.R.E.A.T. or by e-mail: great@cityoflacrosse.org.
Television and movies often show the glitz and glamour of street gang life without pointing out the other side – how gang members often end up dead or in prison, and how gang members who fail to produce can find themselves beaten or killed.

But in an effort to give kids the truth and steer them away from gangs, the Valparaiso Police Department has taught Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) to seventh-graders in Valparaiso since 1993.

Now, a survey has shown that the program does lead to a greater awareness of the dangers posed by gangs.

Valparaiso University’s Community Research and Service Center, in conjunction with the Porter County Substance Abuse Council, surveyed about 400 seventh-graders in Valparaiso during the past school year. They found that after taking the 13-week course – which features lessons on anger management, decision making, awareness of the consequences of actions and avoiding gangs and negative peer pressure – students more strongly believed that gangs lead to criminal activity and trouble.

“The change in attitude appears driven by an increase in students’ understanding that gangs are involved in criminal activity and that if they are involved with gangs they are more likely to get in trouble,” said Dr. Larry Baas, Community Research and Service Center director.

“It does show the program is working,” said G.R.E.A.T. instructor Valparaiso Police Cpl. Michael Grennes. Data from the survey will help police make changes to enhance the program.

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**UPCOMING TRAININGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4-15, 2006</td>
<td>80 Hour</td>
<td>Chicago, IL*</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 8-19, 2007</td>
<td>80 Hour</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH*</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 4-15, 2007</td>
<td>80 Hour</td>
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<td>Aug 13-17, 2007</td>
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<td>Sept 17-28, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 29-Nov 9, 2007</td>
<td>80 Hour</td>
<td>La Crosse, WI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates remote trainings.

**Training Costs**

- **Transportation & Meals:** responsibility of the agency
- **Lodging:** paid for by G.R.E.A.T. (unless it is a remote)
- **Tuition:** paid for by G.R.E.A.T.

If included in your yearly budget, all training expenses are reimbursable from the G.R.E.A.T. grant.

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As your regional G.R.E.A.T. office, we would like to help you stay organized while teaching your G.R.E.A.T. classes. One of the services we offer is mailing graduate certificates to you, free of cost. The three types of certificates we offer are: Elementary (E), Middle (M), and Families (F).

It is imperative that as a G.R.E.A.T. officer, you keep track of the number of students or families that graduate each semester. This information needs to be relayed to us by filling out the Certificate Order Form. You can download the order form from our website at www.mwgreat.org and click on the forms button.

By handing out certificates, you are helping the G.R.E.A.T. Program acknowledge the students who have worked hard to complete the G.R.E.A.T. Curriculum. If you currently do not hand out graduation certificates to your students or families because you do not know how to print names on them, feel free to contact our office to request a certificate template to assist you in your printing needs.

It is always important that you fill out the Certificate Order Form and send it to us 6 to 8 weeks prior to your graduation to ensure a timely delivery. This will allow you time to print names on them before your classes end.

Helpful hint: Try to fax all of your G.R.E.A.T. officers’ order forms on the same date. This will speed up the shipping process.

Even if you do not feel the need to hand out graduation certificates, we still need you to fill out the Certificate Order Form. On the bottom of the order form, please write “DO NOT SEND CERTIFICATES.”

If you have any additional questions or concerns about the certificate ordering process, please feel free to contact the Midwest Regional Training Center at 1-877-TO-GREAT or visit our Web site www.mwgreat.org.