In October 2007, I had the opportunity to travel to Jersey City, New Jersey, for a G.R.E.A.T. kickoff meeting with the U.S. Marshals Service, Jersey City administrators, community activists, law enforcement, and school officials. Jersey City was one of the sites selected to be part of the U.S. Marshals Service G.R.E.A.T. start-up locations. This selection was made based on a documented increase of a “gang presence” in the community and the city’s request for assistance in combating its juvenile gang problems.

Deputy Marshal Dennis Munchel had volunteered and was selected by Marshal James Plousis to become one of the first Deputies to become a certified G.R.E.A.T. officer for this project. During the 2008 G.R.E.A.T. National Conference in St. Louis, I was approached by Deputy Munchel, who said that he wanted me to know that when he was first assigned to the G.R.E.A.T. Program, he was enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with the students but optimistically skeptical about his new assignment and how things would work out. He then explained that after teaching only two G.R.E.A.T. lessons, he became totally convinced of the value of the Program and the impact he could have on the lives of the students in his G.R.E.A.T. classes. He went on to relate the following story:

“On February 20, 2008, Deputy Patrick Higgins and I were just arriving in the classroom of our third-period G.R.E.A.T. class. The previous week we had completed Lesson 2, “To Do or Not to Do,” with a fourth-grade class at a public school in Jersey City, New Jersey. As we arrived in the class, I was approached by one of the students. This student appeared extremely concerned and explained that he wanted to tell me about a situation that he was a part of. After I briefly asked what the situation was, he explained..."
Continued from Page 1 - IMP ACT

that there were two students in the class who had knives and that he had a fake cap gun. I immediately approached the other two children and retrieved the two knives (actually box cutters) and the cap gun. My partner continued with the class, and I escorted the three students to the principal’s office.

“I had the opportunity to talk at length with the boys. When I asked the first one why he had told me about what was going on, he replied that because of the previous week’s lesson about identifying adults when we need help and the difference between telling and tattling, he felt that if he did not tell me what was happening, then something violent could happen and someone could get hurt. After further discussions with all three of the boys, they explained that they were all classmates and that as friends they had gotten involved in an intense argument which escalated to threatening one another. These threats apparently made the boys feel that they needed to carry knives and fake guns to protect themselves. All three boys were suspended for ten days, and following their return to the classroom, they appeared to have sincerely learned not only from the lessons but from their mistakes as well. I feel that this incident is a true testament to the importance of the G.R.E.A.T. Program and the value of each and every lesson. This incident was a definite turning point for me and made me aware of the important role I could play and every lesson. This incident was a definite turning point for me and made me aware of the important role I could play in the classroom, they appeared to have sincerely

Deputy Munchel concluded our conversation by telling me that he was totally committed to this program and am honored to be a part of it. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is honored to have the U.S. Marshals Service as part of our national G.R.E.A.T. “team,” helping us deliver this vital program to students in various locations around the country.

The G.R.E.A.T. Instructor’s Curricula has been updated and will soon be available to all active, certified G.R.E.A.T. instructors. After obtaining access using their user ID and password, instructors will be able to download from the G.R.E.A.T. Web site the middle and elementary school curricula, the G.R.E.A.T. Summer Program Procedures and Resources, and the G.R.E.A.T. Families information sheet.

The curricula are scheduled for release on the Web this spring. When the materials are available for download, an e-mail will be sent to all G.R.E.A.T. instructors in the database.

When downloading the materials, it is important that instructors understand Policy P103 of the G.R.E.A.T. Policy Manual. G.R.E.A.T. instructors must agree to download the G.R.E.A.T. curricula only for their own use in teaching the G.R.E.A.T. Program. Any other use or printing of the curricula is expressly prohibited without explicit permission, and the G.R.E.A.T. curricula cannot be changed or manipulated in any way. The policy is clear that any misconception, misrepresentation, or infringement of the copyright-protected curricula is subject to legal action.

Please help protect the integrity of the Program by complying with the above policy. A copy of the policy is available at www.great-online.org/Organization.

The G.R.E.A.T. Logo

Can You Find the 5 Differences?

NEW LOGO

OLD LOGO

Answers can be found later.

Did you know that the G.R.E.A.T. logo looked different at one time? It is important that you know what the latest version looks like so you can ensure your business cards, Web sites, banners, incentives, and other items bear the current G.R.E.A.T. logo. Because the logo is copyrighted, it is the only logo that can be used in relation to the G.R.E.A.T. curricula.

Take a look at the logos below, and make sure you are using the correct, most current G.R.E.A.T. logo. If your materials have the old logo, please replace the items by contacting one of the G.R.E.A.T. authorized vendors. If you want to use the new logo for any purposes not available through the vendors, you must submit for approval an Application for Agency Use of the G.R.E.A.T. Name and/or Logo. Proper use of the logo is addressed in the G.R.E.A.T. Policy Manual in Policies P10, P11, and P112. G.R.E.A.T. instructors are not authorized to wear clothing items, in public, or distribute to students incentive items that display the outdated logo.

The list of vendors, application for use of the logo, and policies are located on the G.R.E.A.T. Web site at www.great-online.org under the Officer Resources and Organization pages. For questions, please contact your G.R.E.A.T. Regional Training Center or the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office at the numbers in this newsletter.

Out with the Old, In with the New!

More than a year in the making, the “Guam Training,” as it would come to be called, was unique from the start. The entire process demonstrated how networking, collaboration, and hard work can make good things happen. With the support and direction of the United States Attorney for Guam, the Honorable Leonardo “Lenny” Rapadas, his staff took the lead in bringing the G.R.E.A.T. Program to law enforcement professionals representing the majority of Guam’s local and federal law enforcement, probation, and prosecution agencies. The final roster for the G.O.T. included members of the Guam Police Department; Guam Department of Corrections; Guam Customs and Quarantine; U.S. Customs; U.S. Judiciary of Guam (Probation and Marshals Divisions); U.S. Probationary Office; U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the Guam Office of the Attorney General.

Having been a member of the National Training Team (NTT) since 1998 and the Western Regional Administrator for more than three years, I have participated in dozens of trainings in various capacities from sea to shining sea. I have played a part in “remote” G.O.Ts across the continental United States under training conditions ranging from top-shelf to somewhat rustic. All have been memorable and special in their own ways, but the Guam Training will always stand out as the most unforgettable.

Why so special? First, the people of Guam: from agency heads and political leaders to hotel staff, I found some of the friendliest and most hospitable folks with whom I have had the pleasure to associate. The G.O.T. participants bent over backwards to make the training team feel at home. By day three, food began to materialize, every morning, at the back of the classroom. I suspect the locals got a little competitive to see who could bring in the best eats. The
Another year has come to an end and I want to take a minute to look back at 2008. Some of the highlights of 2008 in the Midwest included:

- Well, let’s start with me! I took over as Regional Administrator, in January, when Lt. Raj Ramnarace transferred to a different position within our agency, after serving the Midwest G.R.E.A.T. region for 10 years.
- The 2008 National G.R.E.A.T. Officer’s Conference in St. Louis, MO was a tremendous success with over 800 attendees. The attendance at this conference exceeded attendance numbers at all previous conferences.
- We had 32 officers complete our G.R.E.A.T. Officer In-service (G.O.I.) in La Crosse, WI.
- Five trainings were held in the Midwest, adding 136 newly certified G.R.E.A.T. Officers.
- 188 officers completed the G.R.E.A.T. Families Training (G.F.T.) at 5 G.F.T.s held in the Midwest.

In the future, the Guam Training may be repeated but never duplicated. I consider this training the culmination of my G.R.E.A.T. teaching and training experience. Guam was a “perfect storm” of networking, partnerships, and collaboration. I look forward to following the progress of the prevention efforts on Guam and cannot help but feel good about being part of such a positive and historic undertaking.

Finally, the NTT: without their hard work, dedication, and professionalism, the GOT would not have succeeded.

Corporal Dan Richmond of the Philadelphia Housing Authority Police Department set the new all-time record for distance traveled to a GOT and delivered the educator’s training block while suffering from jet lag and being “road” weary.

During the training, Sergeant Linnea Moren of the La Crosse, Wisconsin, Police Department was always the first to lend a hand and was a huge help in adjusting to the inconvenience of our late-arriving supplies (mail service on Guam has its own distinct schedule). Officer Rory Souza of the Honolulu Police Department had the shortest trip and required the least transitional period to Pacific Island living. Rory’s solid work ethic and quiet, cool demeanor were assets to the team and a role model for the participants. Officer Rachel Strobel of the Portland, Oregon, Police Bureau brought her passion for G.R.E.A.T. and made every effort to transmit that passion to those in the GOT. Last, but not least, Ms. Narcisa Delgado-Grubb, the Western Region Administrative Assistant, worked her normal “magic,” putting in long hours, making friends, and building lasting ties to future partners in the G.R.E.A.T. Program.

In January, when Lt. Raj Ramnarace transferred to a different position within our agency, after serving the Midwest G.R.E.A.T. region for 10 years.

- The 2008 National G.R.E.A.T. Officer’s Conference in St. Louis, MO was a tremendous success with over 800 attendees. The attendance at this conference exceeded attendance numbers at all previous conferences.
- We had 32 officers complete our G.R.E.A.T. Officer In-service (G.O.I.) in La Crosse, WI.
- Five trainings were held in the Midwest, adding 136 newly certified G.R.E.A.T. Officers.
- 188 officers completed the G.R.E.A.T. Families Training (G.F.T.) at 5 G.F.T.s held in the Midwest.

A member of the Midwest Regional Training Center has recently left our office. Over the last 3 years, many of you have probably worked with Stephanie Gavrilos. If you have called the office or have been at a training with her, you probably recall her bubbly, fun loving personality. Stephanie has moved on to take a full time job with a local company. We wish her luck in her new job. Teri and I will try our best to provide the same very personable service that Stephanie provided to many of you as a member of our G.R.E.A.T. Regional team.

In Indianapolis, IN, May 8th was declared as “G.R.E.A.T. Day.”

Chicago Police, IL, increased the number of students taught from approximately 4,000 to over 16,000!

The winner of the G.R.E.A.T. Video contest, sponsored by the G.R.E.A.T. Foundation, was Alex Rodriquez, student of Sgt. Paul Kolonich from Brownstown PD, MI.

We welcomed 3 new agencies that started the G.R.E.A.T. Program in their communities. These agencies are Sparta Police Department, Wisconsin; Dearborn Police Department, Michigan; and South Holland Police Department, Indiana.

In the future, the Guam Training may be repeated but never duplicated. I consider this training the culmination of my G.R.E.A.T. teaching and training experience. Guam was a “perfect storm” of networking, partnerships, and collaboration. I look forward to following the progress of the prevention efforts on Guam and cannot help but feel good about being part of such a positive and historic undertaking.

Continued from GUAM food was homemade and delicious and highlighted local culinary favorites.

The strong desire to do right by the island’s youth, demonstrated by Guam’s law enforcement community, was extraordinary. This indicates that Guam and G.R.E.A.T. are in for a long and successful partnership. Highlighting the local support and commitment was the stakeholders’ meeting organized by the U.S. Attorney’s Office and attended by command staff from all participating law enforcement agencies. Representatives from the school system, potential partners in the nonprofit world, and the head of the local chamber of commerce also attended. I have no doubt that Guam will soon be a model for how multiple local, federal, nonprofit, and business entities can collaborate in a holistic way to reduce youth violence and build strong relationships, while integrating an entire community’s resources toward a common goal.

In the future, the Guam Training may be repeated but never duplicated. I consider this training the culmination of my G.R.E.A.T. teaching and training experience. Guam was a “perfect storm” of networking, partnerships, and collaboration. I look forward to following the progress of the prevention efforts on Guam and cannot help but feel good about being part of such a positive and historic undertaking.

Continued from GUAM food was homemade and delicious and highlighted local culinary favorites.

The strong desire to do right by the island’s youth, demonstrated by Guam’s law enforcement community, was extraordinary. This indicates that Guam and G.R.E.A.T. are in for a long and successful partnership. Highlighting the local support and commitment was the stakeholders’ meeting organized by the U.S. Attorney’s Office and attended by command staff from all participating law enforcement agencies. Representatives from the school system, potential partners in the nonprofit world, and the head of the local chamber of commerce also attended. I have no doubt that Guam will soon be a model for how multiple local, federal, nonprofit, and business entities can collaborate in a holistic way to reduce youth violence and build strong relationships, while integrating an entire community’s resources toward a common goal.

Finally, the NTT: without their hard work, dedication, and professionalism, the GOT would not have succeeded.
Even though there is no 2009 G.R.E.A.T. Training Conference, training will be still available to further develop your G.R.E.A.T. skills. Take advantage of the opportunity to attend your regional G.R.E.A.T. Officer In-Service Training (GOI). The GOI is an excellent forum for learning, exchanging ideas, and networking.

The 2009 regional GOI training schedule is now set for April 6 – 8, 2009, in Minneapolis, MN. The goal of this 2½-day training is to provide participants with an interactive and self-directed forum where they will learn:

• How to implement, fund, and market the G.R.E.A.T. Program.
• New ways to ethically respond to common situations involving school staff, parents, and students using effective communication, interaction, and coping skills.

In addition to an open-discussion forum for resolving problems that have arisen during the participants’ delivery and management of G.R.E.A.T., the training will address topics such as:

• Proactive strategies for classroom management.
• Regional gang issues.
• Special needs and high-maintenance kids.
• Bullying behaviors.
• How to transition from enforcement to education.
• Updates to the G.R.E.A.T. Program.

Tuition for this in-service training is free, and lodging will be provided for those commuting over 50 miles one-way. Participants will be responsible for their travel, meals, and miscellaneous expenses. G.R.E.A.T. grant funds, if available, may be used for these expenses.

Classes are limited to 30 participants so that students can actively engage in self-directed learning processes while interacting with facilitators and other G.R.E.A.T. instructors. Please register early. We anticipate the GOIs will fill quickly since no conference is scheduled. You can register by going to the G.R.E.A.T. Web site at www.great-online.org, downloading an application, and faxing it to your G.R.E.A.T. Regional Training Center.

No G.R.E.A.T. Conference in 2009

Sign Up for Regional G.R.E.A.T. Officer Inservice Early

The Midwest Region is offering solutions to some of the common obstacles encountered by other G.R.E.A.T. officers while implementing their G.R.E.A.T. Families programs.

Obstacles in Implementation

Money for Overtime, Food, and Incentives

Consider holding fundraisers: developing partnerships with other organizations; or even applying for grant assistance from local businesses or organizations such as Wal-Mart and the United Way. To help with meals during your G.R.E.A.T. Families session, ask local restaurants for discounts or donations of food, unless your agency’s policies prohibit this.

Locations/Facilities to Hold Sessions

In addition to the schools you teach in, have you contemplated locations such as local churches or community centers? A successful G.R.E.A.T. Agency in the Midwest Region partnered with landlords of subsidized communities to hold G.R.E.A.T. Families sessions in the community center of the complex. Yet, another agency partnered with a jail and held sessions for inmates and their families at the local jail.

Childcare

Many organizations and schools require volunteer hours. Consider asking the Girls Scouts, 4-H, and Honor Society students at your local high school to assist by entertaining children who are too young to participate in the Families sessions. You can also contact with professors from local colleges or universities that teach child development or education classes.

Obstacles in Participation

Transportation

When selecting a location for G.R.E.A.T. Families, you need to consider transportation needs. Is there a way to hold a session in a central location, within walking distance of the majority of your families? Or, is your agency able to provide free transportation for families that do not have transportation readily available? Recently, a local police department, in the Midwest Region, was able to provide funds for taxi services to transport families for the G.R.E.A.T. Families sessions.

Session Times

Have you considered holding sessions during times to facilitate attendance by shift workers? A successful police agency in the Midwest was able to offer G.R.E.A.T. Families sessions early in the morning, enabling third shift workers to attend. The police department was able to partner with the business owner for classroom space and morning refreshments.

Recruiting

The number one rule when recruiting – “eliminate the excuses for not attending.” When promoting your G.R.E.A.T. Families sessions, don’t stop at handing out informational flyers. Have your schools’ guidance counselors make follow-up phone calls to parents. In addition, stress to the families that child care, transportation, and meals will be provided (if you are financially able to). In some areas, local police departments are able to work with the courts and implement G.R.E.A.T. Families as a diversion sentence for families of first time juvenile offenders, with minor infractions such as truancy, underage drinking, smoking, or curfew violations. Invite your local media to attend sessions. This invite could help your marketing in unforeseeable ways. For instance, a police department in the Midwest invited a local radio personality to attend G.R.E.A.T. Families with his family. During his show, he kept talking about G.R.E.A.T. Families and the experience his family had.

Attendance

Recurring incentives will keep families coming back. Consider holding a raffle each session. Grand prizes can include movie tickets or grocery store gift certificates. Don’t be discouraged if you only have one or two families show the first time – continue on with your sessions. Word of mouth can become one of your G.R.E.A.T.est assets for marketing the Families component.

The best advice we can offer is “Be Creative” – “Think Outside of the Box.” Holding GREAT Families sessions is very rewarding. Good luck!
Partnering with Existing Programs

submitted by Officer Kurt Weaver, La Crosse Police Department, WI

The La Crosse Police Department and the La Crosse County Sheriff’s Department’s G.R.E.A.T. program have had a long and successful history of partnering with local agencies to offer summer programming for at-risk and disadvantaged youth. Like many departments, we are continuously striving to strengthen our G.R.E.A.T. Program by broadening the scope of the program and increasing the number of children we are able to reach. This year, we began an exciting partnership with our local newspaper, the La Crosse Tribune, and the Girl Scouts of Riverland Council to offer Camp Send-a-Kid to 65 area boys and girls.

Creating a Partnership

The La Crosse Police Department learned about Camp Send-a-Kid last year through an article featured in the La Crosse Tribune. Camp Send-a-Kid is a program that provides at-risk youth with a free, weeklong camping experience at Camp Ehawee. Camp Ehawee is a 305-acre resident camp that is managed by the Girl Scouts of Riverland Council. This one-week, overnight camp features hiking, swimming, arts and crafts, cook-outs, and many other outdoor-related activities. After reading about this program, we were excited about brainstorming a possible partnership. We immediately contacted the camp directors to set up a meeting to highlight what G.R.E.A.T. Officers could add to the camping experience. The camp directors greeted us with a warm reception when they heard about our idea of adding G.R.E.A.T. Summer Component classes and AWANA games to their curriculum. After a series of meetings conducted throughout the winter and spring, we were ready for our G.R.E.A.T. debut.

A G.R.E.A.T. Camp Experience

Camp Send-a-Kid was held the first week of July. As G.R.E.A.T. Officers, our presence at the camp was three-fold: role-model, teacher, and lastly, police officer. Our goal at Camp Send-a-Kid was to reach out to these at-risk youth and guide them in the right direction.

We introduced ourselves to the kids with an ice-breaker activity – AWANA games. This activity was a wonderful team-building tool that helped the kids work together and provide an opportunity for everyone to meet each other.

For the rest of the week, we taught G.R.E.A.T. Summer Component lessons to groups each morning. Each class engaged the youth in topics such as making positive choices; avoiding tobacco and alcohol; and learning about rules and laws. We focused our energy on making the classes enjoyable – after all, this was summer break!

When our lessons were done, we continued our presence at the camp throughout the rest of the day. We assisted the counselors with camp activities such as horseback riding, swimming, arts and crafts, and cook-outs. We wanted the staff at Camp Ehawee to realize that our partnership with their camp did not end when our lessons ended. We wanted both the staff and kids to see that we were committed to the total success of Camp Send-a-Kid. These extra hours allowed us to develop a stronger bond with the at-risk youth.

The last day of camp was a solemn one. With tears in their eyes, the kids waved goodbye to the camp staff, counselors and G.R.E.A.T. Officers. It felt good to see their tears, as we knew that we had accomplished the job we set out to do – we were able to reach out to at least 65 at-risk youth in a week’s time.

Partnering Benefits Everyone

Our wrap-up meeting highlighted the many successes that occurred during Camp Send-a-Kid. The camp staff and counselors reported to us that the kids made comments during the week that the presence of G.R.E.A.T. Officers at the camp made them feel safe. This outcome was a positive side-effect of our true goal at the camp. In addition, the Camp Director, Andrea Tsilis, announced that our partnership produced another unexpected outcome – private donations toward the camp had increased by over $5000.00 from previous years. She added that this increase was directly linked to an article written by the Tribune staff that highlighted the addition of G.R.E.A.T. Officers in the program.

Conclusion

Sometimes what keeps G.R.E.A.T. Officers from starting a Summer Component is the overwhelming feeling of starting a program from the ground up. Many communities already have successful programs established – and most would welcome the additional help that G.R.E.A.T. Officers can provide. When we are willing to step out of our comfort zone, we can latch onto something G.R.E.A.T.!
In 2002, the Outagamie County Sheriff’s Department integrated the G.R.E.A.T. Families component in their local school districts. After learning about the Families component, Sheriff Brad Gehring, a strong supporter of the G.R.E.A.T. Program, knew that this would be a perfect fit for the families within his jurisdiction.

Deputy Matt Krzoska, a G.R.E.A.T. Officer for over nine years, was picked to become certified as their department’s G.R.E.A.T. Families instructor. Deputy Krzoska returned from G.R.E.A.T. Families Training (GFT) with enthusiasm and trained his Sergeant, Ryan Carpenter, as a co-facilitator.

In February 2003, Deputy Krzoska and Sgt. Carpenter held their very first G.R.E.A.T. Families class in the community of Buchanan at Holy Spirit Elementary School. Principal Simonson quickly became an advocate for the program after learning about the potential benefits her students and their families would gain. G.R.E.A.T. Families was an immediate success with the first group of families. Students were so excited about the program that they began informing other students about their experiences. Deputy Krzoska and Sgt. Carpenter found themselves with full classes for the next few years.

To enhance the G.R.E.A.T. Families experience, Deputy Krzoska and Sgt. Carpenter decided to brainstorm a fun way for families to continue their G.R.E.A.T. relationship outside of the classroom setting. The deputies contacted a local cinema within the community of Buchanan and asked for a donation of free movie tickets for graduates of the G.R.E.A.T. Families program. After the initial collaboration, it was determined that the tickets would be provided on the condition that they were used for the whole family. If the entire family did not show up to watch the same movie, the tickets were to be denied. This idea has grown into a successful partnership within the community. General Manager Mike Thomas continues to donate tickets to graduates today.

Special thanks are given to the Town of Buchanan and its town board for the continued support of the G.R.E.A.T. program in their town.

If you are interested in learning more about the G.R.E.A.T. Families program, visit the National G.R.E.A.T. website at www.great-online.org. Or, if you are interested in hosting a GFT, contact the Midwest Regional Office at 1-877-TO-GREAT or great@cityoflacrosse.org.

Additional program ideas can be found at our Regional website, www.mwgreat.org, by clicking on the “Idea Page” link.

Looking back at 2007

Last year, I had a group of students in my seventh-grade class who had been inspired by my previous year’s students and their G.R.E.A.T. idea. Because of last year’s accomplishment, my new seventh-graders wanted to expand on last year’s theme. The students stumbled over a few roadblocks during this project, but were able to overcome them once they put their heads together. The class agreed on putting packages together for three U.S. Troops: Specialist Agent Kelly Garbo, NCIS; Specialist 4 Jesse Tanner, 82nd Airborne Division; and Pablo Barrientos, First Sergeant Delta Company 2nd Battalion 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Packages included hard candy, beef jerky, pens, pencils, writing tablets, drink mixes, baby wipes, and lip balm.

Enthusiasm for the project spread quickly throughout the school. Even teachers not associated with the seventh-grade class expressed interest in helping out with their project. Before we knew it, there was an outpouring of support from the entire school. Supplies hastily piled up and filled an entire closet. The students were able to ship each soldier eight boxes of supplies! Before sending off the packages, the students carefully wrote a detailed description of their G.R.E.A.T. Project and included thank-yous for the soldiers’ service to our country.

Weeks later, the students received e-mails, photographs, and letters from soldiers in Iraq. The Principal of Eastlake Middle allowed the letters of gratitude from the soldiers to be read over the morning announcements for the entire school to hear. A special, surprise visit from Specialist Jesse Tanner will be made once he is able to take leave.

Enthusiasm for the project spread quickly throughout the school. Even teachers not associated with the seventh-grade class expressed interest in helping out with their project. Before we knew it, there was an outpouring of support from the entire school. Supplies hastily piled up and filled an entire closet. The students were able to ship each soldier eight boxes of supplies! Before sending off the packages, the students carefully wrote a detailed description of their G.R.E.A.T. Project and included thank-yous for the soldiers’ service to our country.

Inspiring your students to do something G.R.E.A.T. can bring a classroom, and school, together. Please inspire your students to do something G.R.E.A.T. for someone else or their community.

Helping Our Troops

Because of last year’s accomplishment, my new seventh-graders wanted to expand on last year’s theme. The students stumbled over a few roadblocks during this project, but were able to overcome them once they put their heads together. The class agreed on putting packages together for three U.S. Troops: Specialist Agent Kelly Garbo, NCIS; Specialist 4 Jesse Tanner, 82nd Airborne Division; and Pablo Barrientos, First Sergeant Delta Company 2nd Battalion 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Packages included hard candy, beef jerky, pens, pencils, writing tablets, drink mixes, baby wipes, and lip balm.

Enthusiasm for the project spread quickly throughout the school. Even teachers not associated with the seventh-grade class expressed interest in helping out with their project. Before we knew it, there was an outpouring of support from the entire school. Supplies hastily piled up and filled an entire closet. The students were able to ship each soldier eight boxes of supplies! Before sending off the packages, the students carefully wrote a detailed description of their G.R.E.A.T. Project and included thank-yous for the soldiers’ service to our country.

Inspiring your students to do something G.R.E.A.T. can bring a classroom, and school, together. Please inspire your students to do something G.R.E.A.T. for someone else or their community.
A New Year - Same Old Resolution?

Are you one of those people who come into a new year with a list of resolutions carrying high hopes of making changes for the better? I am going to … Quit smoking! Reduce work stress! Lose weight! Do better at work! These are all pretty common ‘resolutions’ and are just as commonly broken.

So what am I getting at? We as adults can learn from the same things we are teaching our G.R.E.A.T. students. Lesson 4 in the middle school student handbook is an excellent place to start - G.R.E.A.T. Goal-Setting Tips. Set goals, don’t make resolutions. Make your goal positive. Your goal should be realistic and focus on things you can control. Finally, make sure that your goal is specific, with a plan that includes dates and times and includes specifics on how you will reach your goal. (All these goal setting tips are located on page 28 of the Middle school student handbook.)

So set your GOALS and have an excellent New Year!

South Bend Police Officer Victorious in 2008

Officer Antwon Jones of the South Bend Police Department achieved many successes in 2008. Officer Jones (also known as “Coach”), a School Resource Officer for the Navarre and Brown Middle Schools also serves as the head football coach for Washington High School. In 2008, Officer Jones became a member of the G.R.E.A.T. team, and was able to lead his high school football team to many unexpected victories.

Earlier this football season, Coach Jones was awarded the Indianapolis Colts “Coach of the Week” award when his football team, the Panthers, won their second game in a row, giving them a 2-0 record start to their football season. Previously, the Panthers remained winless for seven years. In his first season, Coach Jones, who played football for Notre Dame as well as in the AFB for the Columbus Destroyers, was able to transform his team, school, and community by bringing everyone together to watch a successful Panther Football season.

The Coach of the Week program was designed by the Indianapolis Colts to recognize high school coaches who transform, through their hard work and dedication to young people, the best available athletes into high potential football players. One coach each week of the high school football season (12 weeks) in the State of Indiana is given this prestigious title. This year, Coach Jones was up against 300+ coaches in the State. At the end of the season, all award-winning coaches receive a $1,000 donation from the NFL Charities and an additional $1,000 from Blue Shield to be given to their high school’s athletic program.

Coach Jones was also awarded the “Coach of the Year” for Region 2 in the State of Indiana, which helped him achieve “Metro All-State Game Head Coach.” Coach Jones attributes his football success to his football players. Due to the players’ successful season, the Panthers were able to set a State record for the most football players on the All-State Football Team. Seventeen of Coach Jones’ players participated.

In December, Officer Jones added yet another victory to his accomplishments. He studied hard during a 2-week Gang Resistance Education And Training course and received his certification as a G.R.E.A.T. Officer. This triumph will aid him in assisting students in the classroom, as well on the field.

What will Coach Jones do with the $2,000 charitable donation that he earned? Well, half of it will be given to his community’s G.R.E.A.T. Program, benefitting over 600 G.R.E.A.T. students in South Bend, Indiana. The other half will help the Panthers prowl their way to victory next season.

So, what are the Goals of the Midwest Regional Training Center?

One of the goals the staff at the Midwest Regional Training Center has set for itself is to emphasize and promote the use of the Extended Teacher Activities (ETA) that are included at the end of each lesson. A specific area to focus on is the ETA at the end of each lesson. What better way to keep the teacher involved and interested in the program? So if you are an experienced G.R.E.A.T. officer or just recently completed the training, here are a few tips for promoting the use of the ETAs among the teachers in your schools.

- At the beginning of the semester, explain and review the ETA with the teachers or administration.
- Each week provide a copy of that week’s ETA, or at the beginning of the semester, provide a packet of all of the ETA’s to the teacher.
- Read the ETA prior to the class and bring resources along that could assist both the teachers and the students in accomplishing the activity.
- Offer to assist the teacher in reviewing the activities after they are returned from the students.
- Encourage the teachers to provide extra credit for students who complete the activities.

To assist you in promoting the extended teacher activities, the Midwest Region has uploaded the files, both individually and as a packet, to the Midwest Region Website for your convenience! Go to www.mwgreat.org/eta.html to download them. Remember, the Midwest Regional Training Center is here to serve you, so please do not hesitate call us for assistance.
2008 Trainings


Joseph Cross, Brian Farrow, Terry Halvorson, Karla Krug, Lori LaFerrieri, Stella Lee-Saunders, Paul Long, Daniel Mahlmann, Eva Miller, Nicole Mitchell, Michael Pauly, Anthony Reynolds, Kevin Roche, Steven Scally, Paul Smith, jerem Szmergalski, Tim Wallenfang, Anthony Wounded Head, Sr., Marquis Wren

Van Berry, John Bowman, Jeffrey Butkus, Gregory Connors, Michael Jeffrey Cornett, Patrick Cottrell, Tyson Cummings, Jon Cummings, Brett Denison, Robert Drakeford, Scott Falconberry, Greg Fischer, John Harlan, Craig Horton, Jessica Johnson, Michael Ludwigs, Terry McGinnis, Michael McGuire, Brian Rees, Anthony Rice, Chris Townsend, Danny Westbrook, Larry Williams

Michael Auge, Franklin Coleman, Clifton Davis, Prairie Dubray, Kasey Groenewold, Zrondia Hartfield, Gerald Hawley, Parris Johnson, Antwon Jones, James Killingsworth, Mervin Mayo, Cynthia Payne, Anthony Proctor, Andrew Raschka, Terrence Reynolds, Joseph Rolain, Jennifer Filpo, Mark Stegman, Scott Waxweiler, R. Andy Wilkins, Gregg Wyant