“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 2 ½-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. Southwest Regional Training Center Banners with the Conference theme could be found all around the training site.

see GREAT Conference – continued on page 5

(L-R) Corporal Tyler Kennedy, Teresa Gonzales, Katie Hudson, Ashley Catano, Shelby Anderson, and Corporal Don Fernald
National News

Student Handbooks

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Greetings to all members of the G.R.E.A.T. family! I would like to introduce myself as the new Regional Administrator for the Southwest Region and provide you with a little background on myself. My name is Richard (Rick) Aguirre and I have been with the Phoenix Police Department for the last 24 years. I competed with several other experienced supervisors for the position and was selected to transfer into the G.R.E.A.T. Unit after an absence of 10 years from the program. This begins the third chapter of my involvement with G.R.E.A.T. I should start from the beginning.

My history with the G.R.E.A.T. Program began in late 1991, when I was an energetic officer having a fantastic time instructing the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program to students in our local schools. Fortune smiled upon me and I was selected to be one of a handful of officers who were asked to help write the first G.R.E.A.T. curriculum. From day one, the effort involved so many talented people from so many disciplines and agencies that there was little doubt that our efforts to create an effective solution to the gang problem would be successful! Little did anyone suspect that G.R.E.A.T. would develop into the nationwide program that it is today.

I continued to teach the D.A.R.E. Program and contribute to the development of the G.R.E.A.T. Program. By the end of 1991, we had enough of the crucial components in place to begin training other law enforcement personnel in the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum and we held our first three day multi-agency G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training (GOT) at the Phoenix Regional Police Academy.

Our little multi-jurisdictional troupe followed up that GOT with our first remote training in Seattle, Washington in early 1992, if memory serves me correctly. I do recall that it snowed during our week-long stay. Other than the fact that the facility we were training in had a problem with the heating, it was a very enjoyable experience. I began working solely in G.R.E.A.T. and divided my time between presenting the program in our middle schools and participating in GOT’s. From that point forward, we were officially in the training game and as we all know, G.R.E.A.T. grew into the five regions that exist today.

In April 1993, I was promoted to sergeant but was given permission to finish my G.R.E.A.T. classes before transferring back into the Patrol Division in June of that year. Luckily I was transferred into the southern part of Phoenix where most of my schools were located. This gave me an incredible opportunity to stay in touch with some of the students who had gone through the program. Many of them built successful futures for themselves and when I occasionally speak with these past students, they are always eager to share their stories. If nothing else, these encounters have gone a long way to validate the time and effort I put into prevention programs over the years.

In August 1995, I was able to return to G.R.E.A.T. as the supervisor for the local unit. I was able to teach the program part time and fill in for my officers whenever they needed help. I also had the opportunity to return to G.R.E.A.T. trainings which, without a doubt, allowed me to enjoy the best of both worlds: teaching and training. By then, G.R.E.A.T. had gone through a few more changes and it was obvious that a lot of energy had been spent on improving all aspects of the program. Any program, regardless of how good it is, needs to be continuously examined and improved upon, if necessary, in order to stay relevant and effective.

One year later, I left G.R.E.A.T. and worked in several investigative assignments. Here I am, almost 10 years later, back in G.R.E.A.T., ready to contribute once again. Some aspects of G.R.E.A.T. have changed quite a bit from 1991 but that was to be expected. The other expectation I have is that G.R.E.A.T. will continue to grow, change, and improve so that the elementary and middle school students who look to us for answers and support in reducing violence will see us as prepared professionals who are up to the challenge.

I’ll close my portion of this newsletter with a note of thanks. I have noticed that the concern for curbing violence in our country and the positive energy that I experienced in 1991 and 1995 is alive and well today in the new millennium. Take care and please feel free to contact myself or Paul Ellis if you need any assistance or guidance. Thank you all again!

Please visit the G.R.E.A.T. Southwest Region’s Web site at www.phoenix.gov/POLICE/great1.html or e-mail us at great@phoenix.gov.

Greetings from North Las Vegas

Students and staff of the North Las Vegas G.R.E.A.T. Program

The G.R.E.A.T. Program is alive and well here in North Las Vegas, Nevada. The Elementary and Middle School curriculum are both taught in our schools. The students, teachers, counselors and school administrators love the programs and are on a permanent rotating schedule by request which says a lot for the G.R.E.A.T. Program.

With all of the requirements and testing that is put upon the schools for higher achievement and performance scores in addition to the “No Child Left Behind” program, the schools make the time for my weekly visits and appreciate the program, since discipline has become a problem in many of our inner-city schools. It is a good feeling to be a welcomed sight when I arrive in the classroom both by teachers and the students.

The new elementary curriculum has been a big hit with the favorite lesson being G.R.E.A.T. Beginnings (“Bully on the Bus”). Speaking from my own personal teaching experience, this curriculum is much easier to teach with the students being more interactive and the positive interaction has been overwhelming.

Recently, I graduated 470 Middle School students, the largest class ever! The kids put on a G.R.E.A.T. show! We finished our Summer Program and will start the G.R.E.A.T. Families program in partnership with the North Las Vegas Boy’s and Girl’s Club.

A paycheck cannot even come close to giving the same satisfaction of the feeling you get from teaching the G.R.E.A.T. Program to these kids! You can’t put a price on the importance of touching the lives of others through these messages and lessons. Yes, we are making a difference!

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GREAT Changes and Expectations — continued from page 3

No Violence Is G.R.E.A.T.

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NATIONAL NEWS

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GREAT Conference – continued from page 1

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G.R.E.A.T. News

Volume 1 • Issue 2 • August - December 2006


“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 2 ½-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.

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