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D.A.R.E. essay contest winners

St. James School fifth graders dared to say “no” to drugs and alcohol as they completed the 10-week D.A.R.E. program offered by the Red Bank Police Department. Winning entries in the program’s essay contest on the importance of being drug- and alcohol-free earned students Tessa French and Michael Sullivan 10-speed bicycles at the April 24 graduation ceremony held at the Red Bank school.


Red Bank Police Officer Dawn Shields led the 59 St. James students through the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program designed to equip youth with skills for resisting peer pressure with tobacco, drugs and alcohol. Officer Shields gave the children information on the substances, alternatives to their use and sound decision-making skills to keep them substance-free.



D.A.R.E. Graduates: St. James School, Red Bank, students Tessa French and Michael Sullivan are all smiles April 24 as they are awarded with 10-speed bicycles for their winning essays in the drug resistance program. The essays were chosen from among the 59 entries from the St. James fifth grade classes. Pictured from left, front row: Fifth grade teacher Fran Byrne, Michael Sullivan, Tessa French. Back row: William Cardone, St. James School principal; Red Bank Chief of Police Stephen McCarthy; P.O. Dawn Shields; St. James fifth grade teacher Susan Signoriello. *Photo courtesy of St. James School.*


Graduating students received a D.A.R.E. t-shirt and a certificate recognizing their achievement. Each fifth grade student was required to write an essay about what they had learned in the D.A.R.E. program, and the two winning essays by Tessa and Michael were read aloud by their authors at the graduation ceremony.

“We have to make good choices in our everyday lives. Drugs are no good and can only lead to making the wrong choices. They can only control you if you let them,” wrote Tessa. Michael noted, “In D.A.R.E. I’ve learned that drugs can cause mental and physical damage. I will never do drugs. I like myself just the way I am. I like that I have more choices because I am healthy.”



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