

Livonia PD drops DARE in Clarenceville

BY JOHN HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

A program designed to teach kids how to say "No" to chemical abuse and violence has been dropped in Clarenceville Schools.

In a letter sent to district officials last week, Livonia Police Chief Peter Kunst said his officers won't be teaching DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) classes at Botsford and Grandview Elementary Schools.

"The decision is based on the fact that we have a hiring freeze," Kunst explained. "We're usually short a few officers in the patrol division, and it was getting to the point where I was not comfortable

with the staffing levels there."

The program serving Livonia and Clarenceville Schools involved eight officers and a sergeant, including three DARE teaching officers. The department will continue to have a full-time officer in each Livonia high school. Officers will also be assigned to middle schools, and Livonia will pick up some of the DARE model, Kunst said.

The difference in services lies with the financial arrangements.

"Livonia Public Schools pay a good portion of the police officers' salaries," Kunst said. "We do not have any sort of financial relationship with Clarenceville."

The smaller district, which

serves students in Farmington Hills, Redford and Livonia, will continue to receive traditionally provided patrol services.

Clarenceville School Board members learned of the decision at their regular board meeting April 9. Supt. Cheryl Leach called the news "very, very unfortunate."

"We have used their program for many years and have found it to be an excellent program," said Leach. "It helps kids make a positive connection with the police department."

"Should we be looking for something to fill the gap?" asked board member Bryan Bentley.

"We can certainly look," Leach replied.

Students pay tribute to shuttle astronauts

The theme for this year's Botsford Elementary School Science Fair, held April 15, was "Space: A Tribute to Columbia" and was coordinated by Botsford fifth-grade teacher, Kimberly Williams.

"We had originally chosen the state of Michigan to be the focus of the science fair, but with the tragedy of Columbia, we chose to pay homage to the men and women aboard," she said.

Although each student was encouraged to have a project pertaining to the theme, it was not a requirement. The goal of the science fair is to encourage student creativity and to craft a model or individual experiment. Students were provided science fair packets, which included a journal for students to document hypothesis and project results.

Students displayed posters beside their experiment, and each student had an opportunity to orally present their experiments to the judges. Each contributor received a ribbon for participation with additional ribbons awarded for honorable recognition.

Creativity abounded as students went beyond the standard, Williams said. One fifth-grade student, who had chosen



Students at Botsford Elementary paid tribute to the lost shuttle astronauts at their annual science fair.

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Kimberly Williams
Botsford fifth-grade teacher

which brand would create the best reaction.

Other projects included battery testing, Cubism, Impressionism, Early American Architecture, density, weather, dinosaurs, and the causation in the change of color in pennies.

"It was really amazing. The students had original ideas and each one did a wonderful job orating their projects to the judges," said Williams.

Botsford principal, Joe Shiffman, was proud of the students' projects and participation and is already looking forward to next year's science fair.

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