

# From Innisfail student to teacher for D.A.R.E.

BY Johnnie Bachusky, MVP Staff

**INNISFAIL** – It was 14 years ago when Kelly Puttee was a Grade 5 student at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School and the D.A.R.E. program was introduced to her class.

This school year she is the Grade 5 teacher helping to facilitate the 10-week program with Innisfail RCMP Const. Craig Nelson, the detachment's community schools resource officer.

"It's really interesting to see it from the teacher perspective," said Puttee. "I think the main message is still quite similar, and I can even remember some of the topics that we've learned, like seeing it now with my students going through it."

"It's really nice to see the similarities and that they're still getting the same type of education that we did," she added, noting the impact the program had on her life. "I just really knew that I wanted to make safe and responsible choices for the rest of my life, and it kind of inspired me to make those good choices going forward."

And on Feb. 13 she was once again celebrating a graduation. This time it was for her 28 young students.

"They were really excited every Wednesday for D.A.R.E. lessons, and I feel like they really were able to absorb a lot of the material, and I can see that through our final projects that we did today," said Puttee. "They really caught on to a lot of the major themes and lessons they were supposed to take away from it, and I think they really enjoyed it."

The D.A.R.E. program has been taught in schools



The 28 Grade 5 students at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School celebrate their graduation with cake from their 10-week D.A.R.E. program. Each student also received a certificate.

Johnnie Bachusky/MVP Staff



Kelly Puttee, a Grade 5 teacher at Innisfail's St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School, goes over D.A.R.E. projects with students Wyatt Glazebrook, left, and Pyper Verhaeghe on program graduation day on Feb. 13.

Johnnie Bachusky/MVP Staff

for 42 years, and has impacted the lives of thousands of young students.

D.A.R.E., an acronym for Drug Abuse Resistance Education, was first developed by law enforcement and school officials in 1983 as a formal way of introducing alcohol and drug use information to young people, and to lower the rate of substance abuse in the future.

This is the eighth year Nelson has brought the D.A.R.E. program to the Innisfail Schools Campus. Along with Puttee's St. Marguerite class, Nelson also facilitates the program for the Chinook's Edge classes down the campus hallway.

Nelson estimates that a total of about 130 young students at the Innisfail Schools Campus graduated the D.A.R.E. program on Feb. 13, with public school students getting their certificates in the morning and St. Marguerite's students receiving them in the afternoon.

Everyone of them received cake, courtesy of Central Alberta Co-op, and their prized certificates.

"I feel like we need D.A.R.E. today just as much as we did eight years ago," said Nelson. "We need to remind our kids about kindness. We need to remind our kids about how to deal with a bully because there's so many conflicting messages out there."

"Nowadays kids have access to so many different things and different outlets of information, and I love the D.A.R.E. message because the D.A.R.E. message talks about how I can be an advocate for myself," added Nelson.

"So, talking to those kids about that right away, and having them do their D.A.R.E. project to show that they're learning what we're teaching is really cool."

## BOWDEN RESIDENTS

With the sad closure of the Reddi Mart we had to find a new home for you to pick up THE ALBERTAN in Bowden.

**BOWDEN LIQUOR STORE**  
2020-20 Ave.

has volunteered to be that place. Their hours are 10am to 9pm 7 days a week.

The **Albertan**

