

Community congratulates graduating D.A.R.E. instructors

By Ann Harvey
Staff Writer

Four years after teaching a D.A.R.E. class Cpl. Cheryl Jarvis met a girl who had been in the class and got feedback that has kept her going.

The RCMP corporal who was in charge of the two-week Drug Awareness Resistance Education training program for 27 RCMP, municipal and military police held at SIGN on Broadway, told her story at the conclusion of a graduation ceremony held on the morning of Friday, March 3.

"She came from a very broken family. Drugs were a big issue."

Some of the children in the family had been taken away, Jarvis said. "The school was not very supportive and really told Amanda that she did not have much of a future.

"She was a very shy, quiet, little girl who sat in the back of the D.A.R.E. class. Every once in a while she should come up and say: 'Cheryl can I have a hug?'" The officer would gladly oblige.

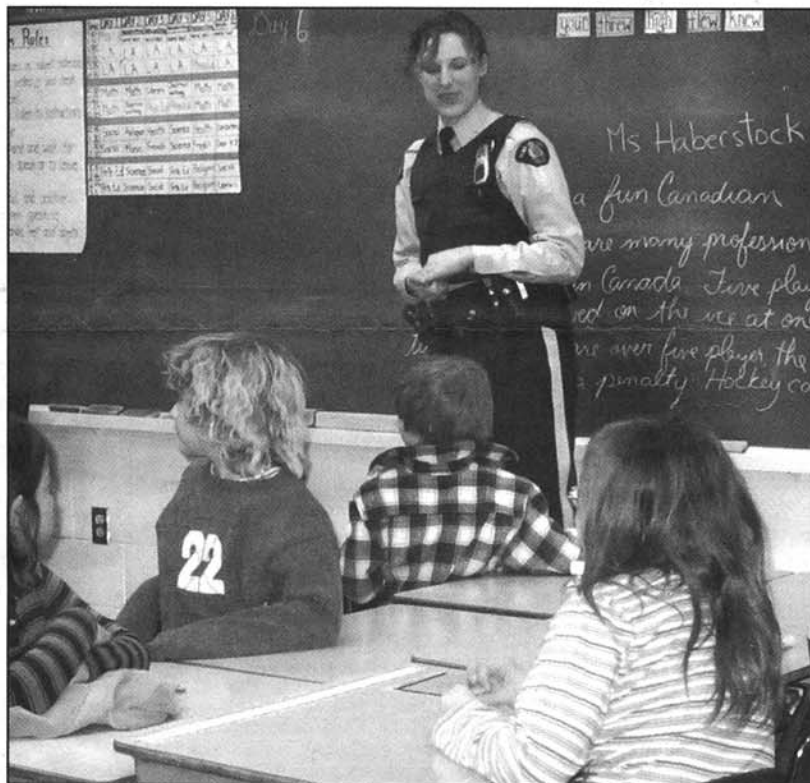
Then, while she was in a restaurant, four years later, Amanda came up to her and told her: "You taught me I didn't have to be like my Dad who uses drugs and that I didn't have to be like Mom who can't take care of her children."

That belief in the D.A.R.E. program was the theme of all the speakers.

Commander Bobby Robinson, of the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office Louisiana, was one of the instructors. He said D.A.R.E. America had given him authority to congratulate all of the graduates.

"We welcome each and every one of you into D.A.R.E. and each one of you will make a tremendous difference in the lives of children.

Robinson said they had been given difficult challenges and had



RCMP Const. Sherri Sanderson of Southey, Sask., gets teacher Mandy Mahling's Grade 3 St. Mary's School children to introduce themselves, giving their names and one interesting thing about them. The constable was one of the 27 police officers who completed the two-week D.A.R.E. training program held at SIGN on Broadway. They went to local schools on Thursday to make presentations to children.

worked hard. "Anything that means a lot to you generally is very hard to achieve."

The program changed him, he said, choking up. "I've been in law enforcement for 23 years. This guy here would never shed a tear for years and years and years.

"After going through the D.A.R.E. program, working with kids, I found another person behind the badge that I wear every day.

"It was a person who I built a shell around to try and protect myself from letting people get too close to me. The D.A.R.E. program has made me personally a better person, a better father and just a better citizen all around.

"Now I don't have a problem shedding a tear because it comes from the heart.

"A kid, and teaching a kid, is worth anything and should be worth everything to you. You're not teach-

ing bad kids. You're teaching every child and touching their lives.

"Welcome to a unique family, the D.A.R.E. family."

Staff Sgt. Gerry Gourlay commended the graduates and teachers and praised the program noting that it is sometimes difficult to spare the teachers' time. "It's about setting priorities to make sure that D.A.R.E. remains as a top priority for the province.

"There's a lot of pressure on detachment commanders to use the resources as best they can. Oftentimes D.A.R.E. is one of the program that is questioned by superior officers."

But D.A.R.E. helps police in their contact with the schools, he said. The detachment has a good relationship with them.

Const. Rene Shank, RCMP youth liaison and D.A.R.E. teacher, taught in eight schools by himself last year. "He even doing some of the rural area as well.



Bruce Schwanbeck, chairman of the Foundation of Elks, presents a \$10,000 cheque for D.A.R.E. to Insp. Jim Templeton, RCMP federal policing officer F Division.



Staff Sgt. Gerry Gourlay

"Youth is a real priority for the RCMP. The program gets us talking to the kids. They see police in a different light."

Jarvis introduced the Elks and Royal Purple, major D.A.R.E. sponsors. Bruce Schwanbeck, chairman of the Foundation of Elks, who pre-

sented a \$10,000 cheque, the first of the a three-year commitment for \$30,000.

Tammy Plews, a St. Mary's School social worker, said D.A.R.E. is the most prominent of the program's "combating the growing problem of young people experimenting with drugs, alcohol, gangs and violence. "Our young people need you.

"They need the D.A.R.E. program more than they ever have before."

Plews said police who are caring and knowledgeable make a big impression on children as was shown by the presentation the D.A.R.E. students made in Yorkton classrooms on Thursday, March 2. "You spent a very short period of time in our school yesterday."

But, despite the shortness of the presentation, the children remembered, she said. Her own children, who are eight and 10 years old, regaled their parents with information such as the presence of many toxins in cigarettes.

Other speakers included Templeton, Tom Seeley, SIGN executive director, and RCMP Const. Nicholas Morriset who was chosen by the students to represent them.

The graduation concluded with presentation of certificates and finally students from Dr. Brass School presented each graduate with a D.A.R.E. Lion