



D.A.R.E.



D.A.R.E. Officer James Ghrist

Munster Police Department



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D.A.R.E. Indiana: Why did you decide to become a D.A.R.E. Officer?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: I went through the D.A.R.E. Program when I was in fifth grade and had a lot of respect for my D.A.R.E. Officer. I wanted to try and make a difference for young people like my D.A.R.E. Officer did for me.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: Were you a D.A.R.E. student?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: Yes, I graduated from the D.A.R.E. program in 1989, the first year that the Town of Munster began the program in our elementary schools. I always make sure to let the students know that the program provided me with a lot of helpful information and that it can definitely help them too.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: How many years have you been a law enforcement officer?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: 14 years. In addition to being a D.A.R.E. Officer, I also run all of my department's community policing programs such as the National Night Out Against Crime, Crime Watch and our citizens advisory council. I also help with car seats and conduct home and business security surveys.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: How many years have you been a D.A.R.E. Officer?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: Just over 10 years.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: Which D.A.R.E. curriculums do you teach?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: I teach the K-4, 5th grade and 8th grade curriculums each year.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: How many students do you teach each year?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: I teach approximately 1,600 students each year in grades ranging from kindergarten through 8th grade at five separate schools.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: What is the most rewarding thing about being a D.A.R.E. Officer?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: One of the best things is when you have students contact you later on to tell you that the lessons you provided helped to make a difference in their life or helped them to make good decisions.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: What are the most important aspects of the curriculum? Why?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: For 5th graders, the lessons about drugs, bullying and communication styles are the most important because the kids will need these the most as they go through life.

D.A.R.E. Indiana: What is your favorite part of the D.A.R.E. program?

D.A.R.E. Officer Ghrist: My favorite parts are meeting the students on the first day and any lesson that allows them to act out situations in front of their peers so that they can practice important skills. I also like playing the game during the final lesson where they can demonstrate their knowledge of the glossary terms.