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# LESSONS FROM THE BATTLE OVER D.A.R.E.

The Complicated Relationship between Research and Practice



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# LESSONS FROM D.A.R.E.: THE COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This paper is part of a multi-year effort undertaken by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Center for Court Innovation to stimulate new thinking about criminal justice innovation. By examining the trials of past reform efforts, this investigation seeks to encourage a more open and honest dialogue about the criminal justice system and what it can realistically be expected to achieve—and to help tomorrow’s innovators avoid the mistakes of yesterday’s. To learn more, visit <http://www.courtinnovation.org/failure>.

## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in Los Angeles in 1983, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) has become one of the most well-known and widespread crime prevention programs in the country. D.A.R.E.’s model is relatively straightforward. Police officers are trained to lead educational sessions in local schools that are designed to help students resist peer pressure and live drug-free lives. The program’s reach is nothing short of remarkable: D.A.R.E. has been responsible for training hundreds of thousands of police officers and educating millions of children.<sup>1</sup> The program has spread to 43 different countries. In recognition of this, every year for the last 18 years, four consecutive presidents have set aside a day in April as “National D.A.R.E. Day.”

Alongside this impressive track record, however, there exists a counter-narrative. This story is written not by the administrators of D.A.R.E. but by scholars who have studied the program. To date, there have been more than 30 evaluations of the program that have documented negligible long-term impacts on teen drug use.<sup>2</sup> One intensive, six-year study even found that the program increased drug use among suburban teens by a small amount.<sup>3</sup> These less-than-inspiring results have received widespread press coverage, including numerous newspaper articles and a February 21, 1997 segment on the NBC newsmagazine show *Dateline*.

Despite these setbacks, D.A.R.E. is alive and well, taught in about 75 percent of school districts across the country.<sup>4</sup> Over 15,000 police officers participate as D.A.R.E. instructors, providing educational sessions about drugs and drug abuse largely targeted at 5th and 6th graders.<sup>5</sup>

To its critics, D.A.R.E. is a cautionary tale of how criminal justice programs can live on despite evidence of failure. To its defenders, D.A.R.E. is a case study of resilience in the face of adversity. This paper is an effort to examine the D.A.R.E. story. In particular, this essay seeks to unpack the complicated relationship between research and practice by examining a case where practitioners and researchers clashed and how it was resolved.

As this paper details, the D.A.R.E. story is more complicated than it appears at first glance. In fact, a strong case can be made that many of the local communities that have chosen to retain D.A.R.E. in the face of scholarly criticism had good reasons for doing so. For many policymakers, the only question that matters when it comes to crime prevention is a simple one: does this program work or not? As the D.A.R.E. story indicates, the reality is almost always more complicated than this. D.A.R.E. is a case study not in black and white verdicts but in shades of grey.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF D.A.R.E.**

In 1983, Glenn Levant was a commander in the Los Angeles Police Department when then-police Chief Darryl Gates hit on the idea of sending police officers into classrooms to educate young people about drugs. It was a time when the “war on drugs” was just starting in earnest. It was also the era of Nancy Reagan’s well-publicized campaign to “Just Say No” to drugs. In this environment, the new program proved to be an immediate hit, and other schools began asking Gates for help in implementing the program. To raise money to pay for expenses, in 1984 Levant helped organize the Los Angeles Police Crime Prevention Advisory Council which evolved into D.A.R.E. California, which became D.A.R.E. America a few years later when it landed a \$140,000 grant from the United States Department of Justice. The stage was set for the phenomenal growth of D.A.R.E.

At the same time, the Department of Justice also agreed to provide funding to the Research Triangle Institute to conduct a national study of D.A.R.E. Preliminary results from the study, which were released in 1993, did not show a reduction in drug abuse among participants.<sup>6</sup> D.A.R.E. publicly criticized the report. This would be the pattern for the better part of a decade, with negative research findings leading to public dissent from D.A.R.E. administrators.<sup>7</sup>

The controversy reached a fever pitch in 1998 with the release of an evaluation by University of Illinois at Chicago Professor Dennis P. Rosenbaum, which tracked 1,798 urban, suburban, and rural 6th graders who had participated in the D.A.R.E. program. The research confirmed earlier findings that program benefits such as educating young people about drugs, improving attitudes about the police, and giving young people the confidence to resist illegal drug use wore off within one or two years. What really got the attention of the press, however, was the finding that D.A.R.E. was associated with an increased level of drug use (3 to 5 percentage points) among suburban youth.<sup>8</sup>

According to Rosenbaum, D.A.R.E. America made a concentrated effort to shape how the report’s findings were covered in the national press. “Behind the scenes, they had used high-powered lawyers to sue or threaten to

sue people who criticized the D.A.R.E. program, arguing that reporters, producers, and researchers were making false statements,” writes Rosenbaum. “Reputations and careers were ruined.”<sup>9</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight, D.A.R.E. administrators now admit that the relationship with the research community grew hostile. “Glenn [Levant, the head of D.A.R.E. America at the time] was very vocal in his utter disdain for most of the researchers,” recalled Jim McGiveney, a D.A.R.E. America Regional Director. McGiveney’s take is that Levant, who had helped grow D.A.R.E. from humble origins, took the criticism personally. “I can understand why Glenn was so defensive,” McGiveney said, “because D.A.R.E. was his baby.”<sup>10</sup>

Levant couldn’t stop the tide. Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper decided to drop the program in 1996, calling it an “enormous failure.” His decision attracted local and national media attention.<sup>11</sup> Even more ominously for D.A.R.E., the criticism was reaching Congress. “You’d walk into a congressman’s office, and they’d meet you at the door with printouts of studies saying that D.A.R.E. didn’t work,” said D.A.R.E.’s McGiveney. “That was very tough to overcome.”<sup>12</sup> In 1998, the House Appropriations subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary took the unusual step of calling for D.A.R.E. America to revise its curriculum.

At D.A.R.E.’s request, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education intervened in May 1998. Several federal government officials (including Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Reginald Robinson, and Bill Modzeleik, the head of the Department of Education’s Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program) convened a meeting between a small group of researchers and D.A.R.E. America administrators.<sup>13</sup> According to several attendees, it was a tense meeting, but in the end D.A.R.E. America demonstrated that it was willing to make peace with the research community.

This made an impression on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which was interested in making an investment in youth drug prevention initiatives. Although the foundation was aware of the critical research about D.A.R.E., they also noted some of the organization’s achievements—achievements that were often overlooked in the controversy over D.A.R.E.’s long-term impacts. Most notably, the organization had built an impressive infrastructure. Through state and regional chapters, D.A.R.E. was training hundreds of new police officers every year. It was “one of the best training systems we had seen,” according to the foundation’s vice president, Nancy Kaufmann.<sup>14</sup> Also, with programs in over 70 percent of school districts across the country, D.A.R.E. America had an unmatched national network. Rather than trying to replace D.A.R.E. with something else, the executives at Robert Wood Johnson thought it made sense to re-tool it.<sup>15</sup>

In 1999, Robert Wood Johnson agreed to commit \$14 million to D.A.R.E. over a five-year period. Rather than invest directly in D.A.R.E., Robert Wood Johnson made the decision to have its funds administered by Zili Sloboda at the University of Akron. Working with Sloboda, D.A.R.E. agreed to a few changes to its model. First, D.A.R.E. would focus on an older cohort of students: many researchers believed it was important to supplement the educational services provided to 5th and 6th graders with a “booster shot” delivered to students a few years later. Second, D.A.R.E. agreed to revise its curriculum to make it less didactic and more participatory. Instead of lectures, the police officers involved would attempt to engage young people in a conversation about the consequences of illegal drugs.

## EVALUATING D.A.R.E.

Also with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Harvard University professor Carol Weiss, an expert on how research informs government policy, decided to investigate the D.A.R.E. phenomenon. She dedicated a team of graduate students to the project, sending them out to school districts across the country to find out what effect, if any, the controversy about D.A.R.E. had had on the field.<sup>16</sup>

Weiss' operating assumption was that local communities had continued to stay involved with D.A.R.E. out of ignorance: "I initially thought it was because practitioners were not paying attention," she said.<sup>17</sup> To test this assumption, Weiss and her team selected 16 local school districts in four states—Colorado, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Illinois—where large-scale evaluations of D.A.R.E. had already been completed, on the theory that it would make it more likely that school officials and other local decision makers had heard about the research findings on D.A.R.E. The districts were divided into two groups. Eight were using D.A.R.E. at the time the study began in 2001 and eight were not.

The team quickly learned that far from ignoring the evidence about D.A.R.E., individuals in the school districts were well aware of it. "When we got into the field, we found out they were paying attention," remarked Weiss.<sup>18</sup> While few had read the academic research first-hand, almost without exception they had seen or read something about the negative research findings. Some had even cut out stories about D.A.R.E. from newspapers, which they shared with the interviewers. As a result, they were very familiar with the broad outlines of the critique of D.A.R.E. Damage had been done: six communities had discontinued D.A.R.E. only a few years before the study started.

In each case, negative research findings played a role in the decision to drop D.A.R.E. In Gardner, Illinois,<sup>19</sup> the school district dropped the program in 1998 after the district's health coordinator saw a critical magazine article about D.A.R.E. that her husband had saved for her. In Marlboro, Kentucky, the city manager and a local police lieutenant jointly decided to discontinue D.A.R.E. after reading stories in the newspaper that confirmed their personal beliefs that the program was ineffective. In Orchard Grove, Massachusetts, a local gadfly used negative evaluation findings to convince the town's governing board to end the program over the objections of the school superintendent, a strong D.A.R.E. supporter.<sup>20</sup>

As these examples show, D.A.R.E. did not survive its battle with researchers unscathed. The negative research findings clearly damaged the program's reputation. Still, many communities in Weiss's study kept D.A.R.E. despite the research findings. In some cases, this decision was influenced by lobbying by D.A.R.E. officials. But it would be inaccurate to say that 75 percent of school districts in the United States simply caved to D.A.R.E. In attempting to understand why D.A.R.E. remained popular, Weiss and her team found that local decision makers were not blithely ignoring or dismissing the research. Rather, many gave relatively sophisticated reasons for retaining D.A.R.E. One reason commonly cited was that local officials were realistic about what D.A.R.E. could do to combat illegal drug use. To cite one example, a school board member in Massachusetts told interviewers that she thought it was "silly" to expect that D.A.R.E. alone would lower rates of drug use among young people.

Local officials also thought scholars had erred by focusing almost exclusively on the program's "official" goal of reducing drug use. Instead, they cited a number of secondary reasons to support the program, starting with the positive relationships built between police officers, students, and educators. As one Massachusetts school superintendent put it, "If you ask the question . . . 'Does it reduce the illegal use of drugs and alcohol?' apparently D.A.R.E. can't demonstrate that for various reasons. If you ask, 'Does it help kids understand their community better? Does it produce favorable relationships between police and kids?' all of the survey results . . . [are] positive." After helping a student with a difficult family situation, one police officer in Kentucky remarked that his interaction was almost impossible to capture in a study. "[It's] not something that you put on a bar graph or a pie chart or anything like that," he said.<sup>21</sup>

Weiss's research team uncovered several examples of ancillary benefits of D.A.R.E. For example, D.A.R.E. officers at one Colorado high school helped reassure students that it was safe to re-enter their school after the shootings at nearby Columbine High School. The benefits appeared to flow in both directions: a number of police officers interviewed said that participating in D.A.R.E. helped improve their understanding of young people because they had a chance to interact with them personally. And police chiefs valued the relationships they had built with school officials. "One of the most important benefits and by-products is the relationship we have now with the school department," said one Massachusetts police chief. "It couldn't be better . . . it really couldn't be better. If I need anything, I just have to pick up the phone."<sup>22</sup>

Finally, many of the school officials interviewed said that they believed their D.A.R.E. program was simply better than others and thus qualified as an exception to the rule. On the one hand, it's possible that these local officials were merely displaying examples of the so-called "Lake Wobegon" effect, named for Garrison Keillor's satirical observation that in his fictitious hometown, "all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average."<sup>23</sup> Yet, as researchers often point out, while research can help provide probabilities about whether a given program works or not, it does not foreclose the possibility that a particular version can be effective.

According to Weiss, communities continued on with D.A.R.E. in the face of negative research findings out of a combination of "rationality and rationalization." As she and her collaborators Sarah Birkeland and Erin Murphy-Graham conclude in their paper, "Good reasons for ignoring good evaluation," local officials were far from ignorant pawns in the hands of the D.A.R.E. America propaganda campaign. "Their decisions to continue implementing [D.A.R.E.]," they write, "are based in an assessment of the pros and cons, rather than simple ignorance."<sup>24</sup>

## RESPONDING TO THE RESEARCH

Local jurisdictions were not the only ones figuring out how to respond to the research about D.A.R.E. At the national headquarters of D.A.R.E. America in the early 2000s, administrators were actively working to re-think the organization's mission and methods. At the heart of this effort was the Robert Wood Johnson-funded project to construct and test a new D.A.R.E. curriculum.

This effort was led by Zili Sloboda at the University of Akron. Sloboda had formerly worked at the National Institute on Drug Abuse and was well known within the drug prevention community. With the help of an educational expert, Sloboda set about overhauling the D.A.R.E. curriculum. Working with consultants, she created a 17-week program, “Take Back Your Life,” that focused on a smaller set of topics and allowed for more back and forth conversation between 7th and 9th grade students and D.A.R.E. instructors. “Kids learn better when they get a chance to ask questions and learn on their own terms,” Sloboda said. “That takes a lot of patience.” For example, in one session, students were told which parts of the brain are responsible for different types of behavior, then shown images of the brain after alcohol is consumed. “The kids love to figure out why people slur their words when they are drinking,” said Sloboda. “They come up with the conclusions themselves.”<sup>25</sup>

Based in part on Sloboda’s research, in 2000, every D.A.R.E. instructor across the country was re-trained, with the goal of re-casting D.A.R.E. as an educational program that taught participants about how to make better decisions about a range of issues, including drug use. The plan was to test the new curriculum with more than 9,000 students in Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Newark, and St. Louis. Follow-up D.A.R.E. education would be given to students two years later when they reached the 9th grade, and the results would be compared to control groups in each city.<sup>26</sup>

D.A.R.E. America eagerly publicized Sloboda’s efforts as a sign that the organization was open to change. For example, Glenn Levant told *The New York Times* in 2001, “There’s quite a bit we can do to make it better and we realize it.” Levant added “I’m not saying it was effective, but it was state of the art when we launched it. Now it’s time for science to improve upon what we’re doing.”<sup>27</sup> The banner headline on D.A.R.E. America’s website said it all: “It’s a New D.A.R.E.”

Early results, released in late 2002, were encouraging: students who participated in the new Take Back Your Life curriculum showed small but statistically significant improvements in terms of their attitudes towards drugs and their drug refusal skills. “It shows us that the program is doing what it intended to do, and in a very significant way,” Sloboda told a reporter from Associated Press.<sup>28</sup> Of course, the key question was whether the results would hold true over the long haul, or if the benefits of D.A.R.E. would dissipate over time as they had in previous studies.

Unfortunately for Sloboda and D.A.R.E., events outside of their control complicated the ambitious research project. Hurricane Katrina presented enormous obstacles: many of the students who fled New Orleans moved to Houston, creating problems halfway through the research process. Even more critically, Sloboda realized that her control group had been, in effect, contaminated. Under ideal circumstances, the control group would receive no drug prevention education at all, which would allow for a better test of the effectiveness of D.A.R.E. However, the reality was that most students get some kind of drug prevention education these days. “That is good news for our kids,” said Sloboda, “but a big challenge to researchers.”<sup>29</sup> For their part, D.A.R.E. critics like Dennis Rosenbaum believe that these are not valid excuses, particularly given the study’s large sample size (six cities and 14,000 students) and the reality that all drug prevention research faces the same challenge of potential control group contamination.



Although final results have not yet been published, in all likelihood, Sloboda's study will not settle the debate about D.A.R.E. After seven years and considerable expense, officials at D.A.R.E. America have limited expectations of what the research will tell them. "I'm not sure anyone is ready to rigorously test any substance abuse curriculum in a real world environment," said D.A.R.E. America Executive Director Frank Pegueros, noting the problems experienced by Sloboda. "Zili found out that the complexities of large scale research are such that it takes on a life of its own and you lose control of it."<sup>30</sup>

Despite these difficulties, Pegueros said that D.A.R.E. America has learned a number of important lessons in recent years. The most important change for the program involves the teaching style of its instructors. According to Pegueros, D.A.R.E. America has worked hard to encourage police officers to be less didactic in the classroom. "We found initially that some D.A.R.E. instructors had some difficulty," Pegueros said. "Their perception was that they were losing control, which is not a situation that many law enforcement officials are comfortable being in." After five years, however, the situation has changed, and Pegueros is encouraged by survey research indicating that students in Sloboda's experimental group reported satisfaction with the performance of police officers who taught the course. "I think we were ahead of the curve on this one," Pegueros said.<sup>31</sup>

In recent years, D.A.R.E. America has demonstrated its continuing willingness to re-think its approach to substance abuse prevention. For example, in 2007, D.A.R.E. America reached an agreement with the Pennsylvania State University to use "keepin' it REAL" as its new middle school curriculum.<sup>32</sup>

## DECIDING WHAT WORKS

It would be comforting to imagine a world in which failure was clearly and decisively identified by scholars. If more than 30 studies have reported a consistent finding—that D.A.R.E. has no long-term impact on youth drug use—isn't the appropriate response to, in the words of Dennis Rosenbaum, "Just Say No to D.A.R.E.?"<sup>33</sup> The persistence of programs like D.A.R.E. has led some scholars to question why the public and government officials continue to support programs that have been shown to be ineffective.<sup>34</sup>

Yet as Weiss's study shows, the D.A.R.E. story is more complicated than it first appears. Far from being ignorant of the research, local decision makers weighed the evidence about D.A.R.E. in deciding whether to keep the program or not. In many communities, the result was that D.A.R.E. was discontinued. In others, D.A.R.E. was retained. In some places, the decision to keep D.A.R.E. was politically motivated. In others, educators and elected officials valued the ancillary benefits of D.A.R.E., such as improved relationships with the police. These hard-to-measure qualitative benefits are the most likely explanation for why D.A.R.E. remains in place in 75 percent of school districts across the country.<sup>35</sup>

Ultimately, there is no single objective standard for determining whether a program works or not. This seems particularly true for D.A.R.E. While noting that local jurisdictions have articulated a number of reasons for keeping D.A.R.E., Dennis Rosenbaum flatly rules them out on the grounds that D.A.R.E. America had already committed itself to achieving a single goal. "While I appreciate these 'voices,'" he writes, "D.A.R.E. was marketed and sold exclusively for its drug prevention benefits, not for other possible outcomes."<sup>36</sup>

The oft-critical scholarship on D.A.R.E. has made an enormous contribution to the field, forcing D.A.R.E. America to make midcourse corrections to their program and injecting a healthy dose of skepticism into the youth drug prevention debate. But scholars like Rosenbaum have expressed disappointment that the research has not led to the wholesale abandonment of D.A.R.E.

The limited impact of D.A.R.E. research should not come as a surprise, as it conforms to the basic pattern observed in “knowledge utilization” studies of the last 30 years. As Carol Weiss and others have shown, evaluation research rarely has a direct effect on policymakers.<sup>37</sup> While research can at times help challenge conventional wisdom, more often than not it is used to justify preconceived beliefs and decisions. “If practitioners are in favor of some action and they find an evaluation doesn’t show positive effects, they tend to disregard it or make up excuses,” said Weiss. “On the other hand, if they’re against the program or the policy, and the study shows it wasn’t effective, they are apt to champion the findings.”<sup>38</sup> Another factor limiting the influence of research is that good evaluations can take years to complete, which is much longer than policymakers typically have to make a decision. When research does influence policy, it tends to do so in an indirect way—what Weiss calls “knowledge creep.”<sup>39</sup>

At the end of the day, the D.A.R.E. story is a lesson in the importance of modest expectations. It can be argued that D.A.R.E. was saved by the realism of many local officials who understood that a complex problem like youth substance abuse doesn’t lend itself to solving through a series of lectures by police officers, no matter how impassioned or well-trained. The message of modest expectations is also appropriate for researchers, for whom the D.A.R.E. story provides ample evidence of the limits of their impacts on policymakers.

The D.A.R.E. story also demonstrates the importance of maintaining a dynamic balance among the key stakeholders involved in criminal justice policy—not just academics and criminal justice officials, but the public, the media, and politicians. While each group has something to contribute, tipping the balance too far in any direction can lead to trouble. As Carl Weiss says, “Evaluation is not a substitute for judgment.”<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSION

There have been dozens of articles written about D.A.R.E. that tell a similar story: how D.A.R.E. America has been able to convince educators and the public into supporting the program over the objections of researchers.<sup>41</sup> A closer look reveals that in the case of D.A.R.E. many local practitioners were able to sift through the competing claims of researchers and D.A.R.E. America and make more-or-less reasoned judgments about whether to keep D.A.R.E. In general, local officials reached their own conclusions about what made the most sense for their jurisdictions. In some places, this has meant that D.A.R.E. is still a vital, active presence; in others, this has meant that D.A.R.E. has been scrapped in favor of other programs.

While the fight over D.A.R.E. is mostly over, the controversy exposed a gap between researchers and practitioners that continues to this day. Some degree of conflict between these worlds is probably inevitable. Social scientists and criminal justice officials have different value systems and divergent world views—they are separated by training, location, professional rewards, and even the vocabulary they use.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the obstacles, criminal justice researchers and practitioners find themselves in a co-dependent relationship. Many practitioners are desperate for a more reflective approach to criminal justice that uses both qualitative and quantitative data to identify problems and assess solutions. Similarly, many researchers are eager to have their work taken more seriously and to have a broader impact on policy decisions.

The D.A.R.E. story offers a number of important lessons about the research-practice divide, including the challenges of implementing rigorous experimental studies, of assessing all of the potential impacts of a multifaceted program, and of creating an honest and civil dialogue between researchers and an evaluated program.

This last lesson is perhaps the most important. The conflict between D.A.R.E. administrators and researchers reached a fever pitch because so much was at stake for the participants: D.A.R.E. felt it was fighting for its very life and the researchers felt they were fighting for their professional integrity.<sup>43</sup> But it didn't have to be this way. If the culture of criminal justice policymaking in this country were different, the D.A.R.E. story might have unfolded with much less acrimony.

Is it possible to create a culture that values both reflection and results? That supports research but understands its limitations? That sets high expectations for practitioners but acknowledges the intransigent nature of many of the problems they are trying to solve? That understands that it is impossible to have trial without error? These are just a few of the questions raised by the D.A.R.E. case study that are worthy of exploration in the days ahead by those who seek to create a dynamic and positive relationship between criminal justice research and practice.

## NOTES

1. For an overview of D.A.R.E. results, see [http://www.dare.com/home/about\\_dare.asp](http://www.dare.com/home/about_dare.asp).
2. For a short introduction to the D.A.R.E. research, see Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Just Say No to D.A.R.E.,” *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 815-824 (2007).
3. Dennis P. Rosenbaum and Gordon S. Hanson. “Assessing the Effects of School-Based Drug Education: A Six-Year Mutli-Level Analysis of Project D.A.R.E.,” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 381-412 (1998).
4. See [http://www.dare.com/home/about\\_dare.asp](http://www.dare.com/home/about_dare.asp).
5. Author phone interview with D.A.R.E. America Executive Director Frank Pegueros, June 26, 2008.
6. S. T. Ennett, N. S. Tobler, C. L. Ringwalt and R. L. Flewelling, “How effective is drug abuse resistance education? A meta-analysis of Project DARE outcome evaluations,” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 84, Issue 9 1394-1401 (1994).
7. Patrick Boyle, “A D.A.R.E.ing Rescue: How an intervention by critics and federal officials brought the youth anti-drug program into rehab,” *Youth Today*, April 2001.
8. Dennis P. Rosenbaum and Gordon S. Hanson. “Assessing the Effects of School-Based Drug Education: A Six-Year Mutli-Level Analysis of Project D.A.R.E.,” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 381-412 (1998).
9. Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Just Say No to D.A.R.E.,” *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 815-824 (2007).
10. Author phone interview with D.A.R.E. America Regional Director Jim McGiveney, June 23, 2008.
11. Paul Shukovsky, “Stamper Wants to Cut D.A.R.E., 17 Positions,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 6/17/1996. Stamper also criticized D.A.R.E. in an interview with the PBS newsmagazine show “NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” on April 25, 1997.
12. D.A.R.E. America points to studies by Dennis Gorman and Carol Weiss in arguing that the D.A.R.E. program has been held to a higher standard than other youth drug prevention programs. For example, as Gorman has written, “what differentiates D.A.R.E. from many of the programs on evidence-based lists might not be the actual intervention but rather the manner in which data analysis is conducted, reported, and interpreted.” Dennis M. Gorman and J. Charles Huber, Jr., “The Social Construction of ‘Evidence-Based’ Drug Prevention Programs: A Reanalysis of Data from the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program,” *Evaluation Review*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 394-414 (2009). Also see “The Fairy Godmother—and Her Warts: Making the Dream of Evidence-Based Policy Come True,” *American Journal of Evaluation*, Vol. 29 No. 1 29-47 (2008). Author phone interview with Jim McGiveney, July 14, 2008.
13. Patrick Boyle, “A D.A.R.E.ing Rescue: How an intervention by critics and federal officials brought the youth anti-drug program into rehab,” *Youth Today*, April 2001.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*

16. Much of the following section of this report is taken from Sarah Birkeland, Erin Murphy-Graham, and Carol Weiss, “Good reasons for ignoring good evaluation: The case of the drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) program,” *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28, 247-256 (2005) and Carol Weiss, Erin Murphy-Graham, and Sarah Birkeland, “An Alternate Route to Policy Influence: How Evaluations Affect D.A.R.E.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, Vol. 26 No. 1, 12-30.
17. Author phone interview with Harvard University Professor Carol Weiss, June 27, 2008.
18. *Ibid.*
19. The school districts that participated in the study were given fictional names.
20. Another important factor for local communities that dropped D.A.R.E. was the federal government’s decision to omit it from its list of “effective” or “promising” approaches to youth drug prevention. The list was released in a preliminary document in 1998 and then embedded in federal legislation passed in 2002, over D.A.R.E. America’s vigorous objections. Although this provision did not explicitly prohibit school districts from using D.A.R.E., in practice many local officials interpreted it as doing so. Sarah Birkeland, Erin Murphy-Graham, and Carol Weiss, “Good reasons for ignoring good evaluation: The case of the drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) program,” *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28, 247-256 (2005).
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, Penguin, 1990.
24. Sarah Birkeland, Erin Murphy-Graham, and Carol Weiss, “Good reasons for ignoring good evaluation: The case of the drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) program,” *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28, 247-256 (2005).
25. Author phone interview with University of Akron professor Zili Sloboda, June 23, 2008.
26. “Study Highlights Value of D.A.R.E. Network,” Press Release, Carnavale Associates LLC. Available at <http://www.carnevaleassociates.com/newD.A.R.E./21st%20Century%20School%20House%20Jan%2006.pdf>.
27. Kate Zernike, “Anti drug Program Says It Will Adopt a New Strategy,” *The New York Times*, February 1, 2001.
28. “Schools D.A.R.E. to get real,” *Associated Press*, October 29, 2002.
29. Author phone interview with Zili Sloboda, June 23, 2008.
30. Author phone interview with Frank Pegueros, June 26, 2008.
31. *Ibid.*
32. The curriculum is listed on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s national registry of evidenced-based programs and practices. See: [http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/programfulldetails.asp?PROGRAM\\_ID=119](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/programfulldetails.asp?PROGRAM_ID=119).
33. This issue is not confined to D.A.R.E. For example, in an influential review conducted in 1997 of the effectiveness of criminal justice programs in reducing recidivism, University of Maryland Professor Lawrence W. Sherman and his colleagues found more failures (23) than successes (15). While some of the ineffective programs named in the report like correctional boot camps have declined in popularity in the last decade, other pr

ograms like D.A.R.E. and gun buyback initiatives are thriving. Lawrence W. Sherman, Denise Gottfredson, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn Bushway, “Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising,” A Report to the United States Congress, National Institute of Justice.

34. Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Just Say No to D.A.R.E.,” *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 815-824 (2007).

35. Sarah Birkeland, Erin Murphy-Graham, and Carol Weiss, “Good reasons for ignoring good evaluation: The case of the drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) program,” *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28, 247-256 (2005).

36. Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Just Say No to D.A.R.E.,” *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 815-824 (2007).

37. Carol Weiss, Erin Murphy-Graham, Anthony Petrosino, and Allison G. Gandhi, “The Fairy Godmother—and Her Warts: Making the Dream of Evidence-Based Policy Come True,” *American Journal of Evaluation*, Vol. 29 No. 1, 29-47 (2008).

38. Author phone interview with Carol Weiss, June 27, 2008.

39. Carol Weiss, “Knowledge Creep and Decision Accretion,” *Science Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 381-404 (1980).

40. “An EEPA Interview with Carol M. Weiss,” *Educational Evolution and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 2, No. 5 p. 75—79 (1980).

41. Author phone interview with Carol Weiss, June 27, 2008.

42. For an overview of these issues, see Aubrey Fox, “Bridging the Gap: Researchers, Practitioners, and the Future of Drug Courts,” Center for Court Innovation, 2004, available at [http://www.courtinnovation.org/\\_uploads/documents/bridgingthegap.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/_uploads/documents/bridgingthegap.pdf).

43. Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Just Say No to D.A.R.E.,” *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 815-824 (2007).

### **Center for Court Innovation**

The winner of the Peter F. Drucker Award for Non-profit Innovation, the Center for Court Innovation is a unique public-private partnership that promotes new thinking about how the justice system can solve difficult problems like addiction, quality-of-life crime, domestic violence, and child neglect. The Center functions as the New York State Unified Court System's independent research and development arm, creating demonstration projects that test new approaches to problems that have resisted conventional solutions. The Center's problem-solving courts include the nation's first community court (Midtown Community Court), as well as drug courts, domestic violence courts, youth courts, mental health courts, reentry courts and others.

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