

What Is G.R.E.A.T.?

"Since 2006, indicators on the countywide survey show a 30 percent reduction in gang activity by students in the school system. G.R.E.A.T. has contributed to these results."

—Captain Kevin Crabtree,
Person County Sheriff's Office, North Carolina

The Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program is a gang and violence prevention program, intended as an immunization against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership for children.

More than 12,000 sworn law enforcement officers from over 2,500 criminal justice agencies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia have been certified to teach G.R.E.A.T. to fourth- through eighth-graders in more than 4,900 school-based settings. The G.R.E.A.T. Program offers four components for students and their families. These components include:

Middle School Component

Officers provide a 13-lesson curriculum to students in their classrooms during the school day. G.R.E.A.T.'s violence prevention/life-skills competency curriculum helps students avoid destructive behaviors and set attainable, personal goals.

Elementary School Component

Officers provide a 6-lesson program to fourth- and fifth-grade students. The goal of the G.R.E.A.T. elementary curriculum is to prevent violence while developing a positive bond between law enforcement and youth.

Summer Component

The summer education and recreation program continues to reinforce the 13-lesson cognitive, social, and self-esteem-building lessons. Children enjoy recreational activities, games, outings, and participation in community service projects, while putting to practical use the skills they learn from the G.R.E.A.T. lessons.

Families Component

The G.R.E.A.T. Families Component consists of 6 facilitator-guided, life-skills-based sessions that provide parents or adult caregivers and their children with opportunities to bond and strengthen healthy behaviors within the family unit.

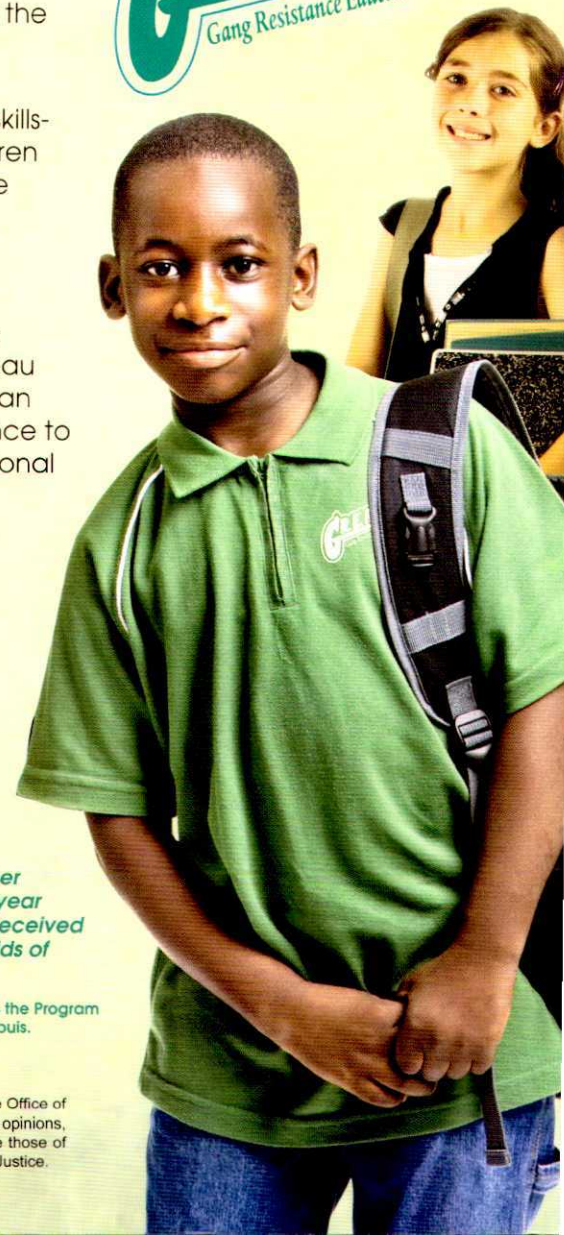
G.R.E.A.T. History

The G.R.E.A.T. Program began more than 20 years ago, in 1991, through a combined effort of the Phoenix, Arizona, Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). G.R.E.A.T. underwent an extensive curriculum and program review in 1999–2000 to ensure adherence to the latest scientifically supported data regarding prevention and educational research and theory. The review led to development of a new and enhanced curriculum, introduced in 2002, which was created through the collaboration of specialists in criminology, sociology, psychology, education, health, and curriculum design.

In 2004, Congress transferred overall program administration from ATF to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which currently has operational control. Since its inception, the G.R.E.A.T. Program has expanded throughout North America, including the United States, Canada, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

"Our multicompnent evaluation found that the G.R.E.A.T. Program is implemented as it is intended and has the intended program effects on youth gang membership and on a number of risk factors and social skills thought to be associated with gang membership. Results one year post-program showed a 39 percent reduction in odds of gang joining among students who received the Program, compared to those who did not, and an average of 24 percent reduction in odds of gang joining across the four years post-program."

— Finn-Aage Esbensen, Dana Peterson, Terrance J. Taylor, and D. Wayne Osgood. 2012. "Is G.R.E.A.T. Effective? Does the Program Prevent Gang Joining? Results From the National Evaluation of G.R.E.A.T." St. Louis, MO: University of Missouri—St. Louis.



G.R.E.A.T. Evidence-Based Program Effectiveness

The National Institute of Justice commissioned a nationwide long-term evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. Program in 2006. Led by the University of Missouri—St. Louis, this rigorously designed, double-blind, multisite study of the G.R.E.A.T. middle school curriculum concluded in 2012. This evaluation follows an earlier (1995–2000) study that returned promising but inconclusive results and led to a rigorous programmatic review that resulted in substantial Program modifications. Results of the latest study are currently undergoing final analysis and peer review before full publication of the results and conclusions. However, articles by the evaluation team examining data from the one-year post-program follow-up have been published in professional journals, and the investigators recently released a report discussing the initial analysis of the full study. Digital copies of all reports and journal publications related to the evaluation can be found on the University of Missouri—St. Louis Web site at http://www.umsl.edu/ccj/About%20The%20Department/great_current.html.

The most recent report notes that at the one-year and four-year post-program surveys, the G.R.E.A.T. students, compared to non-G.R.E.A.T. students, showed statistically significant positive program effects on the following measures:

- More positive attitudes toward police
- More positive attitudes about police in classrooms
- Less positive attitudes about gangs
- More use of refusal skills
- Higher collective efficacy
- Less use of hitting neutralizations
- Less anger
- Lower rates of gang membership
- Higher levels of altruism
- Less risk-seeking

The process evaluation also included comprehensive surveys of teachers and school administrators to measure their responses to the G.R.E.A.T. Program. Surveys of school personnel found that:

- 91 percent of teachers and administrators support having police officers in schools.
- 94 percent of administrators/87 percent of teachers are in favor of having G.R.E.A.T. in their schools.
- 100 percent of administrators/83 percent of teachers say G.R.E.A.T. addresses problems facing their students.
- 88 percent of administrators/80 percent of teachers agree that G.R.E.A.T. teaches students the skills needed to avoid gangs and violence.

"Former G.R.E.A.T. students have approached officers and thanked them for all their help. Students have claimed that they still follow what they learned so many years ago from the G.R.E.A.T. lessons. G.R.E.A.T. students have been very successful. Many are now going to college, and some have become members of the law enforcement community. They have made better decisions for themselves."

—Deputy Jacob Gross, Suffolk County Sheriff's Office, New York



G.R.E.A.T. Regional Training Centers

- Southeast Region
Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, Tennessee
- Midwest Atlantic Region
La Crosse Police Department, Wisconsin
- West Region
Portland Police Bureau, Oregon
- Southwest Region
Phoenix Police Department, Arizona

G.R.E.A.T. Statistics At-a-Glance	Total 2010–2012
G.R.E.A.T. officers certified	1,763
G.R.E.A.T. handbooks disseminated in English and Spanish	1,296,381
Number of communities served by the G.R.E.A.T. Program	2,567
Visits to the G.R.E.A.T. Web site	879,184
Page views on the G.R.E.A.T. Web site	6,690,216
Documents downloaded from the G.R.E.A.T. Web site	164,483

Please visit www.great-online.org or contact the G.R.E.A.T. National Program Office at (800) 726-7070 for more information on how to become involved with the G.R.E.A.T. Program.