

# COPS5 program enters classroom

By STEPHANIE LODER  
Correspondent

**G**ALLOWAY TWP. — The students in Christine Butterhof's fifth grade sat up straight and listened intently as Patrolman Paul Dooner took charge of the classroom at the Roland Rogers School.

Dooner, part of the department's new COPS5 program, carried into the classroom more than just a badge and a gun. And, the tools of the trade this day didn't involve handcuffs, wanted posters or locking up bad guys. Rather, Dooner brought with him a portfolio full of newspaper clippings about crimes that people had committed and a common sense approach to handling everyday situations students might encounter at their age.

For the last few years, the police department here has used the innovative COPS5 program to show students the consequences of bad decisions. According to law enforcement officials as well as students and faculty, the program is working.

"We're here to talk about good decisions and bad decisions," Dooner said matter-of-factly, standing at the head of the classroom in front of the blackboard. "I want you to tell me what it is you look for in a friend." The class was quiet, but slowly hands

were raised to answer the question.

"Someone you trust," said one student.

"And a person who is loyal," said another.

"A good person," one more student said.

Dooner, a police officer since 1987, smiled, then asked the class another question. "What if that friend asks you to do something you are not comfortable with?" He sat in an empty chair at a desk next to a student.

"What if I sit next to Annie here and I ask her for the answers on a test," Dooner said. "Now, if Annie gives me the answers, she is helping me cheat. So what should I do?" The students in the class told Dooner the right thing to do would be to tell the teacher. He smiled. "That's right, now let me ask you another question," he said.

During his time in the classroom Dooner rapidly fired off dozens of real-life situations and coaxed the class to respond with serious answers. He used the COPS5 program and the 40 minutes he was given to lecture the class on the consequences of everything from smoking to snowball-throwing, to writing graffiti, to carrying an unloaded gun to school.

He pulled a newspaper clipping with a picture to show the class a case where some kids had dropped a bowling ball off an over-



Staff photos/Ray Freas  
During the COPS5 program at the Roland Rogers School in Galloway Township, Det. Paul Dooner talked to fifth grader Annie Stiver (right) about safety issues.

pass. The ball went through the windshield of a woman's car that was passing underneath and smashed into the back seat of the vehicle, killing an infant in a car seat.

Dooner and 10 other officers, under the direction of Detective Joseph Davies, make the rounds weekly to local schools using COPS5, a grass-roots program that is the first of its kind in the state and aimed at touching in a

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Stephanie Warnock



Ryan Cropper



Chris Lysokowsky

## D.A.R.E., COPS5: Not the same thing

By STEPHANIE LODER  
Correspondent

**G**ALLOWAY TWP. — Teacher Christine Butterhof sees D.A.R.E. and COPS5 as two totally different educational programs.

"Both are really good. The D.A.R.E. program worked, but it was more run by the police officers," said Butterhof, who has been an educator for 13 years. "It wasn't as interactive as COPS5."

"This program encom-

passes the consequences of the situations," she added. "I wanted the students to know what would happen to them if they got caught breaking a window or spray painting a wall."

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a diversified number of issues facing children ages 5 to 15.

The township police department previously participated in the D.A.R.E. (Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education) program, which is currently used by many schools nationwide.

Davies said, however, the D.A.R.E. program only reached out mainly to just fifth graders or high schools for drug and alcohol awareness.

"We wanted to do more," he said.

A police officer since 1986 who got his career start in Avalon, Cape May County, Davies and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Middle School teacher Marguerite Tomasello developed a program to involve grades kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>.

The program is so-named COPS5 because it keys in on five areas — personal safety, drug education, non-violence, tolerance and civic responsibility. And, Davies said, the key to the program is not just the interaction with the students but the positive re-enforcement it brings the role of law enforcement officers.

"One of our biggest goals is to have the kids view police officers as human beings, not a badge," he said.

For instance, grade two students learn how to 911 but also discuss what to say to the operator, how important it is to know their home address and to know to call back if help doesn't arrive quickly enough.

"As they get older, we approach latchkey issues, good touching versus bad touching, and stranger danger," Davies said.

The seventh and eighth graders talk about personal safety issues, date rape and "more adult issues," he said.

"This is all very real," said Christine Butterhof.

"We'll sit down and go over what it is the officer is going to talk about. I might ask them to change a few things that I feel aren't appropriate, but it's a team approach."

Officers receive instruction before going into the classroom.

To participate in the COPS5 program, officers must first attend an 80-hour methods of instruction course.

Davies said it teaches the officer how to write a lesson plan so it can be presented to the teachers and students.

The COPS5 program involves 11 officers in the department and covers eight schools in Galloway Township, including Assumption Regional School in Pomona.

In comparison, the D.A.R.E. program was a 16-week drug education and awareness program that focused primarily on the fifth grade.

The nationwide program was written in the early 1980s and Davies said, "It hasn't changed since then."

"We're not bashing D.A.R.E. It had a pretty standard and rigorous curriculum," said Davies.

"It started in Los Angeles in an attempt to teach 10 and 11-year-olds drug resistance skills. We just wanted to make it a more grass roots effort. In COPS5, we sit down with

teacher, go over what they want to teach and how they want to teach," Davies said.

"So it's more of a team teaching approach. In the D.A.R.E. program, the officer was the sole teacher. And there were few or no teachers actually involved," he added.

The COPS5 program operates on a shoestring, with donations from local businesses and the local Municipal Alliance which gave them \$3,000 last year.

The result has been an educated student population. In fact, Davies cited a lifesaving incident that happened last year when a 10-year-old South Egg Harbor school student who had been through a COPS5 program and learned the Heimlich maneuver, saved his mother's life when she started choking.

The program is the first of its kind in the state and possibly the nation.

"We invented it here," Davies said proudly.

"So we have had people call about it from other counties and ask how it is working for us. It's still in the pilot stage and we have a good group of guys doing it."

Davies said he is also working on getting the COPS5 program into place at Absegami High School.

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the snowball.)

"I liked the snowball story because I know a lot of people who throw snowballs ... and I don't want to be one of the kids who gets in trouble like that," Lysokowsky said.

"COPS5 teaches us to know the right thing to do. And now I know the right thing to do

## Information

For more information about COPS5, contact Det. Davies at 652-3705.

would be to tell the people what happens to you when you get caught," he said.

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