



Equipping Youth to Make Good Choices

Today's youth face many difficult choices and peer pressure of all sorts. One issue they often encounter is whether or not to become involved in gangs.

Recognizing that gangs can be an issue in any community, the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has partnered with the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.) to bring the curriculum to local elementary and middle school youth in communities across the state.

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

G.R.E.A.T. is a gang and violence prevention program built around a school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom program of study, and is intended to help prevent youth involvement in delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership. Although there are other probation officers teaching G.R.E.A.T. throughout the country, DJJ is unique in providing G.R.E.A.T. classes on a statewide basis.

The G.R.E.A.T. program was developed in 1991 through the collaborative efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Phoenix Police Department, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center was instrumental in making G.R.E.A.T. a nationwide program. In 2004 the Bureau of Justice Assistance assumed responsibility for oversight of the federal grant funds, and in 2011 partnered with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in funding various components of the G.R.E.A.T. Program.

G.R.E.A.T. lessons focus on providing life skills to students to help them avoid using delinquent behavior and violence to solve problems during one hour sessions that last 13 weeks, along with a summer program and a family training component. Program topics include avoiding gangs, violence, drugs, and crime, community responsibility, setting goals, good decision making, effective communication, empathy for others, influences of peer pressure, anger management, the consequences of fighting, and conflict resolution.

Evidence Based Outcomes

A five-year, national longitudinal research study conducted by the University of Missouri-St. Louis indicated that the program shows great promise. Preliminary outcome results from the one-year post-program follow-up showed that G.R.E.A.T. students, as compared with non-G.R.E.A.T. students, demonstrated the following:

- More positive attitudes toward police;
- Less positive attitudes about gangs;
- More use of refusal skills;
- More resistance to peer pressure;
- A 39% reduction in overall rates of gang membership.

Where DJJ Provides G.R.E.A.T.

DJJ currently partners with G.R.E.A.T to provide the G.R.E.A.T program in 19 counties across the state (Allendale, Beaufort, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Greenville, Hampton, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg, Richland, Spartanburg, Sumter, Oconee, Union, Williamsburg, and York counties). DJJ plans to expand the program to serve additional youth in more counties in the future. Providing youth with the tools they need to make good choices in life is paramount to their success, and the G.R.E.A.T. program will continue to be in integral part of DJJ's prevention and intervention efforts into the future.

For more information please contact your local DJJ County Office (full listing on next page) or:

Beth E. Mackinem
Director, Office of Community Justice
4900 Broad River Rd., P.O. Box 21069
Columbia, SC 29221-1069

Office: (803) 896-9766 ♦ Email: memack@scdjj.net

For additional DJJ resources please visit our website:
<http://www.state.sc.us/djj/>

DJJ County Office Directory

Abbeville
864-366-5312

Darlington
843-393-5641

Lee
803-484-4550

Aiken
803-641-7735

Dillon
843-774-4147

Lexington
803-359-5526

Allendale
803-584-4751

Dorchester
843-832-4265

Marion
843-431-1110

Anderson
864-260-4041

Fairfield
803-712-6533

Marlboro
843-479-2961

Barnwell
803-259-7114

Florence
843-665-3080

Newberry
803-276-8243

Bamberg
803-245-5184

Greenville
864-467-5875

Oconee
864-638-9537

Beaufort
843-525-1351

Greenwood
864-229-6648

Orangeburg/Calhoun
803-533-6270

Berkeley
843-761-8194

Georgetown
843-546-8723

Pickens
864-878-7560

Charleston
843-740-1649

Hampton
803-943-4296

Richland
803-253-4050

Cherokee
864-487-2564

Horry
843-915-8969

Spartanburg
864-562-4200

Chester
803-377-8104

Jasper
843-726-5666

Sumter
803-778-2368

Chesterfield
843-623-2378

Kershaw
803-432-9171

Union
864-429-1640

Clarendon
803-435-8587

Lancaster
803-285-9447

Williamsburg
843-355-2772

Colleton
843-549-1509

Laurens
864-984-2518

York
803-909-7500

Tri-Counties
(Edgefield, McCormick, Saluda)
864-445-8138

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is the state cabinet agency responsible for providing custodial care and rehabilitation for the state's children who are incarcerated, on probation or parole, or in community placement for a criminal or status offense. Our mission is to protect the public and reclaim juveniles through prevention, community services, education, and rehabilitative services in the least restrictive environment.