

# NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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See Also: N/A

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## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM GANG RESISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

**New Bedford, Massachusetts** – Tomorrow, Thursday, February 28, 2008 at 11:30 A.M. at the Carney Academy Elementary School in New Bedford, students from all five 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Carney Academy will become the first students of 2008 to graduate from the G.R.E.A.T. program taught by the New Bedford Police Department.

G.R.E.A.T. stands for **G**ang **R**esistance **E**ducation **A**nd **T**raining and is taught throughout the New Bedford Public School System by New Bedford Police Officers assigned as School Resource Officers. The approximately (90) students comprising Carney Academy's 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes received comprehensive education and training about things such as: making good choices; dealing with peer pressure; and the lures and dangers of gangs during the (6) week curriculum which is taught (1) period per day during school hours.

The G.R.E.A.T. curriculum continues at the Junior High School level, but lasts (13) weeks and deals with more in-depth topics and techniques involving gangs and gang violence. All graduates from the G.R.E.A.T. programs are eligible to attend the G.R.E.A.T. summer camp and have the option to record a video as part of the national G.R.E.A.T. competition. Some videos are already underway under the guidance of New Bedford Police School Resource Officers. Those students selected as winners at the state level will receive a prize package for a family of four to attend the national competition in St. Louis.

Parents of the graduates were afforded the opportunity to participate in a G.R.E.A.T. families program that also lasted (6) weeks and educates parents, guardians and/or family members about the training that their children received while providing specific training about the warning signs to look for to help them keep their children away from gangs and gang violence. The graduates of the G.R.E.A.T. families program will be honored in a separate ceremony tomorrow night, Thursday, February 28, 2008 at 6:30 P.M. at the Keith Junior High School.

Both ceremonies are open to the public and will be attended by several area officials.