

PILLARS OF YOUTH DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION:
PARENTS, POLICE, AND PROJECT DARE (DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION)

by

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ABSTRACT

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In 1983 Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officials teamed with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) health curriculum specialist, Dr. Ruth Rich, to redesign an anti-tobacco curriculum, Project Self-Management and Resistance Training (SMART), into Project Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE). In the first four years of Project DARE, local, state, and, federal government branches endorsed the program as an efficient tool in the local and national fight against youth drug abuse. Early program evaluations, conducted by the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI), demonstrated DARE's ability to change attitudes of students, school faculty, and parents concerning social tolerance of underage drug consumption, while also improving attitudes held toward police officers. These evaluations endorsed the expansion of DARE to all LAUSD schools, followed closely by the program's nationwide expansion. This thesis examines how police officers displaced parent activists' role in teaching children drug prevention techniques and why, by 1987, the emergent Bureau of Justice Assistance, a branch of the Department of Justice, funded five Regional Officer Training Centers (RTCs) across the country. By investigating previous federal drug responses, media-driven drug panics, and the expanded role of police in drug prevention education, the DARE program is reconsidered as a curricular vehicle which filtered parental guidance out of youth drug prevention and increased authority and autonomy to police departments across the country.

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To my family and friends,
May we never dream small

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1, A Local Program for a National Problem	14
Chapter 2, Project DARE: No Magic Bullet in the Fight Against Drug Abuse	44
Conclusion	71
References	79

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
BJA	Bureau of Justice Assistance
CPAC	Crime Prevention Advisory Council
DARE	Drug Abuse Resistance Education
DARE-TAP	Drug Abuse Resistance Education Training and Technical Assistance Program
DEA	Drug enforcement Agency
DFSCA	Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act
DOJ	Department of Justice
DSP	California Suppression of Drugs in Schools Program
ETI	Evaluation and Training Institute
FBN	Federal Bureau of Narcotics
FIA	Families in Action
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
LAUSD	Los Angeles Unified School District
NFP	National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth
NIDA	National Institute on Drug Abuse
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NORML	National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws
NPA	National Parents' Association
OCJP	Office of Criminal Justice Planning for the State of California
PDID	Public Disorder Intelligence Division
PRIDE	Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education
RTC	Regional Officer Training Center
SMART	Self-Management and Resistance Training
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics

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Introduction

In June 1988 the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program was already a groundbreaking youth drug abuse prevention curriculum. Representing the DARE program, Deputy Chief Glenn Levant of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) spoke in front of a US Senate Committee hearing testimonies in favor of establishing a nationally disseminated youth drug prevention curriculum. Although DARE started as a local Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) curriculum, police departments across the nation expressed interest in adopting the program. Levant recommended the Department of Education mandate “preventive education throughout all of the schools in the United States.” In an attached written statement, Levant explained, “It is imperative that DARE programs be implemented nationwide if we are to reduce the demand for drugs throughout America.”¹

From its onset, the DARE program was an innovative, education-based, demand reduction tool in the fight against youth drug abuse. In this thesis, I complicate the DARE program’s earliest objectives by examining the erratic and underdeveloped federal drug responses of the 1970s, alongside a sweeping 1980s conservative political shift toward unproven drug prevention methodologies, including DARE. I further examine how LAPD officials’ technocratic maneuvering prowess within local, state, and federal bureaucracies integrated classroom spaces and the DARE program into the national drug war. By expanding the role of the police officers beyond punitive law enforcement practices, LAPD leadership used DARE to overshadow numerous abuses of policing power, while also developing and utilizing new avenues of budgetary autonomy which detached the LAPD and Project DARE from local

¹ Hearing before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate, 100th Congress, June 16, 1988 *Drug Abuse – Prevention, Education, and Treatment*, June 16, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 177-180.

funding obstacles. Meanwhile, the expansion of the DARE program enabled police officers nationwide to rhetorically replace the role of parents in teaching children the dangers of youth drug abuse.

Beginning in January 1983, LAPD and LAUSD officials collaborated to create the DARE program. Originally named Project DARE, the drug abuse prevention curriculum instructed elementary and middle school-aged children using uniformed police officers as program instructors. These officer-instructors were tasked with implementing a 17-week curriculum designed to teach decision-making skills and peer pressure resistance techniques. They were also used to provide accurate facts about alcohol and drug abuse to dissuade future generations from experimenting with illicit substances. The early success of the DARE program mitigated previous failures of strictly using punitive methods to eradicate drugs from schools.

Utilizing a lobbying and promotional campaign, LAPD officials expanded DARE from a local initiative to a national and international network of programming franchises composed of external police departments and school districts. Relying on the antidrug rhetoric of the Ronald Reagan presidential administration, DARE officials carved new avenues in public, private, and corporate funding/sponsorship to transform DARE from a municipality-led program to a private non-profit business model. They thereby detached the program from a history of LAPD misconduct and future department-wide transgressions exposed in the 1990s.

The DARE program was a byproduct of constant federal drug agency reorganizations, and subsequent social movements both in favor of and against recreational drug use. In 1971, President Richard Nixon declared drug abuse as “America’s public enemy number one.”²

² Richard Nixon Foundation, “President Nixon Declares Drug Abuse ‘Public Enemy Number One,’” *YouTube*, April 26, 2016, Presidential Press Conference, 0:29 to 0:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8TGLLQID9M&t=29s> (accessed September 17, 2023).

Following Nixon's proclamation, drug treatment between 1971 and 1973 generated early successes. However, a hastened retreat from the federally funded drug treatment system led to increased funding for drug law enforcement initiatives during Nixon's second term. Funding for the federal treatment system was diminished. Instead, the scope of treatment funding was broadened to develop research on drug use and various methods of drug treatment, alongside various points of sociological research regarding family units, youth populations, and drug use amongst numerous ethnicities and cultures.³ The first Nixon administration ushered in the beginning and the end to a nationwide, homogenous federal drug treatment strategy. The program relied on methadone replacement therapy for its demonstrated ability to reduce street crimes at a rapid pace.⁴ However, the second term of the Nixon White House turned its drug reduction strategies toward increasing drug seizures and arrests as they sought to dismantle domestic and global drug trafficking networks.

This punitive push paradoxically diminished public concern regarding casual drug use. Whereas heroin and psychedelic compounds remained heavily policed and widely taboo, twelve states decriminalized marijuana between 1973 and 1978, and powder cocaine became a common offering in elite metropolitan parties. According to a May 1977 *Newsweek* article, "Among hostesses in the smart sets of Los Angeles and New York, a little cocaine, like Dom Perignon and Beluga caviar," was now fashionable.⁵ In the same year, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the drug research and treatment agency created during Nixon's second term, produced a research monograph titled, *Cocaine: 1977*. NIDA Director Robert L. Dupont noted,

³ See, *Drugs and the Family*, ed. Thomas J. Glynn (Rockville: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1981).

⁴ PBS, "Frontline Interview: Dr. Robert DuPont," undated, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/interviews/dupont.html> (accessed September 17, 2023).

⁵ Quoted in Donovan X. Ramsey, *When Crack Was King: A People's History of a Misunderstood Era* (New York: One World, 2023), 96.

“We are still, to a large extent, ignorant of the actual and potential health hazards posed by this fascinating substance, even though it was used by about two million Americans this past year.”⁶

Tolerance of marijuana and cocaine use lasted until mid-1978, when parents united to challenge federal drug leniency and state-level marijuana decriminalization. Using grassroots organizational efforts, these parents forged a powerful lobbying bloc known as “the parents’ movement.” The parents’ movement was comprised of parents (predominantly from suburban households) concerned by a nationwide tolerance of drug use and the subsequent outgrowth of drug-related entertainment. While marijuana was undoubtedly illegal at the federal level, the acceptance of countercultural entertainment revealed a subculture of Americans challenging the status quo. This subculture was exemplified by children under the age of 18 consuming marijuana in and around their communities without their parents’ knowledge. The fast growth of the parents’ movement came from numerous parents admitting their own naivety of the growing problem and acknowledging their inability to stop the rise of drug use. As their collective positioning grew, a peer pressure resistance model was adopted into federal antidrug rhetoric.

This zero-tolerance antidrug bloc quickly gained authority throughout Washington, D.C. until the Reagan White House used the Just Say No campaign to supplant the parents’ movement. Preceding Nancy Reagan’s Just Say No campaign, discourse and rhetoric from the parents’ movement pushed zero-tolerance ideologies into the political campaigns of the 1980s. Concurrent to the rise of the Just Say No campaign, and inspired by the renewed White House antidrug messaging, LAPD Chief of Police Daryl Gates teamed up with the LAUSD to begin work on what would become Project DARE.

⁶ Robert L. Dupont, “Forward,” in *Cocaine: 1977*, eds. Robert C. Petersen and Richard C. Stillman (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), <https://archives.nida.nih.gov/sites/default/files/monograph13.pdf> (accessed September 22, 2023).

A Brief Historiography on Drug Abuse Prevention and Enforcement

This thesis is a response to the limited historical discourse examining the onset of the DARE program. DARE came into being amidst the increased deployment of drug prevention education following Nixon's drug war declaration. The majority of previous scholarly references to DARE are used as anecdotal evidence of authors' greater arguments and avoid examining the political and bureaucratic maneuvers used to establish and sustain the program itself. Instead, scholars underexplore drug abuse prevention education because drug treatment and other remedies rightfully occupy so much space in this still growing niche of US history.

Medical and scientific drug research, positioned alongside treatment methods as proactive and preventative initiatives, have been expanding in recent years but remain understudied from a historical perspective. Scholars investigating medical and scientific research in the drug war reveal a complex web of events which led to a collective abandonment of federal treatment options and a renewed reliance on drug education methods in the 1980s. For example, Jerome Beck's work targets the rising stature of drug prevention education in the 1980s. Beck demonstrates how prevention education grew from the lack of standardized federal drug responses and strategies.⁷ Further, credence given to parent and police antidrug opinions, in the wake of delegitimized medical and scientific drug solutions, fortified local initiatives as America's primary remedy to rising rates of drug use between the 1970s and 1990s.

⁷ Jerome Beck, "100 Years of 'Just Say No' Versus 'Just Say Know': Reevaluating Drug Education Goals for the Coming Century," *Evaluation Review* 22, no. 1 (February 1998), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193841X9802200102> (accessed February 12, 2023); David F. Musto and Pamela Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control: Politics and Federal Policy in a Period of Increasing Substance Abuse, 1963-1981* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); William L. White, *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America* (Bloomington: Chestnut Health Systems, 2014); Claire D. Clark, *The Recovery Revolution: The Battle over Addiction Treatment in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Nancy D. Campbell, *Discovering Addiction: The Science and Politics of Substance Abuse Research* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

Other drug histories isolate specific substances and the networks of users and sellers. In doing so, isolated drugs are categorized and historicized by what Lucas Richert describes as drug careers, in which, all illicit substances “circulate through consistent patterns and in due course wane into disuse.”⁸ An example with modern implications has been the use of opium and its derivatives. Eric Schneider argues heroin markets debilitated major US cities through the 1970s; however, in the twenty-first century, heroin users substitute heroin for a long list of pharmaceutical sector-produced opium derivative drugs, including fentanyl, morphine, and OxyContin. A shorter example is expressed through the rise and fall of crack cocaine markets. As with heroin markets in the 1960s and 1970s, crack cocaine was confined to urban spaces where users were predominantly black. As David Farber argues, crack cocaine satisfied street dealers’ economic needs and provided cheap potent highs for people trapped in city sectors ravaged by deindustrialization between the 1970s and 1990s.⁹ However, isolating drugs from one another fractures the greater history of federal drug responses unfolding since the 1960s.

Drug histories moreover examine an ever-evolving and -increasing reliance on law enforcement agencies. These historical perspectives highlight numerous drug panics, the decades-long waxing and waning of illicit drug epidemics and the correlated routes of curtailment. Reviewing the period between the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many historians problematize the moral deficiency model, in which drug use and addiction were seen as byproducts of individuals’ moral shortcomings. Further, addiction and drug abuse are demonstrated as mere symptoms of individualistic experiences with complexities mirrored in the expansive global drug markets’ supply and demand. These studies focus research on finite causes

⁸ Lucas Richert, *Strange Trips: Science, Culture, and the Regulation of Drugs* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018), 8.

⁹ David Farber, *Crack: Rock Cocaine, Street Capitalism, and the Decade of Greed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Eric C. Schneider, *Smack: Heroin and the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

of drug abuse, acknowledging the innumerable entry points entrenched in social, cultural, and government patterns of interaction and interference. In this historical discourse, drug prevention rhetoric appears within marginal political outgrowths which minimizes all proactive efforts throughout America's drug war. Here, the DARE program exemplifies proactive drug measures even though its sole intention was to strengthen the social and political standing of police officers nationwide. By describing DARE as a proactive venture, historians underexplore the political value of a federally disseminated drug prevention curriculum which overshadowed decreased funding for a federal drug treatment solution.¹⁰

Historian Max Felker-Kantor's latest publications and forthcoming monograph are the first to historicize the dynamic cultural, social, and policing power influences carved into the DARE program. Felker-Kantor investigates LAPD leadership's efforts to rationalize and justify routine civil injustices and abuses through fervent technocratic and political maneuvering. LAPD leadership also generated national notoriety through the development and implementation of militaristic policing methods, most notably the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. His recent research continues to reexamine the LAPD by refocusing DARE as a program that "solidified the drug crisis as a problem to be solved by law enforcement rather than social policy or public health experts."¹¹ By investigating the police power demonstrated through DARE,

¹⁰ See, David T. Courtwright, Herman Joseph, and Don Des Jarlais, *Addicts Who Survived: An Oral History of Narcotic Use in America before 1965* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), *ProQuest Ebook*; David T. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise: A History of Opiate Addiction in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), *ProQuest Ebook*; Jill Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams: A History of America's Romance with Illegal Drugs* (New York, NY: Scribner) 1996; David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). For more texts emphasizing addict experiences, Michael Massing, *The Fix* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); Johann Hari, *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018); Donovan X. Ramsey, *When Crack Was King: A People's History of a Misunderstood Era* (New York: One World, 2023).

¹¹ Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Felker-Kantor, Max. "DARE to Say No: Police and the Cultural Politics of Prevention in the War on Drugs." *Modern American History* 5, no. 3 (2022): 313–337, <https://doi.org/10.1017/mah.2022.19>; Max Felker-Kantor, "Arresting the Demand for Drugs: DARE and the School-Police Nexus in Los Angeles," *Journal of Urban History*, 49, no. 5 (December 2022) 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00961442221142062>. Max Felker-Kantor's book on DARE will appear too late for direct reference in this thesis. See Max Felker-Kantor, *DARE to Say No: Policing and the War on Drugs in Schools* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2024).

Felker-Kantor shows how race affected drug war solutions and how DARE's zero-tolerance messaging blended drug education into a growing carceral frame of reference. Correlation between our research rests in excavating the underlying motives of the LAPD to establish and expand the DARE program. Whereas Felker-Kantor focuses on the punitive nature instilled into DARE, I analyze the displacement of parents in the development of drug prevention education. I further argue DARE was created as a vehicle to rectify a tarnished public image of the LAPD. Thereby, the role of police stretched beyond punitive actions and allowed police across the nation to emerge from the 1980s as instructors of drug abuse prevention.

Conversely, early DARE investigators argued for the program's efficacy based on demonstrable attitude adjustments of students, school faculties, and parents in early evaluations. According to the only evaluations conducted between 1984 and 1987, the Evaluation and Training Institute's principal investigator, Glenn Nyre, and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded investigator, William DeJong, portrayed DARE through a lens which poised the program for future expansion while failing to assess the program's long-term efficacy. From these two evaluations, government publications promoted DARE as a premier drug abuse prevention curriculum worthy of nationwide dissemination. Though federal government and DARE literature included a brief, summarized history of DARE, their historical perspective merely credited the LAPD and the LAUSD for developing and expanding the DARE curriculum. Nonetheless, from these limited histories, DARE was portrayed as an effective local police department/school district franchise opportunity available through federal funding.¹² On the

¹² See, William DeJong, "Project DARE: Teaching Kids to Say 'No' to Drugs and Alcohol," *NIJ Reports* 196 (March 1986) 1-4; William DeJong, "A Short-Term Evaluation of Project DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education): Preliminary Indications of Effectiveness," *Journal of Drug Education* 17, no. 4 (1987): 279-294, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.84.9.1394>; Christopher L. Ringwalt et al., "Past and Future Directions of the D.A.R.E.® Program: An Evaluation Review," *NIJ Research Report* (September 1994): 1-31, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/152055NIJupdate.pdf>; Karen A. Koch, "The D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program," in *Addictions: Concepts and Strategies for Treatment*, ed. Judith A. Lewis (Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers, 1994), 359-364.

other hand, once DARE had established regular federal funding, numerous evaluations expressed skepticism of its efficacy. This body of work did not historicize DARE, nor did the authors challenge drug prevention education *per se*. Instead, they questioned continued federal funding of a program which proved unable to achieve its purported goal of solving youth drug abuse.¹³ However, during the onset of DARE, criticisms were virtually non-existent. Within the first four years of DARE, the program was locally defended and fortified by LAPD and LAUSD officials until branches of the Department of Justice determined the program to be a premier model of youth drug prevention curriculum.

Stepping outside of schools, Stephen Siff discusses how US media in the first half of the twentieth century originally portrayed drugs as “artifacts of crime” and then in the 1950s, via the psychedelic revolution, as “marvels of science.”¹⁴ This temporal shift in drug presentations occurred because of a “loss of public memory for the realities of drug effects, which were well known in the United States at the turn of the century,” according to drug policy historian David F. Musto.¹⁵ However, the 1960s drug-fueled counterculture revolution replaced scare-tactics with education highlighting drug tolerance and what Jerome Beck calls informed choice, or responsible decision-making education approaches. Following the combination of the parent movement, Just Say No campaign, and the DARE program, information on drug use and abuse was separated between drug prevention education (using factual information about illicit drug use) and sensationalized drug media coverage (emphasizing drug-crime linkages and the growing dangers of drug addiction). Beck describes a core tenet to my thesis, and a minority

¹³ See, Dennis P. Rosenbaum et al., “Cops in the Classroom: A Longitudinal Evaluation of Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE),” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 31, no. 1 (February 1994): 3-31; Susan T. Ennet, et al., “How Effective Is Drug Abuse Resistance Education? A Meta-Analysis of Project DARE Outcomes Evaluations,” *American Journal of Public Health* 84, no. 9 (September 1994): 1394–1401, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.84.9.1394>.

¹⁴ Stephen Siff, *Acid Hype: American News Media and the Psychedelic Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 41.

¹⁵ Musto, *The American Disease*, xi.

voice in drug histories, when he argues: “As a consequence of knowing, *a priori*, the truth about certain ‘bad drugs,’ school-based prevention easily falls prey to reliance on select and suspect scientific ‘facts’ for the purposes of indoctrination more than true education.”¹⁶

The Right Place at the Right Time: Thesis Framework

DARE’s rise in popularity was not a coincidence. The lack of research regarding the program is easily attributed to the cornucopia of programs outcropped from the constant expansion and diversifying drug war. When President Reagan repositioned the White House against drug abuse, his administration explored specific paths. Short-sighted polemics provided a crucial foundation to his iteration of the drug war but continued America’s vacillating reactions to drug abuse. Constant reorganization, promised solutions, and unfettered confidence from government officials destabilized funding for bureaucracies charged with managing drug abuse prevention and enforcement. As crack cocaine created a drug panic in the mid-1980s, the federal government responded by passing the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988. This legislation ballooned federal drug enforcement funding, while reorganizing drug research and treatment funding to extend into the research and development of drug prevention methods. DARE was developed at the right place, at the right time as the country descended into its newest iteration of the rhetoric-driven and enforcement-led drug war.

The first chapter examines various aspects of political and social drug prevention movements. These movements recount conservative drug opinion-makers’ push toward zero-tolerance drug rhetoric. Reconsidering government publications, media sources, and government

¹⁶ Beck, “100 Years of ‘Just Say No’ Versus ‘Just Say Know,’” 38.

archival material, environments and circumstances from the late 1970s and 1980s reveals unstable drug solutions. President Reagan and First Lady Nancy Reagan entered the White House receiving immediate criticism from media sources which forced the first lady to reposition herself as a crusader in the fight against youth drug abuse. By co-opting antidrug messaging from the parent movement of the 1970s and 1980s, the Reagan administration empowered groups of the parents' movement that exemplified private, non-federal solutions to nationwide dilemmas.

Simultaneously LAPD Chief Daryl Gates reimagined the LAPD's presence in and around the LAUSD by presenting the Board of Education a promising new approach to substance abuse prevention. Prior to increased federal acclaim for drug abuse prevention systems, Daryl Gates and LAPD Commander Glenn Levant designed DARE to spread throughout the LAUSD. In DARE's second year of operation, the LAPD also enticed outside police departments to experiment with franchising the program. However, at that point, DARE was little more than a continuation of the relationship developed between the LAPD and the LAUSD throughout the 1970s. Despite consistent reports detailing misuse of police power, the city of Los Angeles and the State of California provided funding to launch and expand the program. Meanwhile, antidrug parents' activism was fundamentally coopted first by Nancy Reagan's Just Say No initiative, and then by the LAPD through Project DARE. Where parents on the East Coast directly influenced youth drug abuse prevention tactics, in Los Angeles parents were simply expected to learn about the program alongside their children rather than being integrated in its formation and presentation.

Chapter two contextualizes the LAPD within the larger federal landscape. The end of the LAPD's Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID) began the same week Chief Gates approached the LAUSD Board of Education with the framework for DARE. Despite being fined

for unconstitutional surveillance practices, the LAPD overshadowed the scandal by lobbying for the expansion of Project DARE. The same autonomy which made the PDID problematic conflated crime prevention and drug abuse prevention under the umbrella of Project DARE. By highlighting police presence in schools, the DARE curriculum indoctrinated children on the harms of drug abuse and the role of police officers, rather than developing permanent drug abuse prevention, which still does not holistically exist. Thereby early evaluations' concentration on changing attitudes shielded Project DARE from demonstrating its purported long-term efficacy. Where the parents' movement made the role of parents insurmountable in the fight against drug abuse, their political authority, over the course of the 1980s, was replaced by DARE officer-instructors. This change was inconspicuous since DARE was designed to be a local program which was eventually outsourced to local police departments and school districts. But by 1987, DARE officer-instructors became children's newest antidrug school liaisons across the nation.

The Reagan administration's co-optation of the parent movement elevated drug prevention into the American public's hearts and minds via Nancy Reagan's Just Say No campaign. Media outlets adopted federal antidrug rhetoric amidst the 1986 election season and inflated antidrug craze to a fever pitch. Scare tactics, introduced in the 1930s post-Prohibition era, evolved to condemnation of foreign drug trafficking networks and domestic drug abuse. In hindsight, however, the threat of losing suburban youth populations was miniscule compared to ousting the inner-city youth networks perpetuating illicit drug markets. Project DARE and other drug abuse prevention curriculums overshadowed increased militarism exercised by police departments. In suburban landscapes, DARE officer-instructors solidified their position by seizing upon the conservative rhetoric of the 1980s and early 1990s. As the United States

expanded its War on Drugs, DARE's primary goal of LAUSD-wide expansion advanced into a nationwide growth campaign.

The rise of the DARE program relied on three dynamic elements for its widespread growth and deployment: 1) local Los Angeles political and policing history which granted increased autonomy to the LAPD; 2) federal and state rhetorical symbolism in the drug war and redirection of bureaucratic power granted through Reagan's return to New Federalism (in which the direction of federal drug abuse funding was turned over to individual states); and, 3) an outgrowth of drug prevention curriculums which replaced the dissolved federal treatment solutions. In this thesis DARE symbolized an extension of police power and influence within malleable local, state, and federal political structures. On the surface, LAPD and the LAUSD demonstrated DARE to be effective and was widely endorsed by several branches of government. In a deeper context, the parents' movement, DARE program, and the Just Say No campaign remain short-lived social experiments. I argue the expansion of DARE required the intersection of the other movements in order for police departments to gain greater responsibilities in the drug war. In turn, police departments advertised their ability to solve a nebulous problem which no academic, political, nor medical circle has yet developed a solution for. Further, by sponsoring the LAPD's expansion of DARE, the federal government added yet another wayward facet to the already redundant War on Drugs.

Chapter 1

A Local Program for a National Problem

“You must call on all your imagination and creativity to find new local answers for today’s urban problems.”¹ – President Ronald Reagan (1982)

Between the 1930s and the 1980s, drug use spread in popularity across the US. For decades preceding the 1960s, substance dependent addicts and alcoholics were largely contained within metropolitan urban centers, yet in the 1970s and 1980s, teenage children hiding their marijuana stashes in their middle-class suburban houses characterized a new flock of drug users. The resulting rise of the parents’ movement led public outcries to convince politicians to challenge previous drug policy deemed too tolerant of drug use. While conservative perspectives outsourced containment practices to law enforcement entities and, consequently, prisons, progressive opinions sought to empower medicine and science sectors in the establishment of public research and the development of rehabilitation protocols. This is a very brief synthesis of the six decades in question, but many solutions were proposed; however, the majority of politicians relied on branches of law enforcement to eradicate the growth of drug use.

In this chapter, I provide a brief historical overview of federal drug policy to describe the oversimplification and inconsistency demonstrated in federal drug policy decision-making. Between the 1930s and 1960s, punitive law enforcement practices of the federal government minimized interest for drug research and treatment avenues. Until the late 1960s, presidents relied on heads of agencies to formulate and execute drug directives and strategies. Beginning in and following the first term of President Nixon, instead of delegating to agencies, presidents brought drug policy into the White House for strategic leadership. Whereas methods of drug

¹ George Skelton, “Reagan Says Cities Must Help Selves,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1982, B1, *ProQuest* database.

treatment developed during the first term of Nixon produced rapid success, later presidents in the 1970s turned attention away from treatment solutions in favor of interdiction strategies applied against foreign drug supply networks. This shift in drug strategies led to ineffective drug policies and did little to attenuate skyrocketing rates of drug abuse amongst youth populations. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the resulting parental frustration galvanized the parents' movement in Florida, Georgia, and Maryland. In a short period of time, the parents' movement successfully lobbied for increased antidrug messaging from state and federal government agencies. Following years of unsuccessful federal drug messaging, the success of the parents' movement ironically led Nancy Reagan's Just Say No initiative to co-opt the parents' movement antidrug messaging for its own.

Amidst years of inconsistent federal drug messaging, law enforcement entities remained frequently credited for their vigilance and effectiveness in upholding the integrity of drug laws. After reorganizing the federal drug budget to widely abandon federal treatment approaches, the Reagan administration launched a two-pronged effort to counter drug abuse nationwide. This elevated law enforcement efforts alongside youth drug abuse prevention messaging. Blended together and disseminated nationwide, the 1980s were characterized by zero-tolerance strategies.

Amidst this wave of zero-tolerance against drug abuse, the Los Angeles Police Department collaborated with the Los Angeles Unified School District to develop Project DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). Designed as a local solution for the nationwide problem, Project DARE was unique for utilizing uniformed police officers in the implementation of drug abuse prevention education. The same drug prevention awareness promoted by the parents' movement led the Reagan administration to increase its own antidrug messaging. Overall, Project DARE established the same drug prevention elsewhere championed by parent activists.

A Brief History on Federal Drug Policy

Drug enforcement was the principal purpose of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) between 1930 and 1968. The FBN was headed by Commissioner Harry Anslinger (1930 – 1962) at a time of liberal expansion of federal agencies and minimal oversight. An extension of the Internal Revenue Service, the FBN was the earliest federal entity tasked to design and implement drug enforcement practices. Because drug enforcement was an extension of tax codes, the cultivation, manufacture, and trade of illicit substances carried federal penalties enforceable primarily by FBN agents. As a result, the FBN gained sweeping influence in the government management and direction of public interactions and portrayals of a growing list of illicit substances. In turn, Anslinger and the FBN portrayed drug abuse using scare tactics which served to stigmatize drug users and addicts as criminals. Through skewed portrayals, the resulting drug panic vastly limited development and utilization of effective drug treatment and prevention methods. As a result, drug law enforcement remained the central mechanism for combatting demand for drugs.²

In the 1960s, the FBN lost credibility due to shifting public perception. President John F. Kennedy and others resituated addiction principally as a public health matter rather than a crime. Between Kennedy and his successor Lyndon B. Johnson, medical treatment and rehabilitation were introduced for criminals convicted of drug possession. However, the shift toward public health strictly applied to persons convicted of drug possession and excluded persons convicted of drug distribution. Guided by growing concerns regarding drug use among returning Vietnam War veterans and rising crime rates within cities, President Richard Nixon used his first term both to expand punishment of drug users and introduce a federal treatment structure for

² Jill Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams: A History of America's Romance with Illegal Drugs* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 160, 197.

methadone, a drug-replacement therapy for heroin addicts. The treatment produced rapid success, but the Nixon administration failed to quell a correlated distrust in the federal government and, as a result, distrust in federal drug and addiction responses.³

One portion of the fragmented public distrust stemmed from the National Commission on Marihuana [sic] and Drug Abuse, also known as the Shafer Commission. The Shafer Commission was authorized by Nixon in 1970 under the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act. This legislation introduced a four-tiered federal drug scheduling system (today a five-tier system) to determine the severity of punishment for those convicted in conjunction with specific substances. From the Shafer Commission, a key debate developed surrounding whether marijuana should carry the heaviest penalties and be included as a Schedule I substance. Today, the DEA policy remains unchanged: “Schedule I drugs, substances, or chemicals are defined as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.”⁴ The Shafer Commission report from March 1972, amongst other more nuanced legislative recommendations, instead suggested federal and state laws decriminalize private possession of marijuana, and suggested states lessen the punishment for public possession of up to one ounce of marijuana to a \$100 fine. While several states adhered to the commission’s recommendations, Nixon ignored the federal legislative propositions.⁵ The Nixon administration chose to not implement the commission’s federal policy suggestions. Instead, the administration separated drug law enforcement and research into two federal agencies. Whereas funding for treatment and

³ David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 249.

⁴ Drug Enforcement Agency, “Drug Scheduling,” <https://www.dea.gov/drug-information/drug-scheduling> (accessed October 15, 2023)

⁵ Emily Dufton, *Grass Roots: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Marijuana in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 55; National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, *Marihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1972), 151-154; David F. Musto and Pamela Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control: Politics and Federal Policy in a Period of Increasing Substance Abuse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 68.

drug research outpaced drug law enforcement initiatives in Nixon's first term, the funding ratio reverted in favor of drug law enforcement in his second term.

While other federal drug entities were established under Nixon, the longest standing were the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), created as a domestic and foreign federal drug enforcement agency, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), established as a funding vehicle for drug abuse and treatment research. Combined, these two agencies reinforced what Musto and Korsmeyer describe as a federal "punitive-deterrent philosophy." Whereas the administrations of Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon's first term depended on a "public-health-oriented philosophy," the DEA and NIDA addressed drug consumption through a criminal justice lens rather than as a medical-based approach. Drug users were, once again, characterized as participating in criminal behavior rather than a population in need of medical attention.⁶ While the first term of the Nixon administration was the first- and last-time funding for treatment outpaced law enforcement spending, Nixon's second term returned to the Anslinger-era punitive-deterrent philosophy. Since lasting results were (and still are) a rarity in drug treatment practices, the federal treatment development funding of NIDA dwindled. Where methadone treatment failed to eradicate heroin abuse, the second Nixon administration and his 1970s and 1980s successors favored drug law enforcement funding.

Following the Watergate scandal of 1974, both Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter sought to distance their own administrations away from Nixon. In doing so, they failed to dissuade federal policy from the punitive-deterrent philosophy and failed to temper growing public interest in casual drug use throughout the 1970s. In terms of drug strategies, Ford's rhetoric continued Nixon-era disapproval of federal- and state-level marijuana decriminalization.

⁶ Musto and Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control*, 7.

Conversely, Carter supported federal decriminalization for simple marijuana possession, as directed by the Shafer Commission, but overall, no durable action was taken.⁷ Instead, the DEA exemplified the ability of law enforcement to produce newsworthy arrests of drug traffickers and routine mass seizures of drugs.⁸ Similarly NIDA was never tasked to recreate a treatment model comparable to the federal disbursement of methadone maintenance therapy. Instead, NIDA-funded research explored sociological and scientific attributes of drugs and drug users. Then, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, NIDA funding expanded to include the development, evaluation, and research of youth drug prevention school programs.

Early Reagan Administration Approaches to Drug Policy

When President Ronald Reagan entered the White House, his earliest feat was to slash federal social welfare spending in order to shrink what had become a deficit-ridden federal budget. In 1981, the Reagan administration asserted social welfare programs were pillars of corruption and symbols of rampant misuse of federal tax dollars. Inflation and diminishing corporate investments were the priority concerns for Reagan to tackle. Programs of federal outreach lost favor as conservatism returned to Washington. Whereas public spending previously fortified social safety net programs, the Reagan administration prioritized developing tax incentives in order to secure global investment interests. While the 1980s stand next to postwar eras as the periods of the greatest prosperity achieved for upper-classes, the vehicle for this fiscal revolution was a redevelopment of the Nixon-era practice of New Federalism. New Federalism

⁷ Dufton, *Grass Roots*, 81, 84.

⁸ Drug Enforcement Administration, *Drug Enforcement Administration: A Tradition of Excellence, 1973-2008* (Washington, D.C.: Drug Enforcement Administration, 2008), 34-37.

called for shrinking federal government power in favor of increasing the autonomy of state governments. Federal government shrinkage meant drug agencies and programs were primed to receive budget cuts.⁹

In his first year, President Reagan authorized the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act which transformed the direction of federal spending between October 1981 and September 1982. The legislation restructured federal funding into block grants – a series of consolidated grant offerings within certain sectors such as education, environmental regulations, health services (such as drug treatment and research programs), and social services (such as child welfare programs). These block grants turned three-quarters of federal responsibilities over to the power of state and local municipalities, while also cutting federal aid to numerous social services.¹⁰ Specifically, the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services Block Grant reshaped NIDA into a research agency and deemphasized its treatment responsibilities. The slashed federal support led many states to divert funds from federal treatment facilities and waived replacing them in favor of alternative ventures. By setting this precedent, the Reagan administration decentralized federal drug programs, resulting in the overproduction of redundant programs from state to state. Anticipating the effects of federalized drug funding, in 1980, a member of the Carter administration estimated a loss of 19,000 federally funded addiction treatment slots under the new budget.¹¹ In 1982, this estimate realized a whittled NIDA budget of \$56.4 million, down from the \$243.8 million allotted in 1981. Rather than attempting to solve addiction, the Reagan

⁹ Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, “Address before a Joint Session of the Congress Reporting on the State of the Union – 1981,” <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-joint-session-congress-reporting-state-union> (accessed February 17, 2023); Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, “Address before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Program for Economic Recovery – February 1981,” <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-joint-session-congress-program-economic-recovery-february-1981> (accessed February 17, 2023).

¹⁰ Robert Dallek, *Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 95, 100-101, 122; Timothy J. Conlan, “The Politics of Federal Block Grants: From Nixon to Reagan,” *Political Science Quarterly* 99, no.2 (Summer, 1984), 261.

¹¹ Musto and Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control*, 239.

administration instead emphasized the importance of eliminating youth drug abuse. To tackle youth drug abuse, President Reagan selected Carlton Turner as his drug policy advisor.¹²

The White House appointment of Turner solidified a growing relationship between the parents' movement and the federal government. Turner was regarded as the foremost expert in marijuana research nationwide. At the University of Mississippi, Turner had cultivated a ten-acre marijuana plantation strictly for government-funded research. Further, Turner was an avid opponent of marijuana legalization. Through his research, Turner had already become well acquainted with federal representatives but believed previous drug policy experts were too soft on drug use. After his arrival to the White House, Turner rejected previous differentiations between types of drug use and considered all drug use to be uniformly deplorable. Turner's research and political positioning was a perfect fit alongside growing conservative demands for expanding federal antidrug messaging.¹³

The Parental Push for Drug Prevention

In 1976, a grassroots parent-led organization against marijuana decriminalization formed. Originating from Atlanta, Georgia, the parents' movement for youth drug prevention emerged from a youth summer party held at the house of Ron and Marsha Schuchard. The married couple had three children, including a thirteen-year-old girl who was discovered to be smoking marijuana at the party with her friends. Marsha Schuchard, a community college professor with a Ph.D. in English literature, organized what kids in her community collectively called the NPA

¹² William J. Bukowski, "Drug Abuse Prevention Funding Resulting from the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981," *Journal of Drug Education* 16, no. 1, (1986), 52.

¹³ Michael Massing, *The Fix* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1998), 158-160.

(Nosy Parents' Association). The organization revealed to parents across her community the extensive presence of youth marijuana consumption and the assortment of paraphernalia hidden by children in their own homes. Between 1977 and 1978, Schuchard researched government literature on youth drug use and became acquainted with Robert DuPont, the NIDA director from 1973 to 1978. Whereas Schuchard employed her newfound influence in federal affairs to argue marijuana decriminalization supported the spread of overall drug consumption, DuPont and his cohorts in government viewed marijuana decriminalization as an appropriate measure coming from the Shafer Commission.¹⁴

Schuchard eventually convinced DuPont to change his perspective. As DuPont readied to resign from NIDA, he commissioned Schuchard (who used her maiden name, Manatt, as a penname to avoid local community recognition) to write a book promoting her style of parent antidrug activism and the dangers drug use posed to youth populations. In early 1978, DuPont resigned but held a press conference in which he stated, "I made a mistake. Decriminalization is a bad idea." He pressed the matter further by stating, "Marijuana is not non-addictive. In many ways, it's the worst of all the illegal drugs."¹⁵ Concerning the change in perspective, DuPont stated, "It was parent power that changed my mind on marijuana."¹⁶ Meanwhile, Schuchard teamed with Thomas Gleaton, an antidrug activist health professor at Georgia State University, to form the Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE). PRIDE was the direct extension of the NPA and a clearinghouse developed to initiate and distribute new information on drug prevention. Combined with her association with DuPont, PRIDE helped Schuchard secure substantial federal influence in 1979. That same year, her NIDA-sponsored monograph,

¹⁴ Marsha Manatt, *Parents, Peers, and Pot* (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1979), 1-21; PBS, "Frontline Interview: Dr. Robert DuPont," undated, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/interviews/dupont.html> (accessed September 17, 2023); Massing, *The Fix*, 143-145, 148.

¹⁵ Quoted in Dufton, *Grass Roots*, 97.

¹⁶ Quoted in Musto and Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control*, 233.

Parents, Peers, and Pot, was published. The drug prevention monograph rapidly gained popularity and over one million copies were circulated nationwide.¹⁷

The Carter administration's lenient drug policy, on the other hand, became problematic in 1978. Peter Bourne, the lead drug policy advisor for the Carter administration was embroiled in controversy. When he joined the White House staff in 1977, Bourne was a staunch advocate for marijuana decriminalization and even called into question the addictive nature of powder cocaine. His prominent allies were the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) and its founder, Keith Stroup. Stroup pushed for marijuana decriminalization nationwide at the state and federal government levels. Between 1977 and 1978, NORML became an influential lobbying organization in federal drug policy affairs. The relationship soured however, due to a disagreement over the use of hazardous pesticides on foreign marijuana crops. In 1978, media sources pressed Stroup regarding allegations that Bourne used cocaine at a December 1977 NORML party thrown for bohemian socialites. Stroup's refusal to deny the allegations were soon coupled with discovery of a quaalude prescription written by Bourne using a pseudonym for the White House staff member he assisted. Though this was considered a grey area in the practice of medicine, Bourne could not avoid the allegation of cocaine use and consequently resigned in the summer of 1978.¹⁸ Lee Dogoloff was chosen to replace Bourne and President Carter had no choice but to abandon appearing tolerant of drug use to distance his administration from further controversy. Dogoloff replaced the lobbying influence of NORML with members of the parents' movement and aided NIDA in transitioning to a staunch antidrug position.

¹⁷ Emily Dufton, "PRIDE International and Drug War Diplomacy: The Parent Movement's Global Battle against Marijuana in the United States, ca. 1970-1985," in *Cannabis: Global Histories*, ed. by Lucas Richert and James H. Mills (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2021), 301-302.

¹⁸ Musto and Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control*, 193, 197, 215.

Meanwhile, PRIDE was not alone in the parents' fight to reposition federal messaging toward youth drug use prevention. As several smaller parent activist groups, including various NPA franchises, sprouted up across the country, Joyce Nalepka and Sue Rusche were two mothers who also gained direct access to federal drug policymakers. Nalepka and sixty members of her Maryland-based organization, the Coalition for Concern about Marihuana [sic] Use in Youth, met with Dogoloff in November 1979 to discuss eliminating federal drug material describing marijuana as harmless. From this meeting, Dogoloff informed Nalepka that the White House was working together with NIDA to produce new material for parents and concerned community members about the dangers of marijuana consumption. From the drug prevention activism of Nalepka, federal literature regarding marijuana use was reanalyzed and updated to reflect a renewed federal promotion of drug abuse prevention.¹⁹

Rusche came from an Atlanta neighborhood adjacent to Schuchard's and separately organized the group Families in Action (FIA). FIA became a state and federal lobbying organization for the curtailment of a burgeoning drug paraphernalia market. Drug paraphernalia became profitable for local businesses selling items like rolling papers, marijuana pipes, and other drug use regalia over the course of the 1970s, and specifically in states with major cities and laws decriminalizing marijuana. In response, Rusche inspired anti-paraphernalia legislation in several states and relayed her anti-paraphernalia message to a November 1979 *Paraphernalia Hearing* of the Congressional Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. From this hearing, federal attention was placed on commerce in drug paraphernalia and helped the parents' movement garner increased political influence.²⁰

¹⁹ Musto and Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control*, 230-231.

²⁰ Musto and Korsmeyer, *The Quest for Drug Control*, 231-232.

As the parents' movement gained national recognition, 300 separate antidrug parent groups formed across the country. In April 1980, the groups came together to organize the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth (NFP). Soon after, the NFP invited Carlton Turner to join their board of directors, where he stayed until he accepted the White House role as the lead drug policy advisor for the Reagan administration. In the meantime, Dogoloff and a cadre of politicians supported the umbrella organization. However, Dogoloff failed to attract an NFP endorsement for Carter in the 1980 presidential campaign due to his history of inconsistent drug messaging. Conversely, when Turner was tapped to join the Reagan administration, the parents' antidrug messaging followed. The antidrug message of the Reagan White House was formalized in November 1981. First Lady Nancy Reagan entertained forty NFP members, alongside media reporters, in the State Dining Room of the White House to declare youth drug abuse prevention as her chosen cause.²¹

Nancy Reagan: From Elite Socialite to Antidrug Crusader

Nancy Reagan had a rocky entry into the national political spotlight. At a 1980 presidential campaign rally, Nancy remarked that she wished her husband could "see all these beautiful white people." Though she backtracked by redressing the statement as "beautiful black and white people," race relations remained a weak point in the Reagan White House.²² Once President Reagan was elected, a debate in the media unfolded on whether Nancy was the next fashionista or if she was the First Lady. Media sources swung back and forth between praise and scorn for the excess of "terrible symbolism" displayed in luxurious White House decor and

²¹ Dufton, *Grass Roots*, 132-140, 148-150.

²² "Reagan Jokes, Nancy Slips, Aide 'Counts' Lost Votes," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 1, 1980, A16, *Newspapers.com* database.

designer brand-name garments donned by the First Lady between 1981 and 1982. Though fashion critics adored the majesty displayed by the first lady's choice in apparel, expensive interior decoration and dishware, the Reagan White House seemed detached from persons suffering from the widening wealth gap. Regardless of attempts to justify the luxurious displays, Nancy Reagan remained a symbol of excess while Ronald Reagan slashed the federal budget. As a result, the media portrayed the first lady as a political liability.²³

In 1981, the Reagan administration remained focused on shrinking the national budget and declined to replace drug treatment options no longer being federally funded. In his first term, Reagan succeeded in wooing Congress to adopt his budgetary cutbacks. Before the American public could digest the ramifications, federal programs shrank in 1982. A composed orator with charismatic comedic timing, President Reagan was unparalleled in addressing political opponents and critics on policies and justifications. That same unshakable charisma in turn made the First Lady, known for her own charisma shown amongst friends, an easy target of attack in the media. First ladies in the United States are often undermined as auxiliary characters within political spheres of influence. However, Nancy Reagan gradually aligned herself alongside concerned parents already active in antidrug activism.

Carlton Turner served as a bridge between the First Lady and her burgeoning concern regarding drug abuse amongst children under 18 years old. Following the appointment of Lee Dogoloff as President Carter's lead drug policy advisor, federal seed grants steadily found their way to antidrug parents' movement groups. However, between 1981 and 1985, the White House lost interest in monetarily supporting parents' movement leadership and organizations. As

²³ "Fashion: Keeping Up with the Reagans," Jan. 18, 1981, *New York Times*, SM9, *ProQuest* database; Bernadine Morris, "The Glitter Jacket," July 25, 1981, *New York Times*, 21, *ProQuest* database; "Extravagant Charges: Dress and Taxes," *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1982, A30, *ProQuest* database; Jason Roberts, "Nancy Reagan" in *A Companion to First Ladies*, ed. Katherine A. S. Sibley (West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2016), 593, *ProQuest Ebook* (accessed February 20, 2023).

federal funding for antidrug parent groups shrank, the Reagan administration filled the growing void with Nancy Reagan.²⁴ She positioned antidrug messaging as her chosen cause in November 1981, as she told NFP leadership, “We’re in danger of losing our whole next generation.”²⁵ In March 1982, the first lady addressed corporate and civic leaders to court influence, energy, and resources to prevent drug abuse amongst children. Carlton Turner explained that the administration sought a 30 percent reduction in high school student drug use and to establish antidrug parent organizations within all high schools by 1984.²⁶

In the Summer of 1982, President Reagan stood with Nancy Reagan in the White House Rose Garden and raised their “battle flag” by announcing a two-pronged effort. First, President Reagan stressed that kids needed to know the truth about drugs like marijuana and the dangers of use by school-age children. In order to achieve this mission, glamorous drug use needed to be demystified across the nation. Second, a Federal South Florida Task Force, headed by Vice President George H.W. Bush, would target drug smugglers in the southern boundary waters.²⁷ Discussion of decriminalization and responsible use disappeared. Antidrug messaging generated from the parents’ movement activists blended with interdiction efforts to hamper media critiques of the Reagan White House.

Carlton Turner energized additional antidrug fervor for the Reagan administration’s new initiative as he asserted the new median age of first-time drug users had dropped to thirteen years old.²⁸ The rhetoric perpetuated by federal officials rationalized and influenced likeminded

²⁴ Dufton, *Grass Roots*, 160.

²⁵ Quoted in Arnold Trebach, *The Great Drug War: And Rational Proposals to Turn the Tide* (Bloomington, Indiana: Unlimited Publishing, 2005), 135.

²⁶ Associated Press, “First Lady Launches Crusade against Teen Drug Abuse,” *Fort Myers News-Press*, March 23, 1982, A5, *Newspapers.com* database.

²⁷ Associated Press, “Reagan ‘Runs Up Battle Flag’ in Federal Fight against Drugs,” *Tulsa World*, June 25, 1982, D8, *Newspapers.com* database.

²⁸ Associated Press, “Reagan ‘Runs Up Battle Flag’ in Federal Fight against Drugs,” *Tulsa World*, June 25, 1982, *Newspapers.com* database.

antidrug views across the nation. Turner and Nancy Reagan led the federal crusade for youth drug prevention, while President Reagan expanded the punitive sphere in the fight against drugs by authorizing augmented federal drug law enforcement strategies. Meanwhile, federal drug treatment solutions were forgotten just as quickly as drug decriminalization. While parent activists remained salient through 1985, the Reagan White House adopted their influential antidrug messaging as the underpinning of Nancy Reagan's Just Say No federal initiative.

Altogether the early 1980s were ripe for new initiatives from new players in the growing antidrug environment. While panic surrounding drug use steered the two terms of the Nixon administration's drug strategies, the parents' movement emphasized compassion, patience, and vigilance in the fight against drug abuse. Although the Carter administration proved accessible and influenced by the parents' movement, the Reagan administration oversimplified solutions for complex issues to focus on fiscal reforms. For example, Schuchard and Gleaton resigned from the NFP due to the politicization associated with the union between the NFP and the Reagan White House. To PRIDE, drug abuse was not a political matter, but a societal problem.²⁹ Conversely, in Los Angeles, California, where the parents' movement gained much less political influence, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was inspired by the federal conservative turn toward antidrug messaging and developed their own youth drug deterrence methods.

Drug Use and Mass Arrests in Los Angeles Schools

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) engaged in school drug busts to address the rising rates of student drug use. In December 1974 and January

²⁹ Dufton, *Grass Roots*, 150.

1975, the LAPD highlighted the growth of illicit drug sales in the high schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). In December, 211 convicted student “drug pushers” sold drugs over the course of the previous three months and were jailed. Using \$15,000 in buy money, undercover LAPD officers obtained “cocaine, LSD, amphetamines, hashish, marijuana, mescaline, barbiturates and ‘angel dust’ (a chemical tranquilizer given to animals)” from student “pushers” aged between 15 and 18 years old. More than eleven undercover officers “posed as students at the schools, enrolling in classes and participating in extracurricular activities” during the monthslong operation. The primary targets were drug dealers rather than drug users. The undercover buyers found white middle-class student “pushers” more trusting to sell to new clients, while “buys at black schools” were more difficult to attain. In 1973 a survey on narcotics usage was given to high school students across the LAUSD. The survey revealed a majority of high school seniors and a third of junior high school students experimented with drug use (predominantly marijuana and alcohol), which provided justification for the undercover police operation.³⁰

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, made up of high-ranking city, law enforcement, and LAUSD officials, ordered a full inquiry into the roundup of “pushers.” The series of arrests was criticized as a “breakdown in cooperation between the Police Department and the county Probation Department,” which endangered the lives of the undercover officers. According to the county Board of Supervisors, the primary concern was the release of 151 suspected “drug pushers” and the proper detainment of a mere 27 suspects. According to one supervisor, the inefficient detainment of the suspects confirmed a myth within Southern

³⁰ Joan Sweeney and Tom Newton, “L.A. Roundup of Pupil ‘Pushers,’” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1974, A1, *Newspapers.com* database; Joan Sweeney and Tom Newton, “128 Students Seized as Drug Pushers in L.A.,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1974, A1, *Newspapers.com* database.

California schools that “Students can sell and use drugs without anything happening to them.” The officers charged with premature release of the “drug pushers” observed that half of the suspect population had no previous police record and found no discernable reason to keep them detained.³¹

A month later on January 6, 1975, Joyce Fiske, vice president of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California, concerned with the lack of due process and use of undercover police to apprehend student drug dealers, accused school and police officials of refusing to cooperate with the ACLU-led investigation. In her statement to the LAUSD Board of Education, Fiske pointed to a smear campaign employed by the LAPD Chief of Police, Edward Davis. Fiske also alleged Davis’s lack of cooperation provided a smokescreen which minimized the surrounding community’s interaction with the investigation. According to a December 1974 statement of Superior Court Judge William Hogoboom, “Labelling those accused as dope sellers, dealers and distributors violates the rights of the accused to be considered innocent until proven guilty and probably makes it impossible for those affected to get a fair trial.” Fiske underlined how undercover agents preyed upon “reluctant students to give or to sell them drugs” and emphasized the ACLU was “defending the rights of students, teachers and the community to be free from secret police on campus.” Fiske closed her statements to the LAUSD Board of Education by stating, “We must not be pressured into a war against the young in the name of a war against drugs by those who play on the public’s fears...to justify the expanded role of secret police in the schools.”³²

³¹ Ray Zeman, “Probe of Mass Campus Drug Arrests Ordered,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 6, 1974, D1, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*.

³² “Mrs. Joyce S. Fiske Addressed the Members of the Board concerning Drug Arrests, Due Process, and Secret Police,” Jan 6, 1975, folder 1, box 1,424, LAUSD Board of Education Records (collection 1923), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA [hereafter LAUSD BOE].

In 1975, the LAPD conducted another string of drug busts throughout the LAUSD, and the ACLU of Southern California, once again, challenged the LAPD's use of "secret police." This time the LAPD detained 285 individuals. The majority of charges involved the sale of marijuana, rather than the kaleidoscope of drugs confiscated the year prior. Two weeks following the December 1975 "crackdown," the ACLU sought to ban the use of undercover officers in high schools altogether. Again, LAPD officers allegedly coerced some students into executing undercover drug buys, and once more, and the ACLU sought to fortify juveniles and young adults from unjust police contact on school grounds.³³

Between 1974 and 1978, school-buy drug busts resulted in the arrests of at least 500 high school students accused of dealing drugs and signaled that tactic's failure to quell an evergreen source of drug-related criminality.³⁴ In December 1980, a Superior Court judge dismissed the 1975 ACLU suit against the use of "secret police" in high school campuses. The judge upheld the use of undercover police agents in order to exert law enforcement in high schools where it was clear drug use was still present. From 1974 to the end of 1980, 839 juveniles and 360 adults were arrested for drug dealing on LAUSD high school grounds. The judicial approval of undercover police forged unique punitive interactions between students, school faculty, and police. The new LAPD Chief of Police, Daryl Gates, commented, "I am with the ACLU. I would like to pull our officers out of there. But I think it is also terrible that our children today are being sold drugs." In his memoir, Chief Daryl Gates stressed, "I feared we were losing a whole generation of kids." He added, "With young undercover officers posing as students, the arrests

³³ Tendayi J. Kumbula, "59 Arrested in New Drug Crackdown at L.A. Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 13, 1975, A1, *Newspapers.com* database; Dorothy Townsend, "Ban Sought on Undercover Officers at High Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 23, 1975.

³⁴ Ovid Goode, "79 Arrested in Los Angeles Area School Drug Busts," *Valley News*, Dec 12, 1976, B7, *Newspapers.com* database; Richard West, "95 Drug Arrests Made in School," *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 1978, B1, *Newspapers.com* database; Grahame L. Jones, "44 Students Arrested in Drug Crackdown at Six High Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1977, B5, *Newspapers.com* database.

for drug sellers rose. Unfortunately, drug use didn't go down one bit." Gates concluded the only rational choice was "to try to stop kids from taking up drugs in the first place."³⁵

Gates conveyed his determination to find a solution to youth drug abuse in a January 1983 meeting with the LAUSD Board of Education. Together, the group reviewed "statistics regarding drug use in the schools, including the number of arrests made for the sale of narcotics on school campuses." In the meeting, Gates "requested that the Board develop a program to teach students in the lower grades, including kindergarten, about the harms of continued drug use." To complete this task, Gates offered the assistance of the LAPD.³⁶

Outlining the need to "'inoculate the next generation against the peer pressure' that encourages drug use," Chief Gates proposed drug education had to start for students in kindergarten and stretch through the sixth grade. While the adults on the board did not question the antidrug messaging of Gates and the LAPD, Jess Bravin, a lone senior high school student member of the board, challenged Gates's proposal. Bravin retorted, "You can't insulate them against peer pressure," and labeled teen-age marijuana use as "nearly universal." Bravin added, "Most young people do not become 'criminals' or 'zombies'" when they use drugs. Additionally, "a 'realistic' youth drug education program would be to 'inform them of the risks' of different drugs" and handle the spectrum of drug abuse at the various levels of chosen substances and quantities of use. Bravin, whether or not intentional, referenced the informed choice model used in the first half of the Carter administration by stating, "Most students avoid more dangerous drugs like PCP, but not marijuana because they judge the risks to be less." Gates indicated his strong beliefs by labeling Bravin's message as "precisely the philosophy that needs to be

³⁵ Myrna Oliver, "Judge Upholds Use of Police at Schools to Make Drug Buys," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 9, 1980, C1, *Newspapers.com*; Daryl F. Gates, *Chief: My Life in the LAPD* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 267.

³⁶ Jack McCurdy, "First Survey Conducted by L.A. District: 56% in Schools Try Drugs, Study Finds," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1974, A1, *ProQuest* database; Los Angeles Board of Education, "Minutes," June 17, 1983, box 603, LAUSD BOE.

stamped out.” Gates added, “If your generation’s attitude isn’t stamped out, this nation isn’t going to make it.”³⁷ Following this exchange, the LAUSD Board of Education approved the drug prevention education initiative.

The approval of Gates’s proposal signaled the LAUSD was ready and willing to preserve and embolden the help of the LAPD. The LAUSD Board of Education returned to the matter in June 1983 to explore a workable proposal to implement a 5th and 6th grade program using ten police officers across 50 elementary schools in the school year of 1983-84. The program was expected to “be based on promising multiple substance abuse prevention strategies.” A week later, the Board adopted the program with an expanded expectation of offering the curriculum beyond elementary school and to include a kindergarten through 12th grade format. Two months later, the LAPD Juvenile Division together with Dr. Ruth Rich, a LAUSD health education specialist, presented Project DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) to the LAUSD Board.³⁸

Early Drug Education and Project DARE

Whereas drug tolerance grew through the mid-1970s, the parents’ movement proselytized drug prevention as a way to shield children from the growing specter of peer pressure. Stephen Gardner, a NIDA official, defined peer pressure (in 1981) as, “Inducements to test new behaviors, to rebel, and to identify with other people of similar ages going through similar experiences.”³⁹ Previous to this, scare tactics and moral panics ran rampant in media campaigns,

³⁷ Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 156; David G. Savage, “Lively School Board Debate: Gates, Student Argue How Best to Fight Drug Use,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 18, 1983, C1, *ProQuest* database.

³⁸ Los Angeles Board of Education, “Minutes,” January 17, 1983, box 603, LAUSD BOE; Superintendent of Schools, “Communication No. 3,” June 20, 27, 1983, box 1,424, folder 5, LAUSD BOE; Gates, *Chief*, 267

³⁹ Stephen Gardner, “Foreword,” in *Adolescent Peer Pressure: Theory, Correlates, and Program Implications for Drug Abuse Prevention* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), iii.

fueled by federal officials' hope for specific outcomes rather than establishing sustainable tactics. Even when President Carter took a lenient stance toward certain drugs, overall drug use remained illegal at the federal level. Sensationalized media sources rationalized federal and local reliance on drug law enforcement and provided credibility to the parents' movement burgeoning menace of peer pressure. As NIDA-funded research stripped informed choice tactics from drug prevention curriculums after 1980, psychosocial prevention approaches isolated peer pressure as the primary influence of rising rates of youth drug abuse. In turn, programs like Project DARE refocused scare tactics away from drugs and instead, utilized resistance tactics to target peer pressure as the primary cause of youth drug experimentation.⁴⁰

To school, police, and government officials, Project DARE reinvented the purpose of police officers in schools. Project DARE required each uniformed police officer-instructor to undergo 200 hours of training (enough to earn vocational education teaching credentials). The officer-instructors' task was to teach a 15-week curriculum (later extended to 17 weeks) involving lessons on self-esteem development and reinforcement, decision-making skills, peer pressure resistance techniques, and to illustrate positive alternatives for children to use if ever confronted with drugs. Project DARE stood out as a curriculum that did not use scare tactics and empty recitations of the hazards of drug use. According to Gates, "It had to be an honest portrayal of what drugs did. 'The kids must never be lied to.'"⁴¹

In Fall 1983, LAUSD Superintendent Harry Handler commended Project DARE, "This will be a more intensive program than what we were able to provide in health classes in the past.

⁴⁰ Gilbert J. Botvin, "Substance Abuse Prevention Research: Research Developments and Future Directions," *Journal of School Health* 56, no. 9, (November 1986), 370; Gilbert J. Botvin and Thomas A. Wills, "Personal and Social Skills Training: Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches to Substance Abuse Prevention" in *Prevention Research: Detering Drug Abuse among Children and Adolescents*, eds. Catherine S. Bell and Robert Battjes (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1985) 27, 34 -35; Max Felker-Kantor, "Arresting the Demand for Drugs: DARE and the School-Police Nexus in Los Angeles," *Journal of Urban History*, 5, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/10.1177/00961442221142062> (accessed February 25, 2023).

⁴¹ Gates, *Chief*, 267

It also means a new approach by the police toward preventative action rather than just the enforcement of drug laws.”⁴² In March 1984, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning for the State of California (OCJP) put out a statewide call for grant proposals as part of the 1983 California Suppression of Drugs in Schools Program (DSP). The call for proposals, sent to all California school districts and law enforcement entities, stated the OCJP expected the DSP to fund between 5 and 25 projects across the state using an allocated \$1,900,000. The February DSP guidelines stated the DSP was a cohesive bloc of antidrug representatives from “parent groups, local schools, prosecutors, law enforcement, county government, other criminal justice system agencies, the State Department[s] of Alcohol and Drug Program, the State Department of Justice and the State Department of Education.” This expansive collaboration pulled together networks of antidrug messengers statewide under one umbrella with the specific goal: “To restore safety to the schools and playgrounds and create a drug-free environment in which our children can learn.” This method called for a “full partnership between educators and law enforcement personnel in developing and implementing a program containing: prevention, education, detection, and apprehension strategies.” However, the parents of students were not included in the formation and implementation of the program.⁴³

The rallying cry, found within the April 12, 1984 grant proposal submitted by LAPD and LAUSD officials to the OCJP, revealed twelve years was the newest median age of first-time drug users. The grant proposal emphasized an increase of PCP abuse while stating, “It is the goal of the DARE Program to attack the problem of drug-abuse through early educational intervention.” The objective was also expanded, “In concert with the educational effort, DARE

⁴² Los Angeles Unified School District, “Spotlight,” Oct. 31, 1983, folder 5, box 1,424, LAUSD BOE.

⁴³ Note: DSP was the acronym used by the California State government. Office of Criminal Justice Planning, “Suppression of Drug Abuse in Schools Program: Program Guidelines” attached to OCJP Request for Proposal, March 2, 1984, foreword, 2, 12, folder 2, box 116, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration Papers (Collection 293), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, CA [hereafter MTBAP].

will provide teacher, parent and community educational programs and will also formulate an intervention program for school-age children in danger of becoming chronic drug abusers.”⁴⁴

Again, the role of parents was enmeshed within proposed community outreach initiatives rather than interweaving parents into the structural fabric of Project DARE. The exclusion of parents from the implementation of DARE curriculum made police officer-instructors the primary source of drug prevention education. Thereby the role of parents was diminished to that of mere audience members; only going as far as attending assemblies in which they themselves were becoming DARE students. By doing so, DARE officials failed to empower parents as authority figures in the presentation of drug resistance tactics.

Rather than leaning on parent activists as NIDA did in the late 1970s, LAPD and LAUSD officials turned to the perspectives of University of California-Los Angeles marijuana researcher, Sidney Cohen, to assess the problem and legitimize the need for Project DARE. Police and school officials argued, “One undisputed certainty is that today’s children will be tomorrow’s business leaders, politicians, doctors, and other professionals.” Police and school officials invoked Cohen’s expertise in stating, “Those youngsters who have learned to rely upon alcohol or drugs during their formative years ‘may never be able to operate at their best level of effectiveness.’” To combat this, Los Angeles utilized a new education tool known as early exposure curriculum. According to the LAPD officials, “Experts in the education and medical fields agree that substance abuse education and prevention must begin before individuals are involved with those substances.” They continued, “This means that substance abuse education must begin with kindergarten children and continue that educational effort through high school.” By exposing children to antidrug messaging and peer pressure resistance, Project DARE was

⁴⁴ Patrick Froehle, “Project Summary,” March 26, 1984, attachment 7, box C-825, folder 84-1431, City Council Files, Los Angeles City Archives, Los Angeles, CA [hereafter LACCF].

theorized to produce “a future of emotionally mature men and women able to keep society strong and healthy.”⁴⁵

The OCJP grant also illuminated the assertion from LAPD and LAUSD officials that Project DARE could successfully disseminate drug prevention education regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class. The racial-ethnic percentages of the LAUSD student population in 1984 was 47.6% Hispanic children, 22.5% White, 22% Black, 7.5% Asian, and .4% American Indian. The demographic analysis also revealed 82 languages were spoken within city boundaries while failing to provide the innumerable cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the students. Diversity was an inescapable characteristic of the school district, “The community itself fluctuate[d] widely from areas of poverty to affluence; from crowded inner-city sites and industrial complexes to suburban, single-family dwellings.” Instead of admitting limitations of utilizing police officer-instructors, principally trained for law enforcement duties, LAPD officials positioned Project DARE as a colorblind policing initiative. In these grant filings, LAPD and LAUSD officials emphasized, “Research only served to show that all children, regardless of social-economic status or geographic location, [had] a high risk of developing drug-abuse behavior patterns.”⁴⁶ By illustrating students as tantamount to adult populations, students were *de facto* adults; they thereby required drug prevention education from police officer-instructors who further detached drug education responsibilities from their parents’ authority.

Project DARE blurred its role in drug education by inferring an existing relationship among drug abuse, truancy, and crime. The interlocking mechanics of all three lacked “specific correlation;” however, the LAPD emphasized, “Most professionals see a direct relationship

⁴⁵ Harry Handler and Daryl F. Gates, “Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report,” 17E, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

⁴⁶ Handler and Gates, “Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report,” 17F, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

between truancy, crime, and substance abuse.”⁴⁷ The best cultural support for this correlation existed in an influential March 1982 article in *The Atlantic* by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling titled, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety.” Urging evolution in policing theory, Wilson and Kelling outlined how the presence of unlawful conduct within city spaces inspired disordered behavior from otherwise peaceful citizens. More specifically, “If a window in a building is broken *and is left unrepaired*, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken.” Wilson and Kelling argued, “At the community level, disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence.”⁴⁸

The main motives behind *broken windows theory* encouraged police entities to blend tactics of solving more crimes, making more arrests, and gathering better evidence, in order to target overall public disorder rather than targeting disorderly individuals. The authors argued that the police should arrest persons collectively exhibiting vagrancy, public drunkenness, or suspicious behavior because communities wanted “an officer to have legal tools to remove undesirable persons from a neighborhood when informal efforts to preserve order in the streets have failed.” This theoretical lens reimagined how the LAPD and LAUSD correlation between truancy, crime, and substance abuse bypassed parental involvement and treated school populations with the same standards applied to adult populations. In fact, LAPD officials blended student arrests, public overdoses, criminal activities, and truancy into abstract symptoms of substance abuse. They argued that prevention education, performed by police officer-instructors, with first-hand experience in the streets of Los Angeles, and peer pressure resistance lessons were the cutting-edge techniques needed to “keep society strong and healthy.” Just as

⁴⁷ Handler and Gates, “Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report,” 17C, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

⁴⁸ James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety,” *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1982) 31, 33, 35, 38. Emphasis in original.

Wilson and Kelling argued, “Above all, we must return to our long-abandoned view that police ought to protect communities as well as individuals.”⁴⁹ In other words, Project DARE would protect schools as well as students.

By stripping the idea of individuality away from the problem of drug abuse, the LAPD and LAUSD treated school populations as microcosms of the general public. In the wake of the School Buy drug bust program’s inability to solve youth drug abuse alone, DARE became a prototype of police-led prevention education. Altogether, school classrooms emerged as a new arena of the drug war when the Reagan administration co-opted the parents’ movement messaging, which correlated youth peer pressure with rising rates of drug abuse. Project DARE’s similar embrace of a peer pressure resistance model cemented DARE officer-instructors as points of authority and effectively displaced parents’ power in the fight against youth drug abuse.

The Predetermined Expansion of DARE

In Spring 1984, the LAPD expected the DARE program to go through five stages of citywide growth and dissemination. School year 1983-84 was Phase I. This phase expected the program to enter into elementary schools as a field test, while planning began for a junior high school program alongside the development of a parent/community awareness method. Between the 1984-85 and 1987-88 school years, Phases II through V anticipated further field testing, expanded DARE curriculum implementation, and the broadened utilization and expansion of parent/community awareness for every elementary, junior high, and senior high schools.

Meanwhile, officer/instructor manuals, teacher guides, student activity workbooks, an

⁴⁹ Wilson and Kelling, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety,” 31, 33, 35, 38; Handler and Gates, “Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report,” 17C, 17E, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

officer/instructor training program, refinement of the parent-community education awareness approaches, and routine outside evaluation were also expected.⁵⁰

Beside the anticipated annual growth, the LAPD expected that working with the Los Angeles County Suppression of Drug Abuse in Schools Advisory Committee would better disseminate information about drug abuse among youth populations; establish a Memorandum of Understanding which dictated DARE officer-instructors be divorced from their role as law enforcement unless in emergency situations; work with parents attending awareness education sessions at schools implementing DARE to improve family communication and parenting skills; jumpstart the junior high program and implement a referral system more apt to engage students identifiably engaging in drug-related behavior; introduce a shortened kindergarten through 4th grade pilot DARE program; and, develop an intervention system for students exhibiting drug-use behavior and link their families with school counselors and, if needed, link the student(s) to community based treatment facilities for adolescents. While parent awareness methods were planned, the LAPD and LAUSD jointly overlooked the value of incorporating parents within the early program planning stages. This oversight remains a retroactive criticism of a \$500,000 program designed to address student drug abuse without better integrating the aid of parents in the instruction of drug prevention to nearly 3,000,000 students.⁵¹

Whereas the Reagan administration's Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services Block Grant disconnected the federal government from responsibilities to fund federal drug treatment options, the growth of peer pressure resistance campaigns provided credibility to the diminishing parents' movement and the concurrent growth of Project DARE. Although parents

⁵⁰ Handler and Gates, "Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report," 18-35, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF; Froehle, "Project Summary," attachment 7, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

⁵¹ Handler and Gates, "Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report," 18-35, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF; Patrick Froehle, "Program Summary," attachment 7, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

on the East Coast were well-integrated in the early fight against drug abuse, the LAPD and LAUSD excluded the role of parents in the development and instruction of DARE. For example, in a February 1984 *Los Angeles Times* article, a school principal commented on the passive parental presence, “All of the parents at the school seem to love this program, and we have not gotten one negative response...The parents in other grades are wondering if they will be able to get the project for their kids.” LAUSD health curriculum specialist Dr. Ruth Rich further outlined DARE officer-instructors’ displacement of parents by stating, “We show them there are ways to reduce stress without resorting to drugs by participating in athletic and creative programs which are enjoyable and promote self-esteem.”⁵² This unperceived displacement of parental authority led parents and school faculty to applaud Project DARE and encourage the LAPD’s expansion of the program.

Regardless of the program’s approval, original Project DARE documentation from 1983 anticipated the program’s expansion throughout the LAUSD by the 1985-86 school year (or its third year of implementation).⁵³ Whereas Project DARE was offered in 50 Los Angeles schools in its first year (1983-84), the Spring/Summer 1984 OCJP DSP approved grant for DARE’s second year (1984-85) extended DARE into 110 elementary schools and 10 middle schools. The goal from DARE’s onset was to expand the program to all 355 elementary schools, 67 middle schools, and 43 high schools in the LAUSD. To serve every school in the LAUSD, DARE estimated a need of “61 Police Department personnel at an annual cost of approximately \$3,000,000.” However, the Los Angeles City Council refused to allocate additional funding on

⁵² Quoted in Greg Braxton, “Students Learn Drug Resistance,” *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 19, 1984, folder 2, box 116, MTBAP.

⁵³ Daryl F. Gates and Harry Handler, “Substance Abuse Education for Los Angeles City Schools”, June 14, 1983, 38, box 4205, folder 3, MTBAP.

the grounds of being too great an expense for an unproven program.⁵⁴ Despite DARE's funding woes, LAPD officials relied on program evaluations, conducted by Dr. Glenn F. Nyre at the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI), to justify the continued expansion of Project DARE.

According to the LAPD, Nyre's "expertise in evaluation, as well as his knowledge" of both the LAUSD and the LAPD made him the "most suitable person to conduct a rigorous, third-party evaluation."⁵⁵ The first evaluation was published in July 1984 and declared DARE's first year of implementation (1983-84) a success. Nyre noted, "DARE has proven to be extremely effective and welcome addition to schools. Teachers, principals and parents are very supportive of the project and report many positive outcomes in terms of student attitudes and behaviors."⁵⁶ However, beyond this cursory mention of parents, Nyre failed to call for any increased inclusion of parents. Further, the evaluation lacked any input from parents of children receiving DARE instruction. Thus, parents, like their children, were DARE pupils. Their role, according to early grant filings and program evaluations, only existed when attending abbreviated DARE informational sessions and expressing their approval of either LAPD or Project DARE.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Note: junior high schools and middle schools appear synonymous in DARE discourse. Harry Handler, "Project DARE – 1984-85 Program," Aug. 28, 1984, folder 5, box 1424, LAUSD BOE; Handler and Gates, "Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report," 16, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF; Keith Comrie, "Council Motion (Ferraro-Bernson) proposing an appropriation of \$262,281 to the Police Department for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (DARE)," April 11, 1985, folder 85-0214, box C-1108, LACCF.

⁵⁵ Handler and Gates, "Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report," 40, box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

⁵⁶ Evaluation and Training Institute, "An Evaluation of Project DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)," July 1984, 10, folder 85-0214, box C-1108, LACCF.

⁵⁷ Evaluation and Training Institute, "An Evaluation of Project DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)," July 1984, 1-2, 10, folder 85-0214, box C-1108, LACCF.

Conclusion

Administrative records illustrate the LAPD's tactical use of law enforcement language and statistical aggregates to gain favor from LAUSD, local and state government officials as they explored an unproven method of drug abuse prevention. DARE funding, as a result, was intended for both crime and drug abuse prevention. The purpose was to provide a school-based program demonstrably efficient at combatting youth drug abuse and establishing long-term holistic crime prevention strategies. If parents had been better included, DARE may have provided a revolutionary system of drug abuse prevention with comparable ingenuity as exhibited by addict treatment facilities and substance-replacement therapies.

However, students, in the eyes of Project DARE and LAPD officials, were first, future citizens and, second, adolescent dependents in parent-led households. At the same time, the omission of parents from Project DARE's creation, expansion, and implementation in large part filtered parental assistance out of student-based drug abuse prevention. As student drug abuse unfolded into a premier national problem in the 1980s, antidrug parents' activism was coopted first by DARE and compacted into parent presentations in classrooms and assembly spaces.⁵⁸

By interlinking parents, students, schools, and police together in drug prevention education, LAPD officials accelerated Project DARE as a worthwhile enterprise. Besides developing a drug abuse prevention curriculum, the LAPD used Project DARE to rehabilitate their public image. Simultaneous to the school drug busts, the LAPD expanded their controversial citywide counter-intelligence division. To circumvent community disapproval and a continual lack of funding for crime prevention programs, LAPD officials increased their promotion of Project DARE alongside growing media coverage surrounding crack cocaine.

⁵⁸ Robert B. Taylor on behalf of Daryl F. Gates, "Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program: Supplemental Report," attached to June 7, 1984 letter from Robert B. Taylor to G. Albert Howenstein, Jr., box C-825, folder 84-1431, LACCF.

Chapter 2

Project DARE: No Magic Bullet in the Fight Against Drug Abuse

“I began to divert, without any authority to do so, a great deal of taxpayers’ money to the program – up to \$5 million a year.”¹ – LAPD Chief Daryl Gates (1992)

Project DARE was launched as a Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) political repositioning tool in response to public disapproval of the misuse of the Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID). Inspired by a national outgrowth of counter-intelligence police work in the postwar era, in 1970 the LAPD created the PDID. Following its early years, Police Chief Ed Davis, in the mid-1970s, redirected the PDID away from strictly investigating criminal entities and commanded the division to spy on progressive community groups recategorized as subversive. When Daryl Gates replaced Davis as LAPD Chief of Police in 1978, the PDID was already being sued for internally spying on community organizations. Pivoting policing efforts amidst growing public distrust and disapproval of the LAPD, Chief Gates teamed with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to launch and expand Project DARE citywide. The public appeal of Project DARE did not prevent the LAPD from paying a monetary fine in the 1984 PDID court case settlement; however, between 1983 and 1987, the DARE program repositioned a segment of the LAPD into the role of classroom instructors.

When Ronald Reagan decoupled drug solutions from the federal budget in his first term, the original scope of federal drug approaches shrank to broadcasting youth drug prevention messages. Supported by his drug policy advisor, Carlton Turner, and instigated by the parents’ movement, adolescent drug abuse prevention messaging inspired Nancy Reagan’s Just Say No initiative and led the Reagan administration to pursue a cultural antidrug campaign. As powder

¹ Daryl Gates, *Chief: My Life in the LAPD* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 268.

cocaine flooded Florida drug markets in the early 1980s, the Reagan administration shifted its drug policies in 1982 by implementing a South Florida Task Force headed by Vice President George H.W. Bush. From that point on, the Reagan administration divided federal drug strategies into expanding the dissemination of drug prevention and the federal dependence on drug law enforcement entities, including the use of police officer-instructors.

Back in Los Angeles, funding scarcity from the City of Los Angeles led the LAPD to create the Crime Prevention Advisory Council (CPAC) to fundraise for various crime prevention programs, including Project DARE. Between 1984 and early 1986, the LAPD was repeatedly challenged on the necessity and efficacy of Project DARE. Due to these challenges, Los Angeles City funding for the program never increased. The fundraising from the CPAC, however, lessened Project DARE's funding woes. In 1985, the persistence of the LAPD and Project DARE caught the attention of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a research branch of the Department of Justice. The NIJ, thereafter, determined Project DARE to be a promising new drug prevention program and provided federal publicity. The expansion of LAPD duties strengthened the local autonomy of the LAPD and in 1986, when the new drug panic surrounding crack cocaine reached its climax, the LAPD used its NIJ influence to promote Project DARE alongside the Just Say No initiative.

The parents' movement's obsessive concern with protecting children from drug abuse also influenced federal drug responses of the 1980s. As Project DARE proved effective without parent power, the program was swept up into the federal fight and expanded into a federally-funded enterprise. Previous power abuses of the LAPD were widely disregarded alongside the political influence of antidrug parent activists. Crack cocaine and youth drug abuse remained scapegoats for the police to gain strong footholds in school districts and to increase their

aggressive occupation of communities of color. Project DARE, meanwhile, flourished as a purportedly effective drug abuse prevention program, thinly veiling its utility to the LAPD as a tool to earn additional political endorsements and program funding.

The national expansion of Project DARE glamorized the LAPD as an innovative, ingenious operation and propelled Daryl Gates into stardom. An overlooked fact was that Project DARE failed to stop or reduce overall youth drug abuse. Instead, Project DARE provided police entities an avenue of early exposure education which favorably altered student attitudes of drug use and police officers alike and convinced parents and school districts to welcome DARE police officer-instructors as the program spread into classrooms across the nation.

The Damaged and Repaired Public Image of the LAPD

In Los Angeles, LAPD responses to the anti-communist Red Scares of the 1920s and 1950s, and the Civil Rights movement and student-led activism of the 1960s won the police department increased autonomy. To better resist uprisings and protests, the LAPD mirrored federal law enforcement agencies' turn toward counter-intelligence work. LAPD Police Chief Ed Davis (1969-1978) created the Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID) in 1970 to target radical movements like the Ku Klux Klan as well as progressive activists calling for system-wide governmental changes by way of racial justice and police reforms.

To protect the LAPD's expanded autonomy and to avoid any unauthorized leak of PDID documents, the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners, a civilian-led police oversight committee, called for the LAPD to destroy obsolete PDID files. The file destruction further secured the autonomy of the LAPD and extended the role of the PDID into a politically-driven

surveillance entity. Regardless, PDID material leaked into the public sphere and a scandal unfolded. Chief Davis retired from the LAPD in 1978 to pursue a political career, leaving his successor Daryl Gates to inherit the ensuing PDID scandal. In the same year, police reform activists sued LAPD leadership in the court case, *CAPA et al. v. Gates et al.*, incorporating “six separate cases on behalf of twenty-three groups and 108 individuals charging that the LAPD engaged in illegal surveillance operations based on political or ideological motivations.”² The scandal concluded in March 1984 when the case was settled out of court. In the end, the six-year long court case helped the ACLU to discover “more than 10,000 pages of raw police files and intelligence summaries” and awarded the 144 plaintiffs (comprised of individual journalists, and political, racial justice, and police reform organizations) \$1.8 million, paid out by the City of Los Angeles.³

In 1983, anticipating fallout from the PDID scandal, Gates reversed the soiled credibility of the LAPD by interlinking the department into the national fight for drug abuse. On January 17, 1983, the same day a proposal to disband the PDID was handed to the city’s Police, Fire and Safety Committee by City Attorney Ira Reiner, a pro-police reformist, Chief Gates met with the Los Angeles Board of Education to stress the need for substance abuse education in Los Angeles schools.⁴ This meeting laid the foundation to launch Project DARE.

Project DARE introduced police officer-instructors into classrooms, outsourced parental influence to local police personnel, and positioned media, peer, and societal pressures as root causes of drug abuse. By inserting police officers into schools, the LAPD expanded their

² Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 136, 144, 146, 152; Gates, *Chief*, 224.

³ Dave Lindorff, “Police Spies in the City of the Angels,” *The Nation*, May 5, 1984, 537-538, *Archive.org*, <https://archive.org/details/police-spies-in-the-city-of-the-angels-by-dave-lindorff-the-nation-vol.-238-issu/mode/2up> (accessed March 18, 2023).

⁴ Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 156; Los Angeles Board of Education, “Minutes,” January 17, 1983, box-603, LAUSD BOE.

responsibilities into an unfamiliar sector and fastened unattainable assurances to Project DARE. In response to the deficiencies and controversies of the undercover School Buy program, discussed in chapter 1, and the PDID scandal, Project DARE was presented as a long-term, comprehensive youth drug abuse prevention program. The broad idea was that if a student was introduced to the DARE curriculum in fifth or sixth grade, when that student reached high school, drug abuse prevention lessons would help the child resist peer pressure and discourage consumption of illicit drugs. While the LAPD developed this multipronged initiative, they did so without first securing sustainable funding. In turn, the fundraising efforts of the LAPD helped the department separate itself from the previous controversies.

Funding Struggles for DARE

By 1985 Project DARE repositioned the LAPD as a pioneering entity in Los Angeles by integrating police guidance into drug abuse prevention education. Determined to reduce drug abuse amongst youth populations, the DARE program gained praise for the LAPD from school officials and federal officials alike. According to one report, “School principals love [the DARE program]. Several police agencies are copying it. And the federal government has expressed interest in using the program as a national model.” In the same report, the executive director of the National Institute for Justice, James K. Stewart, said the program was “the only one of its kind in the country.” The removal of scare tactics and utilization of police officers as school instructors led Stewart to applaud DARE for being “well-integrated” in the Los Angeles educational system. To show support for the still fledgling program, in April 1985 Stewart promised to spread DARE brochures to “police departments and school districts around the

country” to inform the nation “of the Los Angeles Police Department’s enthusiasm for the program.”⁵

As the LAPD expanded DARE, Los Angeles city officials remained reluctant to provide the LAPD additional funding. Though the LAPD was ready to move away from the PDID scandal, a mere calendar year separated DARE’s second year of implementation from the \$1.8 million paid out by the City of Los Angeles to the PDID court case plaintiffs. Walking the line between supporting police and challenging their power, Barbara Schlei, a member of the citizen-led Police Commission, remained a staunch opponent of DARE. Schlei posited, “Do we want our military and paramilitary teaching moral values in our schools in a democracy?” Schlei praised DARE’s method of using “terrific police officers” as the “best people to teach kids...to stay away from drugs.” However, Schlei also challenged, “But once you start teaching attitudes, what about attitudes that aren’t as clear-cut? Is it a step we’re really ready to take?” Chief Gates felt pressured by unsupportive politicians and civil libertarians concerned the LAPD was turning “L.A. into a police state.” Structurally, Los Angeles never became a police state; however, DARE served as a vehicle for broader police autonomy and motivated the LAPD to maneuver forward without additional funding from the city. The local creativity and imagination called for by President Reagan in 1982 provided the LAPD alternative strategies for funding which conjoined DARE and the fight against drug abuse with private funding from individual citizens and corporate sponsors.⁶

Facing diminishing budgets in Los Angeles, LAPD officials developed the Crime Prevention Advisory Council (CPAC) as a fundraising entity for crime prevention programs. Started in 1984, the CPAC was designed to circumvent local tax reductions enacted via

⁵ Andy Furillo, “DARE: It’s Working and in Trouble” *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1985, B1, *ProQuest* database.

⁶ Furillo, “DARE: It’s Working and in Trouble,” B1, *ProQuest* database; Gates, *Chief*, 267.

California's 1978 Proposition 13. According to Gates, budget cuts made after Proposition 13 forced the LAPD to "eliminate or reduce many important but so-called 'nonessential' services." The primary programs affected were crime prevention branches of the LAPD. Project DARE grew to become the leading LAPD program considered "extremely effective in reducing crime."⁷

To counteract the lack of funding, LAPD Deputy Chief Glenn Levant designed the CPAC as "an extremely proactive" entity which pioneered "the frontier of public funding, outside of the normal budgetary process, for law enforcement programs." Levant emphasized, "The end result of this strategic alternative has been a needed bi-level funding source which effectively provide[d] for the capabilities needed by the [Los Angeles Police] Department to achieve its mission." Using the "long standing principle of 'people working with police,'" citizens of Los Angeles, via the LAPD, launched the CPAC as way to incorporate private residents' time, energy, funding, and fund raising "to finance many of its crime prevention programs." The CPAC's by-laws outlined two objectives. The first was, "To increase citizen awareness of the Los Angeles Police Department's crime prevention activities and programs by providing high quality, low cost crime prevention materials for dissemination" throughout Los Angeles. The second was, "To receive, hold, and disburse gifts, bequests, devises, and other funds to accomplish these objectives." The overall purpose of the CPAC was to serve as a fund-raising branch of the LAPD. To accomplish its objectives, the CPAC thrived through networks of "professionals with outstanding reputation and name recognition" able to "exert influence with their colleagues, associates, and friends," reaching throughout Los Angeles.⁸

⁷ Daryl F. Gates, "A Partnership against Crime," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* 55, no. 8 (Aug. 1986), 6.

⁸ Glenn A. Levant, *A Technological Transfer Describing an Alternative Funding Source for Law Enforcement Enhancement Programs Not Available Through the Normal Budget Process through the Establishment of a Private Citizen Advisory Council* (California Police Command College, December 1985), 1, 2, 16, 47.

The CPAC exemplified the same policing ingenuity demonstrated by the creation and implementation of Project DARE. From relationships throughout Los Angeles, members of the LAPD positioned crime prevention as a marketable venture. Non-profit venture capitalists, private citizens, and corporations aided the LAPD by providing funds unavailable through the City of Los Angeles. As expansion intertwined with DARE's survival, the promotional campaign unfolded. In 1984, the CPAC distributed over a half-million brochures promoting crime prevention, with thousands circulated at the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. In 1985, the CPAC was able to raise \$178,000 from its membership base. Though the CPAC provided a source of funding to myriad LAPD crime prevention programs, the expansion and dissemination of DARE was undergirded by the public campaigning and fundraising ventures of the CPAC.⁹ However, regarding the funding dispute, Chief Gates still had "no support" from the Mayor and City Council. As Gates later noted, "Some politicians and civil libertarians questioned the wisdom of putting police officers in the classroom."¹⁰ Though critiques of the program persisted, the LAPD saw "the ultimate solution to the drug problem" depended on their "success at changing attitudes of future generations away from drug abuse."¹¹ As public concern grew from mounting reports of youth populations' use of crack cocaine, Gates promoted the DARE program alongside the growing cultural prevalence of Nancy Reagan's Just Say No initiative.

⁹ Levant, *Alternative Funding Source for Law Enforcement Enhancement Programs*, 86; D.A.R.E. America, "2008 DARE Annual Report," <https://dare.procon.org/sourcefiles/2008DAREAnnualReport.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2023).

¹⁰ Gates, *Chief*, 267.

¹¹ Daryl F. Gates, "No Truce in the Drug War," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1986, C5, *ProQuest* database.

Crack Panic in Los Angeles

Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, PCP generated a minor drug panic which earned government officials' attention for its ability to send users into violent frenzies. Between 1984 and 1986, public attention shifted from PCP to crack cocaine. Crack cocaine, or crack, for short, generated furor from elected officials which inspired a more comprehensive media and public panic than during the PCP scare. In fact, the fear surrounding crack mirrored the parent activists' fears regarding youth populations' use of marijuana at the end the 1970s. PCP and crack, on the other hand, were correlated by the comparable effects of the two illicit substances. While neither was explicitly viewed to be addictive, users' repetitive use of the drugs was in large part due to the potent highs achieved from their consumption. PCP was a dissociative drug able to remove one's mind from one's place and setting. Whereas fear amongst police officials focused on PCP's ability to incite violent behavior in its users, crack was a stimulant which encouraged incessant use due to the production of a fleeting, manic high which lasted mere minutes. Both substances, unlike marijuana, generated psychoses and high rates of addiction, and further led the American public to fear the spread of drug abuse.¹²

The national drug problem was further exacerbated by unprecedented profits which drew numerous youths into the business of peddling crack. In November 1984, the *Los Angeles Times* introduced Los Angeles readers to an 18-year-old man who was making "up to \$70,000 a week selling cocaine." He spent "his afternoons playing baseball or football, or video games with friends in arcades. He [was] clean-cut and articulate." The crack phenomenon rose at a time when Black communities experienced 15.4% adult unemployment and 40.2% teenage

¹² Craig Reinerman and Harry G. Levine, "Crack in Context: America's Latest Demon Drug," in *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social*, eds. Craig Reinerman and Harry G. Levine (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1997), 2, 8; Harry Nelson, "'Angel Dust' Use Sending More Youths to Hospitals," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1977, D1, ProQuest database.

unemployment. The portrayal of this young man also involved a growing discussion of gangs in the mid-1980s. A surge in gang affiliations and anti-gang rhetoric resulted from the disproportional lack of jobs offered to individuals living in inner-city communities. As young entrepreneurs spread crack across the city, inner-city neighborhoods became inundated with police forces expected to win the fight against and address ramifications arising from persistent drug markets.¹³

As community officials condemned the rising violence in their neighborhoods, the LAPD appeared vigilant in the face of community expectations. Conversely, skepticism of the LAPD also persisted from a history of prejudice and unaddressed violent abuses of power exacted upon communities of color. Local drug abuse clinics and rehabilitation centers, in the meantime, were busy attending to a population of individuals that doubled following the emergence of crack. In South-Central Los Angeles, teenage youth appeared in court daily for selling crack. Only sales of heroin and marijuana compared to the rise of crack in illicit drug markets, yet their distribution networks could not rival the rampant rise of powder cocaine and its rock derivative. In 1984, police raided 150 crack houses in South-Central Los Angeles, and the Narcotics Division pushed for warrants to raid 30 additional crack enterprises.¹⁴ These militaristic occupation tactics were inspired by sweeps conducted to remove homeless individuals, drug dealers, and gang activity from event spaces utilized for the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles.¹⁵ As the Olympic Games welcomed a plethora of visitors to the city, the LAPD regarded the removal of vagrancy and criminality as a solution for the ailments developing within the inner-city. Media and

¹³ Andy Furillo, "South-Central Cocaine Sales into \$25 'Rocks,'" *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 25, 1984, B1, *ProQuest* database.

¹⁴ Andy Furillo, "South-Central Cocaine Sales into \$25 'Rocks,'" *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 25, 1984, B1, *ProQuest* database.

¹⁵ Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 199-200.

cultural optics were the impetus for continual use of neighborhood raids, yet their frequent utilization merely forced drug dealing networks to relocate rather than deteriorate.

To make matters worse for antidrug hawks, drug dealing enterprises emerged within every major US city across the US. As officials bypassed drug addiction solutions, government funding prioritized symbolic political ventures. Police were expected to fix, manage, and control the rising rates of criminality, while social and economic remedies were kept out of reach of inner-city communities. In Los Angeles, by promising future results using short-term planning tactics, the LAPD gained power and influence. Therefore, as the PDID scandal was settled, the Olympics and the threat of crack cocaine justified increased LAPD presence within communities already frustrated by a history of police abuses. However, as crack networks persisted, and rates of gun violence rose, communities in the late 1980s rescinded LAPD criticism and sought their assistance in dispelling gang violence and crack cocaine from their neighborhoods.

1986: Crack Panic Grows into a National Concern

Beginning in March 1986, *Newsweek* positioned crack cocaine as the greatest threat to middle-class America. The March 17th, 1986 magazine cover featured an adolescent white male about to inhale powder cocaine while sitting on a single-family dwelling staircase. According to the cover article, “Kids and Cocaine: An Epidemic Strikes Middle America,” white suburban youth were under direct threat from the terrors of inner-city crack trafficking networks. The article emphasized the growth of crack use amongst high school seniors due to its affordability and a distribution network reliant on teenage peddlers. The appearance of cocaine in suburban homes carried shock value since the drug was previously portrayed only in inner city landscapes.

Conversely, urban adolescent drug dealers and users did not astonish a national audience since drug dealing networks were already widely fastened to cultures in inner-cities. Further, the appearance of numerous suburban adolescent accounts was used to reinforce the “gateway drug” theory. Disseminated with the support of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), antidrug parent activist literature regarded marijuana use as a “gateway” toward the use of more potent drugs like cocaine.¹⁶ Meanwhile, suburban anecdotes depicted the horrors of youth drug abuse. One article revealed the experience of relatives powerless to keep their adolescents from drug using cultures by centering on middle-class children enticed by cultures of rebellion, escapism from broken homes, and recapturing the loss of social stature in school.¹⁷

Stories of children alone in homes illustrated the increase of families with two working parents across the nation. By depicting children alone, familial structures were illustrated to have less cohesion and far more independent youth populations. By 1986, parents’ movement activism was replaced by Nancy Reagan’s Just Say No initiative. Instead of having communities filled with nosy parents, multiple income families allotted youth the freedom to bring drug use into suburban landscapes. The growing turn to drug prevention education centralized the sphere of schools as spaces where students were expected to accept non-familial figures as a replacement for attention lacking from their parents. When political officials underemphasized drug deterrence in the mid-1970s, parents filled the void through promoting community cohesion and increased parental contact with their children. However, by the time Nancy Reagan launched the Just Say No campaign in the mid-1980s, peer pressure was addressed as the principal cause of youth drug abuse, even though it accounted for a minor degree of drug use nationwide.

¹⁶ Marsha Mannatt, *Parents, Peers, and Pot* (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1979), 50.

¹⁷ Terry E. Johnson, et al., “Tale of Three Addictions,” *Newsweek*, March 17, 1986, 61.

One reason for the far-reaching adoption of drug prevention rhetoric came from *Newsweek*'s regular antidrug media coverage in the 1980s. Editor-in-Chief Richard M. Smith declared crack cocaine use a "drug crisis" and a national "plague." Smith commended the publication's coverage of rising drug trends, reaching back to 1983, and promised, "We plan accordingly to cover [drugs] as a crisis, reporting it as aggressively and returning to it as regularly as we did the struggle for civil rights, the war in Vietnam and the fall of the Nixon presidency."¹⁸ The article following Smith's titled, "Crack and Crime," argued, "Police in every city where crack is now a major problem argue that courts are too lenient with drug offenders" and this leniency encouraged the expansion of drug trafficking. Using police experiences from Boston, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, and San Antonio, Tom Morganthau et al. argued, "Given the widespread societal acceptance of drugs of all types and given cocaine's immense addictive power, the war against crack will not be won by campaigns to reduce public demand." Though the authors realized this critique against demand reduction contradicted the support of Nancy Reagan's Just Say No initiative, they concluded, "Bigger law enforcement budgets at both the federal and local level" were necessary to strengthen law enforcement's fight against illicit drug markets.¹⁹

On June 19, 1986, the death of college basketball player Len Bias shocked and revolutionized the cultural perception of Nancy Reagan's Just Say No campaign and provided a rationale for the greatest expansion of the 1980s drug war. Initial reports of Bias's death revealed "major damage" as the 22-year-old suffered a heart attack. A prospective draftee to the National Basketball League's Boston Celtics, Bias captured headlines for his All-American level of

¹⁸ Richard M. Smith, "The Drug Crisis: The Plague among Us," *Newsweek*, June 16, 1986, 15.

¹⁹ Tom Morganthau, et al., "Kids and Cocaine," *Newsweek*, March 17, 1986, 59; Tom Morganthau, et al., "Crack and Crime," *Newsweek*, June 16, 1986, 15-22.

gameplay. Averaging an impressive 23.2 points per game, Bias ended his final collegiate season with the University of Maryland by providing a photo opportunistic reverse slam dunk. The young man's star power was ready to skyrocket as he was the second player selected in the 1986 NBA draft on June 18th. On June 20th reports surfaced of his potential cocaine use, followed by the pronouncement of cocaine as the cause of Bias's death on June 25th. The shock caused ripples that persist in modern day drug war history discourse conjoining his death to growing rhetoric concerning crack cocaine, when in fact, rock cocaine was not the substance found; it was powder.²⁰ Specificity aside, the untimely death of a young, otherwise healthy, man generated a media storm surrounding drugs in professional sports.

On June 26, 1986, a White House briefing paper titled, "Drug Abuse Prevention," outlined a strengthened federal push for drug prevention. Without mentioning Len Bias, the brief noted, "A national change in attitude has occurred." It continued, "Americans have recognized that there is no single magic bullet to solve the drug problem and we must take every opportunity to attack drugs."²¹ A sense of urgency suddenly descended upon the nation's fight against drug abuse. Any cultural resistance against acknowledging drug abuse as a national concern subsided. Widespread drug fear stretched beyond the media culture wars and was utilized in White House rhetoric.

On August 4, 1986, President Reagan outlined six initiatives dictating the antidrug position which directed the remainder of his presidential term. The initiatives outlined included striving for drug-free workplaces, drug-free schools, support for drug treatment, seeking to

²⁰ Dick Wagner, "L.B. Savors Brush with Good Basketball," *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1986, D8, *Newspapers.com* database; Times Wire Services, "76 Deal Shake Up the Team and the Draft," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1986, C1, *Newspapers.com* database; Betty Cuniberti, "College Basketball Star Lens Bias Dies," *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1986, C1, *Newspapers.com* database.

²¹ "Briefing Paper: Drug Abuse Prevention," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections, Thomas, W. Dennis: Files, folder Drug Abuse Prevention 07/02/1986 (1), box 11, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/public/digitallibrary/smf/cos/thomas/box-011/40-561-7259862-011-016-2019.pdf>.

defeat international drug trafficking, strengthening antidrug law enforcement efforts, and “expand[ing] public awareness and prevention” regarding drug abuse.²² One week later, *Newsweek* published “Trying to Say ‘No.’” The article outlined the efforts in Washington to develop a bipartisan bill. Larry Martz et al. reported Democrats in Congress sought to stiffen penalties for drug dealers, target money launderers, and to bolster “treatment and prevention programs,” while Republicans also sought tougher penalties for drug dealers while also calling for international sanctions against any country that did not cooperate with drug-eradication programs of the US. Further in the article, the unproven value of drug prevention education and inefficiency of scare tactics remained pertinent topics. While criticizing the scare tactics employed in exaggerated drug exposes, like *Reefer Madness* from 1936, alongside the ineffective “straightforward presentations of the pleasures and dangers of drugs” of the 1960s, *Newsweek* outlined, “The fashionable focus of educators now is on peer and family influences, trying to teach children simply to reject drugs as uncool.” However, “One major hitch” was “nobody [could] show conclusively” that these “fashionable” programs worked. Regardless, dissuading youth drug use remained a central tenet of all plans for expanded drug prevention education.²³

In the following September, President Reagan signed Executive Order 12564. The Executive Order called for drug-free federal workspaces and required urinalysis drug tests for all current and future federal employees. The presidential rationale against drug use relied on a lack of productivity exhibited by illicit drug users.²⁴ Excessive drinking and nationwide drug abuse were used as a scapegoat to increase federal oversights and law enforcement expansion. That

²² Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, “Remarks Announcing the Campaign against Drug Abuse and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters,” (accessed March 22, 2023), <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-announcing-campaign-against-drug-abuse-and-question-and-answer-session>.

²³ Larry Martz, “Trying to Say ‘No,’” *Newsweek*, August 11, 1986, 15, 19.

²⁴ National Archives, “Executive Order 12564--Drug-free Federal Workplace,” <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12564.html> (accessed October 23, 2023).

same month, William J. Bennett, Reagan's Secretary of Education, released a handbook, named *Schools without Drugs*. Bennett's *Schools without Drugs* sought to dissuade drug abuse in youth by encouraging community members to join police entities in promoting antidrug messaging. Bennett billed himself as a drug prevention expert. His monograph was not intended to guide citizens to treatment options. Bennett admitted, "Treatment usually requires professional help." Instead, this drug prevention literature focused on rhetorical and tangible frustrations with rising rates of drug abuse. The handbook emphasized the drug model of prevention peer pressure resistance supported by the parents' movement, developed through NIDA funding in the 1970s and 1980s, and exemplified by the core philosophy of the DARE program. According to Bennett, the target audience, "parents, teachers, principals, religious and community leaders, and all other adults - and students - who want[ed] to know what works in drug use prevention," remained unchanged from years past antidrug groups and programs.²⁵

By proxy, this new sector of drug prevention bypassed professional addiction and drug abuse treatment methodologies as a new sector of expertise. Instead of seeking treatment methodologies, Bennett propagated the "gateway" drug theory alongside describing peer pressure influences as "a key role in making drug use attractive to children." Bennett favored drug abuse prevention programs, like DARE, and parents' movement organizations. However, the handbook portrayed youth drug abuse as a solvable national problem if youth were dissuaded from drugs and galvanized to do so by their surrounding community. The handbook was a symbolic reference guide for programs and entities supported by the Reagan administration. The final section, "How the Law Can Help," outlined the punitive efforts to remove drugs in schools.

²⁵ William J. Bennett, *What Works: Schools without Drugs*, Final Draft, vii-viii, 7, 53-62, Richard A. Davis Collection, folder Drugs/Department of Education (2), box OA 15700, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventory/davis-richard-files-1985-1987>.

By dedicating the final pages of the handbook to law enforcement and available disciplinary actions for schools, zero-tolerance drug policies encouraged the presence of police officers in and around school districts.²⁶

Reagan's iteration of the drug war entered its supernova stage with a national address on September 14, 1986. Featuring the Reagans together in a televised push for the fight against drug abuse, the couple's address mirrored *Newsweek* by describing rising crack abuse as an epidemic. According to the President, "Today there's a new epidemic: smokable cocaine, otherwise known as crack. It is an explosively destructive and often lethal substance which is crushing its users. It is an uncontrolled fire." Nancy Reagan positioned the fight against drugs through the detailed description of babies born to mothers addicted to crack cocaine. Their rhetoric situated dangers of drug cultures threatening children, "[Drug peddlers] work [every day] to plot a new and better way to steal our children's lives, just as they've done by developing this new drug, crack. For every door that we close, they open a new door to death." The President's intensified rhetoric led the first lady to end the address by asking the US public, "Won't you join us in this great, new national crusade?"²⁷

Athletes, recovering addicts and alcoholics, community organizations, educators, private businesses, and members of the media made up the chosen Reagan coalition in the fight against drug abuse. Through the cohesion of the American public, the Reagans' sweeping drug crusade marched the Just Say No campaign into living rooms and denigrated drug use of any sort, but especially crack. By centralizing crack as the primary drug concern, the Reagan administration leaned on law enforcement entities to eradicate drug trafficking networks. Meanwhile, William

²⁶ William J. Bennett, *What Works: Schools without Drugs*, Final Draft, vii-viii, 7, 53-62, Richard A. Davis Collection, folder Drugs/Department of Education (2), box OA 15700, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventory/davis-richard-files-1985-1987>.

²⁷ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Campaign against Drug Abuse," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-nation-campaign-against-drug-abuse> (accessed March 25, 2023).

Bennett and the Department of Education targeted the abuse of five substances: marijuana, powder cocaine, crack cocaine, PCP, and LSD.²⁸ Mention of PCP and LSD existed in the margins, making marijuana and cocaine the primary focus of the Reagan administration. By targeting illicit drugs rather than underage drinking the Reagan administration positioned inner city drug dealers and users alongside youth marijuana smokers. These two populations were treated very differently when the Reagan administration enacted the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986.

The National Expansion of DARE and the Drug-Free America Act

As the media and political frenzy targeted crack cocaine, Chief Gates was invited to produce articles centered on DARE. Gates' testimony situated DARE as a "program to 'inoculate' students" by providing "'immunization' against drug abuse." Written using rhetorical liberties, Gates presented DARE to be effective in elevating students' grade point averages. Using the August 1985 ETI evaluation, Gates boasted a "50 percent" increase in grade point averages for DARE junior high school students. Gates added, "56 percent [of students] increased cooperation marks, and 43 percent improved work habit marks" in the fall semester of 1985. Gates emphasized the linkage between drug and alcohol use among youth and the potential for "failing grades, school dropouts, runaway children, broken families, potential addiction, juvenile crime, and even loss of life." Further, "Students who do not use drugs are seriously affected by classmates who disrupt learning and destroy friendships." The newest line of thought by Gates

²⁸ William J. Bennett, *What Works: Schools without Drugs*, Final Draft, vii-viii, 7, 53-62, Richard A. Davis Collection, folder Drugs/Department of Education (2) and (3), box OA 15700, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventory/davis-richard-files-1985-1987>.

concerning DARE was, “DARE tries to teach students being an adult really means not giving in to peer pressure, making one’s own decisions and learning to cope with life’s problems in positive ways.”²⁹ DARE officer-instructors actively replaced the role of parents by creating a need for police officers to be instructors educating young students in how to effectively resist drug experimentation.

Project DARE officer-instructors, from the program’s onset, represented a growing spectrum of responsible adults interacting with school children. As the program progressed, DARE’s purported benefits ballooned to address students’ grades, daily behavior, responsibility, and peer interactions. The earliest commissioned evaluation agency was the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI). The ETI used agree/disagree questionnaires to survey the efficacy of DARE according to students, LAUSD teachers and principals, and lastly, parents. According to the three annual ETI evaluations from 1984 to 1986, using a four-question agree/disagree survey, “all [142] parents surveyed” (of a student population of 14,085) while attending three separate DARE parent meetings, indicated having interest in attending more DARE meetings, thought that it was a “good idea to have uniformed police officers teaching about drugs” and thought they would “be able to communicate better with their children about drug use as a result of the meetings.”³⁰ Blanket agree/disagree statements like these failed to integrate parental involvement into Project DARE. Alternatively, by detaching parents from the curriculum, Project DARE could be replicated by any collaboration between a city or state’s police department and school district(s).

²⁹ Daryl F. Gates, “LAPD’s Project DARE Tells Youth to Resist Drugs,” *School Safety* 26 (Spring 1986), 27.

³⁰ Glenn F. Nyre, “An Evaluation of Project DARE,” July 1984, folder 85-0214, box c-1108, LACCF; Glenn F. Nyre, “Final Evaluation Report, 1984-1985,” August 1985, folder D.A.R.E. [Drug Abuse Resistance Education] (1), box OA 18766, Office of the First Lady: Projects Office: Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; Glenn Nyre, “DARE Evaluation Report 1985-1986,” August 1986, folder 3, box 116, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration Papers (Collection 293), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, CA.

An outside evaluation was needed before federal officials were convinced to help DARE enter national expansion. In March 1986, William DeJong, a program evaluator commissioned by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), observed DARE, noting its young history, hopes of citywide expansion, and the program's successful collaboration between public and private sectors. DeJong reported, "A growing consensus among experts in education and medicine holds that substance abuse prevention must begin early, well before children have been led by their peers to experiment with drugs and alcohol." The short-term evaluation, published in March 1986, disseminated the working knowledge and rationale behind DARE and its 17-lesson curriculum and encouraged implementation outside of Los Angeles. "In Los Angeles," DeJong wrote, "both private and public resources stand ready to combat drug and alcohol abuse by the city's young people." The analysis continued, "Can other cities adopt the DARE approach? Successful implementation of Project DARE hinges on strong cooperation between local schools and law enforcement." DeJong finished by making the LAPD initiative seem like a plausible task for other police departments to explore: "In many cities, building that cooperation may appear to be an insurmountable obstacle. But as Chief Gates has shown, the police can make the first move."³¹ By repeating the same talking points as Gates and reflecting the expansionist goals of Project DARE, the NIJ helped promote Project DARE as it entered its fourth year of operations.

In June 1986, the LAPD and Chief Gates maneuvered limited funding and positive program evaluation to rationalize a greater DARE expansion than originally planned. In the third year of DARE, Gates used a \$500,000 combined grant from the City of Los Angeles and the State of California to advance the LAPD's commitment to the program. By reallocating LAPD

³¹ William DeJong, "Project DARE: Teaching Kids to Say 'No' to Drugs and Alcohol," *NIJ Reports 196* (March 1986), 1-4.

budget funds to increase the number of officers involved in DARE, the LAPD prepared for a LAUSD-wide expansion.

In Los Angeles during the 1986-87 school year, one year after the anticipated program expansion district wide, 345 elementary schools and 58 middle schools utilized either full or partial DARE program instruction. All 322,215 students in kindergarten through 7th grade were included in the 1986-87 school year. Continued correlation between substance abuse, truancy, and crime led LAPD and LAUSD to assert, “Enforcement of narcotics violations alone [had] proven to be ineffective in combating substance abuse by youth. Therefore, there [was] a need for a concerted effort by law enforcement and the schools” to rely on “programs and practices” counteracting drug abuse. “In addition to the grant-funded effort,” according to a grant contract, the LAPD assigned “48 sworn police officers to the DARE Program” to implement instruction in all elementary and middle schools. The cost of the “City-funded officers plus the grant-funded officers” escalated the program cost to “approximately \$5,000,000.”³²

In early August 1986, two weeks removed from the death of Lens Bias, LAPD Detective Donald Van Velzer appeared before a Congressional hearing on drug abuse prevention and education on behalf of DARE. Alongside his promotion of Project DARE successes, Velzer provided three DARE information packets to Congress, *DARE to Say No!*, *D.A.R.E.: Drugs are Everyone’s Problem*, and a packet which summarized the history of DARE, outlined the 17-week lesson schedule of the program, and included the March 1986 NIJ article from DeJong. The literature exemplified the LAPD’s collaboration with private sectors, positioned drug abuse as the paramount concern facing students between the 4th and 7th grades, and prioritized

³² Rodger K. Coombs, Office of Criminal Justice Planning Grant Award, July 1986 – June 1987,” June 13, 1986, folder 84-1431, box C-825, LACCF; Mayor Tom Bradley, “Transmittal 0150-04406 (C),” July 7, 1986, folder 84-1431, C-825 LACCF.

prevention practices as “the only answer” in combatting youth drug abuse.³³ The police-led prevention message also was spilling into the public sphere. According to a September 1986 Gallup Poll, adults believed drugs were the “biggest problem confronting schools.” The same poll showed adults supported “expelling students caught using drugs and allowing teachers to search lockers for narcotics.” Outside of schools, private companies introduced mandatory drug tests, alcohol treatment centers were opening their doors to cocaine addicts, and public foundations were flocking to support the Just Say No campaign. The DARE evaluator from the Evaluation and Training Institute, Glenn Nyre, applauded DARE by saying, “It really works in changing kids’ attitudes about drugs, and principals and teachers were very laudatory about the program.” Though Chief Gates cautioned, it may take “a decade or a generation” for DARE to express its intended effect in society. Regardless of lacking efficacy, rising drug abuse was a dire situation in the eyes of the Police Chief. According to Gates, “The truth is that no one knows how well education programs will work in the long run. I’ll tell you, if they don’t [work], God help America in the 21st Century.”³⁴

Gates penned his own article in the *Los Angeles Times*, titled “No Truce in the Drug War,” which did not focus on promoting DARE but instead lobbied for support of the nation’s growing fight against drug abuse. While leading with enthusiasm, Gates stated, “I fear, however, that this quantum leap could lead to only a few weeks or months of hysteria – and then it’s back to business as usual.” He continued, “that concerns me deeply. Hysteria leads to frantic searches for, and acceptance of, quick and shallow solutions – not long-term commitments.” In practice, Project DARE set numerous unachievable goals. Though few officials debated the efficacy of

³³ Hearing before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States House of Representatives, 99th Congress, *Drug Abuse – Prevention, Education, and Treatment*, August 6, 1986, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), 118-139.

³⁴ Bill Farr and Carol McGraw, “Anti-Drug Education: Smarts vs. Dope Seems to Work,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 22, 1986, A3, *Newspapers.com*.

DARE at the time, the paradoxical rationale was revealed by Gates himself. For example, Gates described that “sloganezing” drug abuse resistance phrases would not impact the drug war. “Rehabilitation programs” were too costly, “and no matter how much money is committed to rehabilitation, those who do not want to get drugs out of their lives won’t be rehabilitated.” DARE, on the other hand, according to Gates, “Should be duplicated in every school across the nation.”³⁵ Using combat-related metaphors, Gates also stressed, the nation needed to “become a people willing to put forth the long-range national, institutional and personal commitments to victory and the unconditional surrender of our enemy – drug abuse.” Conversely, Project DARE’s expansion depended upon specific factors. Next to classroom instruction which prioritized the use of drug law enforcement, DARE expansion also thrived in the wake of deteriorated federal- and state-funded systems of drug treatment. However no contingency plans existed if programs like DARE failed to quell rising rates of drug abuse.³⁶

Without exploring any alternative approaches, on October 27, 1986, Ronald Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, also known as the Drug-Free America Act. While signing the legislation, President Reagan remarked, “The vaccine that is going to end the epidemic, is a combination of tough laws, like the one we sign today, and a dramatic change in public attitude.” Reagan continued, “We must be intolerant of drug use and drug sellers. We must be intolerant of drug use on the campus and at the workplace. We must be intolerant of drugs, not because we want to punish drug users, but because we care about them and want to help them.”³⁷ While this piece of legislation, like so many omnibus bills, consisted of more than fifty individual sections, the Drug-Free America Act included the first iteration of the Drug-Free

³⁵ Daryl F. Gates, “No Truce in the Drug War,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 25, 1986, C5, *ProQuest* database.

³⁶ Gates, “No Truce in the Drug War,” C5, *ProQuest* database.

³⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Signing the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-signing-anti-drug-abuse-act-1986> (accessed March 26, 2023).

Schools and Communities Act of 1986 (DFSCA). The DFSCA “establish[ed] programs of drug abuse education and prevention (coordinated with related community efforts and resources) through the provision of Federal financial assistance” using grants to strengthen the relationship between the federal, state, and local branches of government.

The DFSCA allocated funding to “establish, operate, and improve local programs of drug abuse prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation referral, and education in elementary and secondary schools.”³⁸ Though DARE did not see a sharp increase in funding, the 1986 legislation praised overall drug prevention education programs. The Drug-Free America Act allocated \$1.7 billion to antidrug initiatives; however, only \$200 million was intended for education endeavors. The remainder went to “state and federal agencies to use in the arrest and prosecution of drug offenders,” construction of new federal prisons, and to increase interdiction efforts. Though the legislation was purported to help drug users, it instead disproportionately targeted sales and possession of crack in inner cities and tapering marijuana consumption in schools across the country. Further, the legislation militarized law enforcement entities, while it took the federal government further away from pursuing any system of federal drug treatment.³⁹

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a new branch in the Department of Justice, validated Project DARE’s ambitions for national expansion by providing the program with its first federal funding. Submitted to the BJA in September 1986, and approved by the City of Los Angeles in late November, the grant awarded \$140,000 for the DARE Training and Technical Assistance Program (DARE-TAP). The grant provided “assistance in developing local DARE programs, formal DARE training, and technical assistance to selected Bureau of Justice

³⁸ Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, Pub. L. No 99-570, 100 Stat. 3207-125.

³⁹ Emily Dufton, *Grass Roots: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Marijuana in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 191-193, 196; Claire D. Clark, *The Recovery Revolution: The Battle Over Addiction Treatment in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 159, 164-165.

Assistance grant recipients.” The seven jurisdictions entitled to duplicate the DARE program were the Arizona Department of Public Safety, Boston Public Schools, Huntsville Police Department in Alabama, the Illinois Department of State Police, Portland Police and School Departments in Maine, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Committee on Criminal Justice, and the Syracuse Police Department in New York. These seven government entities launched their own DARE programs in three phases. First, the grant designated on-site assistance to develop local iterations of DARE. Second, representatives from each jurisdiction were brought out to Los Angeles to receive official DARE training. Then the third phase was the facilitation of technical assistance for each grant recipient.⁴⁰ The collaboration presented an opportunity for “the City [of Los Angeles], and its leaders” to take “a vanguard role in demonstrating that local initiatives [could provide] effective means of reducing demand for illicit drugs and providing for the well-being of the nation’s youth.” The new grant also gave Project DARE the ability to “foster better working relationships between the City and other localities and organizations concerned with the effects of drug abuse.” The nationwide coalition granted Los Angeles comprehensive knowledge of drug trafficking organizations and provided information on “drug-related violence and corruption” from outside communities.⁴¹ The DARE-TAP program stood apart from earlier program efforts by combining local, state, and federal funding to efficiently and unilaterally spread Project DARE nationwide.

DARE’s national expansion continued when DARE-TAP received another year of funding from the BJA to create DARE Regional Officer Training Centers (RTCs). The \$140,000 from the BJA was split into a biannual grant with numerous criteria for the RTCs. Up through

⁴⁰ Keith Comrie, “Transmittal 0150-04406 (D),” Nov. 11, 1986, 11/24/1986, folder 86-1634, box C-1372, LACCF.

⁴¹ Rose Matsui Ochi, “Transmittal of: Grant Award for the City of Los Angeles Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Training and Technical Assistance Program,” Oct. 30, 1986, folder 86-1634, box C-1372, LACCF.

September 1987, 398 police departments in 33 states were represented in the DARE training pool in Los Angeles. Recognizing too much demand for the DARE-TAP program, the BJA was asked to support the RTC concept.⁴² The primary purpose of the RTCs, like DARE-TAP, was to replicate and transplant the DARE program outside of Los Angeles. The RTC initiative was estimated to reach upwards of 50,000,000 people once completed.⁴³ The project was all-encompassing and pulled the DARE program from a local municipal initiative to national dissemination organization. While seed money for the RTCs provided a mere building block for the expansive vision, the BJA, by way of the Drug-Free America Act, pushed DARE forward without sufficient knowledge of whether or not the program worked.

Where the City Council stood in the way of the growth and local expansion of DARE, the crack cocaine epidemic catapulted the program forward using private donations and fortification from the Los Angeles CPAC, alongside funding from the BJA. The maneuverability of DARE through government bureaucracies allowed the LAPD to never accept expansion stagnation and to ignore outside challenges. The program grew into a cultural phenomenon because the creation of the Los Angeles RTC led to the establishment of four more RTCs scattered across the nation.

Conclusion

DARE chased its intended 50,000,000-person audience as it expanded further. The CPAC evolved into D.A.R.E. California, and then in 1987 became D.A.R.E America, an independent

⁴² “An Introduction to the National DARE Parent Program: Program Brief” (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993), 2.

⁴³ Los Angeles Police Department, “Drug Abuse Resistance Education Regional Officer Training Center,” July 1, 1987, folder 87-1127, box c-1712, LACCF.

non-profit organization.⁴⁴ The stated purpose of D.A.R.E. America was to “wage war against drugs by” generating “awareness of the DARE program,” establishing a fundraising network to create school materials to be included in and given away during DARE implementation, encourage DARE training to spread using the RTCs, and to monitor “the program to maintain standards and integrity.”⁴⁵ In the years following 1987, DARE was featured in seven separate BJA publications which informed readers of the program’s ability to comprehensively combat drug abuse. Its success depended upon the two-way encouragement from first, Daryl Gates and the workforce initiative of the LAPD, and then, federal promotion and funding provided by the Department of Justice.

While replacing the majority role of parents in providing drug resistant techniques to students, DARE’s expansion thrived as a core program tenet. The local and national program autonomy, political influence, and funding garnered propelled the LAPD beyond negative public perception and immortalized DARE in the 1980s as a premier system of drug prevention education. Program efficacy, funding disputes, and expansion were melded into a polemic-based lobbying campaign which further displaced government attempts to venture back into developing drug treatment systems. Simultaneously, the drug prevention awareness campaigned for and fortified by the parents’ movement, transitioned into the nation’s recognition and approval for Nancy Reagan’s Just Say No and the LAPD and LAUSD’s Project DARE. Whereas Just Say No remained a relic of the 1980s, the DARE program, in some portions of the United States, has never stopped operations.

⁴⁴ D.A.R.E. America, “2008 DARE Annual Report,” <https://dare.procon.org/sourcefiles/2008DAREAnnualReport.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2023).

⁴⁵ “An Introduction to the National DARE Parent Program: Program Brief,” June 1993, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993), 2.

Conclusion

“America has a drug problem... Law enforcement experts now recognize that the problem of substance use must be addressed by stemming demand, especially among young people who might become tomorrow’s drug users.”¹ – Bureau of Justice Assistance (1988)

Prior to the federal promotion of peer-pressure based drug prevention education, drug treatment methodologies addressed addiction to alcohol, cocaine, and opiates. However, marijuana did not fit this rubric due to no proof of its users exhibiting physical addiction. Complicating the matter further, the use of marijuana amongst youth populations symbolized an uncontained fascination with altered states which required alternative responses. To the members of the parents’ movement, peer pressure and federal/state drug tolerance were easy targets. Before the 1980s, drug solutions were predicated on short-term response methods and less prone to identify and solve long-term causes of drug abuse and addiction. While this did not change under the influence of the parents’ movement, the targeted population and setting did.

The parents’ movement refocused federal drug strategists away from drug use in urban settings, where alcohol, cocaine, and opiate addictions appeared most often, and resituated government responses into suburban landscapes where marijuana consumption and underage drinking were targeted as gateway drugs. By focusing on suburban youth populations, demand for drug prevention education overshadowed government-sponsored treatment systems. The newfound vulnerability of young drug users overshadowed the consistent presence of drug addicted urban populations.

Rather than experimenting with treatment solutions for adult drug users, as President Nixon did in his first term, attenuating youth drug use became the paramount treatment response

¹ Bureau of Justice Assistance, *An Invitation to Project DARE: Drug Abuse Resistance Education*, Program Brief (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1988), v.

due to its purported long-term results. This shift further destabilized an already unstable system of government drug responses. While short-term drug treatment responses were not sufficiently studied nor improved upon, neither were the effects of drug prevention education. By shifting federal drug responses away from treatment methodologies, the primary concern of the parents' movement isolated and positioned the containment of marijuana. Early support for the parents' movement led the Reagan administration to systematically criticize the efficacy and overspending of previous federal drug strategies. In place of a new treatment strategy, the Reagan administration supported the ideology of the parents' movement and dismantled federal treatment strategies. The Reagan administration isolated cultural drug strategies to the containment of marijuana and youth drug use. To uphold this cultural shift, the Reagan administration supported government funded programs, like Project DARE, which mirrored the President's antidrug strategies.

In the 1980s, the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice each funded separate entities promoting systems of youth drug prevention.² Even after treatment funding was jumpstarted once again toward the end of President Reagan's tenure, funding was bifurcated into a 70-30 split. Whereas 70% of federal drug funding supported law enforcement entities in their attempts to disrupt networks of drug cultivation, dealing, and trafficking, the remaining 30% was split between addiction and drug research, alongside support for prevention and treatment programs. The political success of the 70-30 split kept these funding levels in use through the presidency of George H.W. Bush.³

² Hearing before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate, 100th Congress, June 16, 1988 *Drug Abuse – Prevention, Education, and Treatment*, June 16, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 198; Richard L. Fogel, *Drug Abuse Prevention: Further Efforts Needed to Identify Programs that Work*, GAO/HRD 88-26 (Washington, D.C.: Government Accounting Office, 1987), 2.

³ "Does the War on Drugs Need a New Strategy?" *CQ Researcher* (Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press, 1990, <https://cqpress.sagepub.com/cqresearcher/report/does-war-drugs-need-new-strategy-cqresre1990022300>).

The rhetorical nature of the federal drug strategy, led by the phrase, *Just Say No*, welcomed programs with catchy abbreviated names. While Project DARE grew to be one of the largest education programs of them all, a sample of other drug resistance programs were B.A.B.E.S., CAP, SMART, and STAR.⁴ Simplicity was key since each program was to be applied to youth populations. Project DARE built off the prevention rhetoric of the parents' movement but replaced parent voices in favor of police officer-instructors. Instead of establishing DARE as a community program, parents, faculty, and school administrators were invited to attend students' DARE graduation ceremonies at the culmination of the 17-week curriculum. The parents and community were rhetorically displaced and substituted for police officer-instructors. DARE stood apart from its program rivals for instituting police officers in schools as alternative instructors.

Where the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) established themselves as a drug enforcement entity throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) via drug busts in the 1970s and 1980s, DARE softened the role of police in schools. Rather than simply busting dealers pushing drugs, the DARE program solidified police presence in schools as a drug deterrence and prevention show of force. As examined in this thesis, the LAPD drug busts alone could not solve the drug problem in Los Angeles schools, and instead was grouped together with other controversial uses of policing power. The development and implementation of DARE, however, soothed public perception of the LAPD by employing drug prevention to a younger population than the high school students continually targeted for drug possession and sales. Historian Max Felker-Kantor also complicates the police-school relationship: "By using police

⁴ United States General Accounting Office, *Impact of School-Based Drug Education*, GAO/HRD 91-27 (Washington, D.C.: GAO, 1990), 19-22.

officers as teachers, in turn, DARE further blurred the distinction between reducing supply by arresting pushers and demand through prevention.”⁵

In the same way the parents’ movement refocused government attention away from adult drug users, the LAPD rehabilitated their broken image by instructing children in fifth and sixth grade, while continuing to utilize the inefficient school drug bust method. As late as 1993, Glenn Levant noted, “When one undercover LAPD officer asked a student where he could buy some drugs, the student responded with a technique learned in D.A.R.E. – changing the subject.”⁶ While Levant used this anecdote to suggest the effectiveness of DARE instruction, here it illuminates Felker-Kantor’s position of a dualistic intention from the LAPD. While DARE firmly planted the LAPD in the business of drug demand prevention, the police department continued to target drug suppliers as a disciplinarian drug enforcement entity.

As the parents’ movement lost their influence in the federal government in the mid-1980s, the Just Say No antidrug messaging diminished under the administration of George H.W. Bush. DARE, on the other hand, thrived between 1989 and 1995. In 1989, implementation and national dissemination costs of the DARE program increased to \$8 million. The intricate partnership between the LAPD and D.A.R.E. America outsourced program responsibility to the non-government and non-profit organization. The nationwide franchises of the Los Angeles program were accepted and studied in Illinois, Hawaii, Wyoming, Indiana, and Kentucky. Conversely, despite ongoing lobbying attempts from LAPD officials, the State of California remained reluctant to expand DARE into all the schools statewide.⁷

⁵ Max Felker-Kantor, “DARE to Say No: Police and the Cultural Politics of Prevention in the War on Drugs,” *Modern American History*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2022): 24.

⁶ Glenn Levant, “‘I D.A.R.E. You’... It Works!,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Oct 23, 1993, 13, *ProQuest* database.

⁷ Jeff Elliott, “Drug Prevention Placebo,” *Reason*, vol. 26 (10), March 1995, <https://reason.com/1995/03/01/drug-prevention-placebo/> (accessed March 13, 2023).

Regardless, in 1989, Glenn Levant stated, “[DARE] works as well in Los Angeles as in Virginia, as in Hawaii, as in South Carolina. No other program can say that. We’ve got it and we are giving it away to anyone who wants to implement it.”⁸ And despite the stagnated California expansion, in 1990 Daryl Gates clamored, “Come on, folks. We can, we will, we must win the war on drugs – not for [Ronald Reagan] but for ourselves, our kids and the future of our nation. If we don’t, we do not deserve to survive.”⁹ Despite near-annual increases in funding, expansion, and federal promotion, the curious state of affairs required an evergreen lobbying campaign for the DARE program. While lobbying techniques grew the program into a cultural phenomenon, there was never sufficient data proving the program worked. In fact, it was only after DARE’s national annual budget skyrocketed (to an argued range of less than \$200 million and \$700 million¹⁰) that an extensive meta-analysis evaluation was published. From this study, DARE showed “limited influence on adolescent drug use behavior” despite “the program’s popularity and prevalence.”¹¹ Further, as exposed by journalist Jeff Elliott, core elements of the original DARE curriculum demonstrated a “‘boomerang’ effect – it actually encouraged some children to fiddle with drugs.”¹²

The lack of substantive evaluations left lobbying campaigns as the foundational motivator for the creation, expansion, and nationwide promotion of the DARE program. By coupling the DARE program onto the drug prevention rhetoric initiated from the parents’ movement, and then the Reagan White House, the LAPD fabricated a unique methodology to

⁸ Quoted in William Overend, “DARE Survives Early Doubts: L.A. Drug Effort Takes on International Dimensions,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1989, A1, *ProQuest* database.

⁹ Daryl Gates, “Drugs a War We Must Win,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1990, B7, *ProQuest* database.

¹⁰ As reported by Jeff Elliott in 1995, “A DARE spokesman claims the program costs somewhat less than \$200 million annually, but other credible estimates range as high as \$700 million, once all costs are considered.” Jeff Elliott, “Drug Prevention Placebo,” *Reason*, vol. 26 (10), March 1995, <https://reason.com/1995/03/01/drug-prevention-placebo/> (accessed March 13, 2023).

¹¹ Susan T. Ennett, et. al, “How Effective Is Drug Abuse Resistance Education? A Meta-Analysis of Project DARE Outcome Evaluations,” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 84 (9), September 1994, 1399.

¹² Jeff Elliott, “Drug Prevention Placebo,” *Reason*, vol. 26 (10), March 1995, <https://reason.com/1995/03/01/drug-prevention-placebo/> (accessed March 13, 2023).

address both demand- and supply-sides of the drug war. The motivation behind the program, meanwhile, illuminates two advantages the program provided the LAPD. While Chief Daryl Gates wanted DARE to redevelop police presence in schools beyond mere mass student arrests, the program also decoupled the LAPD from an avalanche of public outcries against abuses of policing power.

DARE improved the public image of the LAPD following the Public Disorder Intelligence Division scandal, and shielded the influence and power of the LAPD in 1991, following the Christopher Commission and the fallout of a videotape depicting several LAPD officers beating a defenseless Rodney King during a traffic stop. Both the report and the videotape illuminated a culture of overly aggressive and racialized policing tactics with little to no accountability, nor any adequate recourse for officers' countless instances of unnecessary use of force. However, neither Daryl Gates nor Glenn Levant were explicitly linked to these abhorrent policing tactics. Their leadership, on the other hand, remained a focal point latched onto by media and community members as they called for LAPD leadership change.¹³

Glenn Levant left the LAPD in 1992 to become the executive director at D.A.R.E. America. Throughout the 1990s, DARE remained Levant's pride and joy as a program with constant need to justify funding and retain its expansion. A tedious task which he accepted proudly, going so far to publish, *Keeping Kids Drug-Free: D.A.R.E. Official Parent's Guide*. While DARE's monopoly on federal funds for drug prevention dissolved in the late-1990s, Levant's book buoyed the DARE program and D.A.R.E. America as invaluable drug war tools. Today, in 2024, the same lobbying and promotional campaign which expanded and transformed

¹³ Joe Domanick, *To Protect and To Serve: LAPD's Century of War in the City of Dreams* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 401.

DARE in the 1980s, is now tasked with disseminating and substantiating D.A.R.E. America's new program, D.A.R.E: keepin' it REAL [sic].¹⁴

The DARE program still exists both in practice and as an antidrug program memorial throughout the United States. A black and red "This is a D.A.R.E. Community" sign continues to greet people on their way into certain towns. At certain schools, the same small sign is still fastened onto brick, representing a collective memory of the 1980s and 1990s. The LAPD, Daryl Gates, and Glenn Levant remain supporters of a program never wholly accountable to an American public; a program since considered under a recent adage: too big to fail. Overall, DARE and similar drug prevention campaigns were distractions from the actual causes of drug abuse and addiction. Because DARE provided police officers a new scope of responsibilities, the program promoted as unique and effective. Its promotion preceded substantive evaluations and outpaced scientific research regarding the nature of youth drug abuse. Whereas an alternative view identified addiction as "an attempt to control and fulfill [a] desire for happiness,"¹⁵ DARE officials instead, repeatedly equated drug abuse to wasted human potential.

DARE and other systems of drug prevention education were demonstrated as cheaper alternatives to a federally funded treatment system. The inefficacy of drug prevention education was never widely acknowledged and became a part of America's failed war on drugs. DARE's drug prevention curriculum did not win the War on Drugs as Daryl Gates hoped it would. As for the demand reduction attributes of DARE, they failed to deter future youth populations away from illicit consumption of drugs. Whereas other studies illuminate a new pathway for hope and change, this study demonstrates how the US federal government and public, without stabilized

¹⁴ D.A.R.E. America, "D.A.R.E. Keepin' It REAL Elementary School Curriculum Is Evidence-based, Successful and Effective," <https://dare.org/d-a-r-e-keepin-it-real-evidence-based-successful-and-effective/> (accessed November 3, 2023); Leslie Berger, "Deputy Police Chief Levant Will Retire," *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1992, B3, *ProQuest* database.

¹⁵ Craig Nakken, *The Addictive Personality: Understanding the Addictive Process and Compulsive Behavior* (Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden, 1996), 2nd ed., 1.

drug strategies, were molded into supporting peer-pressure based youth drug prevention. Future comprehensive federal curtailment of drug abuse will require systemic redevelopment of humanitarian approaches and a normalization of drug-using cultures. These suggestions, however, require too big of societal paradigmatic shifts and thus, are ignored in federal attempts to develop cheap and effective solutions.

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