



ECCC PTA Consequences of Crime Program

The Cobb County Sheriff's Office is excited to partner with the ECCC PTA in the presentation of "Consequences of Crime". This educational program was developed by past ECCC PTA President Margie Hatfield in 1980 and targets students currently enrolled in 5th through 12th grade. The Sheriff's Office recognizes the inherent differences of students in this wide grade span and presents an age/grade appropriate program. While the educational focus has remained a constant over the 30+ year history, the content and style of the program is often evaluated to maintain relevancy while at the same time capturing the attention of students.

"Consequences of Crime" is loosely divided into 3 phases during the program's 2 hour duration. The first phase consists of a brief overall view of not only the Cobb County Jail but the criminal justice system as a whole. Sheriff's Office representatives explain and discuss the steps an arrested individual faces beginning with the initial jail book-in, the movement of a case through the court system, and the subsequent outcome be it probation or imprisonment. The technical meaning of terms such as bond, pre trial, probation and conviction is defined. The second phase provides an eye opening view of daily jail life. Although students no longer tour the current jail housing area, this phase is conducted in a facility dating to the 1940's and housed inmates as recently as 2 years ago. This housing area has not been modified and is still fully functional in this capacity. Much of this phase is presented in a boot camp style format which serves to shock students and hold their attention. The third phase facilitates a dialogue between students and carefully selected male and female inmate workers. Sheriff's Office representatives are always present during this time. This unscripted question and answer session encourages student participation and allows each inmate to relate their personal story and detail factors which led to their incarceration. The interaction with inmates reinforces the educational message Sheriff's Office representatives present in "Consequences of Crime".

The underlying message to students throughout the program is to focus on making good choices and decisions and how a single bad choice or series of bad choices can potentially affect the rest of one's life. Research indicates drugs and/or alcohol is the leading factor in the incarceration of 2 out of 3 individuals. Further, nearly half of all individuals incarcerated do not have a high school diploma. These national statistics are generally consistent with the Cobb County Jail population as well. Therefore, Sheriff's Office representatives reiterate the importance of staying in school, choosing friends wisely and maintaining a life free from the influence of alcohol or drugs throughout the 2 hour program.