



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Detroit Field Division

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ATF AND THE DETROIT TIGERS TEAM UP FOR KIDS' SAKE *Tigers Honor and Host 1,800 Michigan G.R.E.A.T. Students*

DETROIT – Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced today that this afternoon's baseball game between the Detroit Tigers and the LA Angels of Anaheim will mark a 13-year partnership between ATF and the Tigers in combating violence and gangs.

“The Tigers dedicate a game each year to the Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program on behalf of all Michigan kids who are students or recent graduates of the outreach program. Attending today's game is one of the many rewards the kids will experience for their commitment and pledge to live a life free of the negative influences of street gangs,” said Goddard. “ATF and the Detroit Tigers also salute our law enforcement partners, the Detroit and Brownstown Police Departments, for their longstanding commitment in educating and supporting our youth and for their unwavering support to stop gang violence,” she added.

Goddard and others attending today's game in support of the G.R.E.A.T. Program include ATF Assistant Director William J. Hoover, Office of Field Operations; U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy (Eastern Judicial District of Michigan); Brownstown Interim Police Chief Jim Sclater; Detroit Police Chief Ella Bully-Cummings; and G.R.E.A.T. Regional Administrator Raj Ramnarace.

More than 1,800 kids from the communities of Brownstown Township, Detroit and Gibraltar are guests of the Tigers. They are wearing their G.R.E.A.T. “colors” in honor of their effort to avoid gangs and youth violence. Chaperoning the kids today are G.R.E.A.T. officers, school administrators, teachers and parent volunteers.

With the support and guidance of specially trained law enforcement officers, the students develop beliefs and practice behaviors that will help them avoid destructive behaviors. They learn to set goals, resist pressures, respect differences, resolve conflicts, and understand how gangs impact the quality of their life. They also learn the importance of becoming responsible members of their communities. The 13-week G.R.E.A.T. curriculum is available to students at the middle school level.

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The goals of G.R.E.A.T. include:

- Reduce the incidence of violent youth crime
- Resolve conflicts without resorting to violence
- Provide youth with skills to make sound choices
- Provide activities for G.R.E.A.T. graduates during summer months
- Involve teachers, parents, and communities.
- Teach youth to recognize indicators of gang involvement in their communities.

ATF developed and implemented the G.R.E.A.T. Program with the Phoenix, Ariz., Police Department in 1991 to deter youth violence and crime by reducing involvement in gangs. ATF currently has numerous partnerships with local and state agencies, as well as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the Police Athletic League.

Since the program's inception, **more than 75,076 Michigan children** have received instruction from city, county, state and federal law enforcement officers throughout the state. Nationwide, **more than 4.5 million children** have been through the program. **To date, approximately 8,000 officers from 2,100 agencies** representing 50 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda and military personnel from overseas bases have been trained to present the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum in elementary and middle school classrooms.

More information on ATF can be found at www.atf.gov.

ATF recognizes that enforcement efforts need to be combined with prevention in order to successfully combat the problems of gangs in our communities. ATF has supported the G.R.E.A.T. Program since 1992. For additional information on the Program visit the G.R.E.A.T. Home Page at: <http://www.great-online.org/>

For information on gangs, 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment, go to http://www.atf.gov/pub/gang_related/2005_threat_assesment.pdf.

Note to editors: Media interested in footage/photos/interviews with the kids in the stands or an interview with any of the agency representatives regarding the Tiger G.R.E.A.T. game and the G.R.E.A.T. Program should contact ATF PIO Vera Fedorak, (313) 647-1885 (cellular phone).

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