



**UA Receives Its Largest-Ever Grant to Develop  
Substance Abuse Prevention Program D.A.R.E.**

*Nick Nussen*

In 2001, The University of Akron's Institute for Health and Social Policy received an initial grant of \$13.7 million—the largest in the University's history—from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health. The grant supported the IHSP's creation and evaluation of an evidence-based substance abuse prevention curriculum, called "Take Charge of Your Life," what was delivered by D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) to nearly twenty thousand middle- and high-school students in six cities nationwide. In total, the IHSP received more than sixteen million dollars in grants from the RWJF over

the course of the project.

University researchers found that, over five years, there was a significant decrease in marijuana use among adolescents who participated in the program. While D.A.R.E. decided to discontinue the program after its trial period—because it did not result in similar decreases in cigarette and alcohol use—the study represents a major milestone in substance abuse prevention research, according to Dr. Zili Sloboda, IHSP senior research associate at the time and principal investigator for the study.