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Back row (from left): Judge Burt Poston, Whitfield County Superior Court; Lt. Tammy Silvers, Sheriff Scott Chitwood, Dep. Ron Kirby, Dep. Nathan Center, Dep. Vincent Schaub, Whitfield County Sheriff's Office. Front row (from left): Dr. Mike Ewton, Superintendent; Maribel Ortiz, 2nd place winner; Curry Pierce, 1st place winner; Lucas Harrell, 3rd place winner; Karey Williams, Deputy Superintendent, Whitfield County Schools.

Westside Elementary Student Wins First Place in DARE Contest, Honored at Kiwanis Club Luncheon

Whitfield County, Ga – The Whitfield County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer Division, is proud to announce that Curry Pierce, from Westside Elementary, has secured overall first place in the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) contest. Curry's exceptional essay impressed the judges, earning the top spot among other 1st place winners from the other county elementary schools.

For the past 18 years, the DARE contest aims to promote awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and empower students to make informed decisions for a drug-free future. Students are encouraged to express their thoughts and insights through essays that address these critical issues. “DARE is taught in 5th grade so students learn to resist and say no when, and if, the opportunity presents itself,” said Pierce. “I can and want to see my future brighter because of what Deputy [Ron] Kirby shared with all of us how and why to say no!”

The Kiwanis Club, known for its dedication to supporting youth initiatives, organized the luncheon to honor Curry and other top-ranking participants. Kiwanis Club hopes students will take a stand against substance abuse, make healthy choices and become inspired to be positive role models within their communities. “The DARE program lets us know that they [the students] are listening,” said Lt. Tammy Silvers. “And they do want to learn, and hopefully, make those good choices for their futures.”

Pierce's success in the DARE contest not only reflects her talent and dedication, but also highlights the commitment of all Whitfield County elementary schools to provide a nurturing environment that fosters academic excellence and personal growth.

Honorable mention for all the first-place winners:

- Arekxis Jimenez – Antioch Elementary
- Daniela Tobias – Cedar Ridge Elementary
- Emeri Cittenend – Beaverdale Elementary
- Curry Pierce – Westside Elementary (1st place overall winner)
- Charlotte Cook – Cohutta Elementary
- Sophia Castillo – Dawnville Elementary
- Bo Chakales – New Hope Elementary
- Lucas Harrell – Pleasant Grove Elementary (3rd place overall winner)
- Gissel Meza-Hernandez – Valley Point Elementary
- Bella Beaudoin – Dug Gap Elementary
- Ella-Grace May – Tunnel Hill Elementary
- Maribel Ortiz – Eastside Elementary (2nd place overall winner)
- Blakley Nix – Varnell Elementary

For more information on the Whitfield County Sheriff's Office DARE program, please visit:

<https://wcco.com/d-a-r-e/>