

**D.A.R.E. Graduation
June 5, 2010**

Good morning everyone. It's always a pleasure to be part of this very important event. I want to thank the Board of Education and the school administration for inviting the Township Committee today.

I particularly want to commend DARE Officer, Detective Mike Mitchell for his continued dedication to the Barnegat children as their mentor of this crucial program. And of course, I want to congratulate all of the students here today for their successful completion of the DARE program.

Since the inception of the DARE program in 1983, officers like Mike Mitchell have been educating our children and providing them with the skills to resist the temptation and peer pressure of drugs, gangs and violence. In the past three years, well over 200 schools have started a new DARE program, which now represents a 75% participation in our nation's schools. DARE education is probably just as important as any regular course we teach our children, maybe more.

It is critical that we as parents, educators and community leaders do all that we can to guide our children on the right path so that they may achieve their life's goals. And that is why we are here today. That is why we continue to offer DARE to every one of our students.

So as your names are announced, I want all of you kids to remember that today's graduation is just as important as when you move on to graduate to Junior High and graduate from Barnegat High School.

As your Mayor and on behalf of the entire Barnegat Township Committee, congratulations and enjoy your summer!

**Jeffrey M. Melchiondo
Mayor, Barnegat Township.**