

Basketball tournament benefits D.A.R.E. camp

By HARVEY BURGESS

Special to The Herald

CHARLOTTE — This weekend's Diet Pepsi Tournament of Champions means a little more than college hoops competition for one local police officer.

For Mecklenburg County Police Cmdr. Glen Mowrey, it means his department's Drug Abuse Resistance Education program will give even more area kids the opportunity to build self-esteem.

Tournament sponsors Rick and Dee Ray of Raycom, the nation's top independent sports programmer, have donated \$10,000 and a portion of the weekend's proceeds to pay tuition for as many as 150 kids to Mowrey's D.A.R.E. Camp of Champions.

"The donation makes it possible for us to establish what is believed to be the only such D.A.R.E. camp in the country," Mowrey says. "Without their support, we would not have the camp."

Mowrey, who chairs the camp board of directors, said the program will be launched next summer at the Sertoma 4-H camp in Winston-Salem, where 75 boys and 75 girls will "swim, go canoeing, play games and learn to say 'no' to drugs."

Two hours a day during the week at camp, officers will "reinforce the D.A.R.E. principles," according to Mowrey.

"They need strong adults to serve as role models," he says.

A Mint Hill native, Mowrey's involvement in D.A.R.E. is only a part of the veteran officer's civic involvement.

"I enjoy working with youngsters and community groups," he says. "It's a great feeling to help kids and watch them become good, solid citizens."

Mowrey helped launch a goods

and gift donation drive for area needy families. The campaign that started in his living room now operates out of a warehouse to help hundreds of residents.

One of Mowrey's personal success stories can be found no farther away than his own police department.

Officer Ken Jones, a county investigator, came to the department after being in Mowrey's Explorers program at the agency.

"Explorers gave me a better understanding of law enforcement," Jones says. "Commander Mowrey is the most selfless person I know."