SHARING IDEAS & RESOURCES

to Keep Our Nation's Schools Safe!

VOLUME III

NLECTC
National Law Enforcement and
Corrections Technology Center

INTRODUCTION

From the blue-jacketed volunteers helping to de-escalate tension in Pennsylvania to the teens taking a stand against bullying in Tennessee – and throughout the rest of the United States – schools, law enforcement agencies and communities continue to come together to create innovative and groundbreaking solutions to the persistent problems of violence, bullying, security breaches, gang tensions and social media abuse.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System bring you more of these solutions in this third volume of *Sharing Ideas and Resources to Keep Our Nation's Schools Safe*. We want you to know about the people who are searching for, and finding, positive ways to address these problems. We want to tell you about the technologies and strategies that are working across the country, and we want to hear from you about what's going on in your area. In addition to the success stories that fill the two previous volumes in this series, we continually post new ones on SchoolSafetyInfo.org, the NLECTC website dedicated to school safety news, information and technology. In addition to downloadable files of Volumes I and II, our site includes links to a wide range of resources at the federal, state and association levels, and access to school safety-related publications and videos from NIJ and the NLECTC System.

In this third volume, beside the stories mentioned above that open and close the volume, you will read about school safety-related programs from national agencies such as the National White Collar Crime Center, the National Crime Prevention Council and the National Center for Campus Public Safety; efforts at the state level from Illinois, Alabama and Michigan; and community efforts ranging from smartphone apps to cops in the classroom, from gunshot detection systems to job-specific school safety training.

While we neither finance nor endorse specific products, we introduce you to people who have successfully used new tools to address growing problems. And, we encourage you to investigate and decide what is right for you and what has a place in your school setting.

First responders, school staff, students, parents and community leaders continue to work cooperatively to combat the myriad safety issues that affect our nation's schools and provide safe and healthy environments in which to learn. As your schools and your communities work together with local public safety professionals to do the same, we hope that you will continue to use NIJ, NLECTC and SchoolSafetyInfo.org as resources.

Sincerely,

Lance Miller
Director, National Law Enforcement and
    Corrections Technology Center
lmiller@justnet.org

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

ERIE'S BLUE COATS PROMOTE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, HELP REDUCE VIOLENCE

By Becky Lewis
March 2015

In colonial America, knowing that the Red Coats would show up pretty much guaranteed that a fight would take place.

Some 240 or so years later, knowing that the Blue Coats will show up at a school in Erie, Pa., ensures the opposite.

A volunteer organization started 10 years ago by Daryl Craig, a former gang member in Buffalo, N.Y. , and now-Erie County Councilman Andre Horton, the Non-Violence Initiative members (now known as the Blue Coats) turn up outside

city schools around the time of the morning bell, during lunch hour, in school hallways, during dismissal, at sporting events and at other activities open to the public. Taking a mentoring approach to stopping conflicts before they start, the Blue Coats' 20 to 30 volunteers use their training and sense of compassion to foster a connection between administrators, students and the community. Since the Blue Coats began their outreach efforts in 2005, violence around the nine school buildings where they maintain a presence has sharply declined, including a 57.9 percent drop in incidents at East High School and a 65.9 percent decline at Strong Vincent High School. These positive results led to Erie's Public Schools recent receipt of a $300,000 grant from the Erie Community Foundation, which will ensure that the school district can continue its commitment to fund the Blue Coats to remain on the streets, in the hallways and in the stands.

Craig, better known as "Brother D," started a grassroots campaign to visit streets known for gang activity and spread a message of non-violence as his way of paying back to the community, first in Buffalo, then in Erie following a job transfer. Several other volunteers had joined this proactive community-based effort before a murder in the general area and a non-fatal shooting during an East High basketball game brought their efforts to the attention of Erie Public Schools administrators in January 2009.

"We never had a shooting incident in a school before, but during a basketball game, there was a shooting in the stands. A young lady was hit and there was a lot of panic, but fortunately everybody ended up okay," says Superintendent Jay Badams. "I remember the next day standing shoulder to shoulder with Brother D, greeting kids and working to bring calm. It was quite an introduction."

Following that introduction, Erie's Public Schools and the Non-Violence Initiative began formalizing the partnership that has grown to include a strong rapport with the Erie School District Police under Chief Timothy Vona, and led to the significant reduction in violence.

"I saw firsthand the need and that it could work. We devised a schedule and picked out some locations that needed extra help and extra attention. We gathered our troops and trained them on the responsibilities and commitment they should have to the community, and we went out with the hope we could make a difference. There were a lot of fights in that first couple of months, but now we're happy to say that most times, in our presence, there may be one fight a year on school grounds," Craig says.

"When he says fight, we're talking big events. There are a couple of main actors leading the fighting, but there are also ancillary groups, spectators egging kids on…it can take over the entire front yard of a high school and there are always threats that there could be a knife or a gun," says Badams. "Whenever there's a flashpoint incident, there are always people who want to have a vigil and

march, but when it comes to putting in time day to day, they don't want to be involved."

Craig describes the situation early on as pandemonium, but says that through persistence and collaboration, violence has steadily declined: "Erie's Public Schools administrators admitted they needed help in certain areas from a community perspective and they were willing to learn cultural things they might not have otherwise known. I think overall, our schools have been allowed to be viewed as separate from the community, but that's untrue. They are staffed by community members and are part of the community. It's all about getting the community to invest in the schools and it's working."

"Today, the Blue Coats serve as respected and recognizable members of both our schools and neighborhoods. The Blue Coats are uniquely positioned because they are deeply familiar with the families, friends, churches and community centers that are at the heart of many of our students' lives and, in this unique role, they are able to build trust with students and families and encourage them to transfer that trust and respect to their school community,' Badams says.

The Blue Coats help Erie schools in four primary areas: They support non-violent and conflict resolution strategies among students and staff, build and strengthen relationships between students and staff, provide training to educators on cultural competencies and serve as familiar, positive adult role models for inner-city youth in order to reinforce positive behavior.

Although Badams cautions that the school district takes great care to make it clear that the Blue Coats are not affiliated with law enforcement, Chief Vona makes it equally clear that his 14-member department values the relationship with the volunteer organization.

"We have great rapport with the Blue Coats. If there's an incident after school hours, Brother D gets on the phone right away to let us know there could spill-over the next school day and we may need to be proactive, whether it's through mediating or by having additional manpower at that location. We have each other on speed dial," Vona says. "The members are very respected in the community. They can de-escalate incidents by working with families and alleviating issues from moving into the schools."

Vona especially values the Blue Coats' efforts to get a feel for what is going on at sporting events – some of which are played outside his jurisdiction at local universities – and says that with their help, he's noticed a definite reduction in serious incidents since he became chief in 2007: "We're stopping incidents before they happen. They're basically another set of eyes and ears that the community and the school district has out there to help."

More than just that desire to help is required of volunteers who want to become Blue Coats. Curtis Jones, another leader in the Non-Violence Initiative, explains that in addition to requiring that volunteers have at least a high school diploma and pass a stringent vetting process, they also must complete school district classes and workshops required for third-party organizations, as well as Non-Violence Initiative-specific trainings based on Martin Luther King's six principles of non-violence and training on interacting with multiple generations. Students who volunteer to be Junior Blue Coats, receiving extra mentoring and working with the adults to build community from within, also must meet strict qualifications related to grades, attendance and behavior.

"Our training is rooted in the 1950s and 1960s, but has evolved for the 21st century and continues to grow and evolve based on the needs of schools. Because our organization is growing, it can adapt to changing needs," Jones says.

Without completing all of the required training, volunteers can't receive the ID badge and clearance that identify them as a formal agent of the school district who will enforce its policies and procedures. And they also need the training to receive the jacket that gave the organization its name, which Craig explains: "When we started at Wayne Elementary School, we ordered jackets that matched the colors of the signs we had been taking out on the street, blue coats with white lettering that said Non-Violence Initiative on the back. During the holidays, we got handmade cards from the kids thanking us, addressed to 'Dear Mr. Blue Coat.' That was our first indication this was going to work."

For more information on Erie Public Schools and its partnership with the Blue Coats Initiative, contact Matthew Cummings, director of communications, at mcummings@eriesd.org or Chief Timothy Vona at tvona@eriesd.org.

CHAPTER 2

VOLUNTEERS WATCH LANSING STREETS TO PROMOTE SAFETY

By Becky Lewis
October 2014

The final bell still echoes in the hall when the first students spill out of the school, shouting, laughing and walking down the neighborhood streets. Some head home. Some head toward jobs. Others head toward trouble.

With the eyes and the ears of Lansing School Watch volunteers on them, the ones that initially head toward trouble may seek a different destination.

Launched in June 2014 as a pilot project, Lansing School Watch expanded in late August 2014 to encompass the neighborhoods near the city's three high schools (Lansing Eastern, Lansing Everett, J.W. Sexton) and plans call for expansion to the streets near the city's middle schools in the near future and eventually, to elementary school neighborhoods.

Volunteers wearing easily identifiable hats and safety vests walk, bike or cruise the streets near the schools for an hour before and an hour after classes, serving as non-confrontational eyes and ears for the local police and as a visible presence to remind students that responsible, committed adults are watching out for them. Volunteers are encouraged to engage in positive contacts with the students and residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

"This not only makes sure that the students have a safe environment, it's also an opportunity for neighbors and citizens to get involved. It also provides extra protection for them. Sometimes kids would meet up not far from the school and get into a fight, or a loud boisterous wave of kids walking through a neighborhood would cause disruption. Sometimes they would bully other students, or take over a street and not let them walk through," says Lansing Police Chief Mike Yankowski. "While it was still in the planning stages, we had five students injured in a shooting incident about a block and a half from one of our high schools. It was an instance where students met up and started a fight, only this time gunfire erupted in the neighborhood. That really resonated that this was the right thing to do."

The costs involved in launching the program were minimal: vests, hats, car rental and decals, cell phones, promotional brochures. Yankowski explains that rented cars are available for volunteers' use, particularly in inclement weather, but they are encouraged to walk or bike in nicer weather to be a more visible presence. In all, startup costs came to approximately $25,000, with Sparrow Health System, a local community hospital, donating $10,000. Lansing School District and the city of Lansing also partnered in the police department efforts, which included training for the volunteers and assemblies in the high schools to introduce the program.

"We're pitching this to the community as a civic duty, and we tried to educate the students about being good and respectful neighbors," he says. "We also went out to the local community college and universities and encouraged them to take it on as a project, and we have a number of volunteers who are students. Most of the rest are adults over the age of 50, many of them retired."

"The safety of our students, not only while in school, but on their way to and from school, is a top priority for the city of Lansing. The primary mission of this initiative is to provide an additional layer of security empowering not only the neighborhoods that the students travel through, but also empowering the students themselves," says Yankowski. "The volunteers have enjoyed what they're doing to this point, and we haven't had any issues where they've had to step in. They're a visible presence in the neighborhood, and the kids feel somebody is out there looking out for them."

Learn more about the program by visiting https://www.lansingmi.gov/media/view/School_Watch_Fly/7117, *or contact Chief Yankowski at (517) 483-4800,* michael.yankowski@lansingmi.gov

CHAPTER 3

STARS ADDRESSES THE CONCERNS OF TODAY

By Becky Lewis
March 2015

For millennia, there have been stars in the sky.

For more than a hundred years, there have been stars in Hollywood.

And for several months, there have been "STARS" in Sudbury, Mass.

The result of a partnership between the Sudbury Police Department and Sudbury Public Schools, Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly in Sudbury (STARS) teaches fifth-graders to tackle decision making and addresses issues such as cyberbullying, digital safety,

navigating the Web and using smart phones. School Resource Officer Alan Hutchinson and Wellness Curriculum Specialist Elizabeth Gams worked together to create the details of the STARS curriculum, which replaces the DARE program in the fifth-grade learning plan.

Sudbury Chief Scott Nix says he made helping the community's youth a personal priority when he became chief of the 28-officer force in 2013, and when the department's long-time DARE officer retired at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, it seemed like a good opportunity to transition "to a program that is more indicative of the concerns of today."

"STARS encompasses the aspects of positive decision-making contained within the DARE curriculum while adding, enhancing and updating the lessons for today's issues. The department and the school worked together to create an up-to-date curriculum tailored to our community's needs," Nix says. "At the same time, we had an opportunity to assign a school resource officer to circulate among the four elementary schools and the middle school for the first time, further strengthening a positive relationship between the schools and our department."

Hutchinson, better known to the students as "Officer Al," started his duties in the schools in September 2014, and began assisting with teaching the STARS curriculum in January 2015.

"The partnership between the police department and the schools is an extremely important reflection of what we value. We have enhanced safety as a whole in the broadest of terms," says Sudbury Superintendent Dr. Anne Wilson of the program, which wrapped up its first session in March.

"I had a general vision of where we wanted to go, but I didn't want to adversely impact the ever-increasing mandates on our teachers. There is a lot of curriculum that can be more powerful when taught by police officers," Nix says.

In contrast to DARE, STARS focuses more on cybersafety, including smartphone use, sexting and the dangers that can be encountered on the Internet. The program also uses real-life examples for emphasis.

"There is so much more now that students have to deal with compared to when DARE was conceived. STARS adds more about media messages and advertising, especially social media. It includes more up-to-date refusal skills and information on bullying prevention," says Wilson. "While DARE had self-advocacy and did some good instruction around drugs and alcohol and smoking, there's just more now that we need to be explicit about, not only messages in the media but things that students communicate to each other. We also wanted to create a connection that follows the students through their school years."

That's exactly the kind of ongoing connection that Hutchinson is working to build by coming to games, attending concerts and in general circulating around the school buildings during class time.

"He's connected to each staff member and to each school. He's really become part of each of our school communities and he has been able to forge relationships so that students realize they have another adult they can go to and they see the broader community supports them," Wilson says. "It was the absolute right thing to do and we're thrilled to have him."

And Nix also has received nothing but positive feedback about the program from the community of 18,000 residents: "The feedback has been tremendous. I live in the community, and when I met with the PTO last week, everything I heard was positive. If we can use the STARS class to develop positive relationships that reinforce sound decision-making, that will be incredible."

For more information on STARS, contact Chief Scott Nix at (978) 443-1042, email NixS@sudbury.ma.us. *or Dr. Anne Wilson at (978) 639-3211, email* anne_wilson@sudbury.k12.ma.us

ILLINOIS SCHOOL TAKES TEAM APPROACH TO SCHOOL SAFETY

By Becky Lewis
January 2015

Again. She reads through the essay a second time, growing more uneasy with the re-reading. For the third time this marking period, the same themes show in the same student's work, themes of despair and anger.

Should she approach him herself? No, better bring it to the attention of the Learning Support Team. Counselors, social workers, the school's resource officer…they can focus a variety of skills on helping the student come to terms with his problems and get back him back to enjoying his final year of high school.

According to the Libertyville High School website, the school's three Learning Support Teams (LSTs) support the academic, social-emotional and physical well-being of students. Instead of a more traditional approach where a single dean carries the responsibility for all students, the Illinois high school divides its 2,000 students among three LSTs. Each team includes two counselors who deal with academic planning and scheduling, a social worker who becomes involved with individual students as needed and a team leader. The SRO, the school nurse and the student assistance program (SAP) coordinator, who deals with sub-stance abuse and code of conduct issues, all attend every scheduled meeting of all three teams and also help with interventions as needed.

"School safety breaks down into two elements. One is the physical brick-and-mortar things we do, but the more important element consists of developing social-emotional and interpersonal relationships. The LST approach helps us get information about students and determine whether this is someone we need to have on our radar. Has he isolated himself? Is she being bullied? Is he exhibiting violent character-istics and making threats?" says Det. Bob Uliks of the Libertyville Police Department, who is the Libertyville High SRO.

Each team has a scheduled weekly meeting, but additionally meets on an as-needed basis to address specific concerns: "A teacher might identify some-thing she found in a student's paper that is alarming enough to bring to a team's attention. At that point, we sit down and decide how to move forward. Obvious-ly most students are well intentioned and take advantage of their educational experience. However, there also students who are not able to thrive for various reasons. These are the students we would like to have on our radar to address what they are lacking. At that point we would look at what the team has done before and whether it is working."

Uliks says the LST may decide to interview the student and assign counseling or social work assistance, or it may determine that a law enforcement response is needed, perhaps because of disturbing social media posts.

"One example that comes to mind is a picture that a student had posted of himself with a gun and comments about how he was feeling that day. We took a copy of the photo and went to his house and spoke to his parents. We estab-lished he had no access to a weapon and there was no clear and present danger. It turned out he had taken the orange tab off an airsoft gun, but even I honestly thought it was a real gun," Uliks says. "Once we addressed that aspect, we

rolled it back to the LST and assigned the student to do a decision-making class with the social worker, learning about actions and consequences. That's an example where everyone became involved, and the team approach really worked."

Uliks says the LST concept predates his 11 years at the school, but he has seen the extent of SRO involvement in the process continue to increase over time. Prior to implementing the LSTs, Libertyville, which is a northern suburb of Chicago, used the more traditional single dean approach. Switching to LSTs allowed the team members to really get to know and understand the students in their group.

"The LST concept helps the student from a more holistic standpoint. Thinking back to when I was in school, if you got in trouble, you went in and received your punishment. This approach addresses the behavior. Is it something more than just being a normal teenager? Is there something going on at home? Is there a substance abuse issue? A learning issue?" Uliks says. "It ties school behaviors to what is going on in the community and at home, and we can usually figure out why the kid is not succeeding. It just comes full circle to address everything and determine what the student might need to get back on track."

For more information on Libertyville's LST approach and how it relates to school safety, contact Det. Bob Uliks at (847) 327-7011 or email robert.uliks@d128.org.

CHAPTER 5

ALABAMA SCHOOLS LEAVE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

By Becky Lewis
October 2014

When was that fire extinguisher serviced? Virtual Alabama School Safety System (VAS3) knows.

Where's the gas shutoff valve for this floor? VAS3 knows.

What evacuation route do students use in the event of natural disaster? VAS3 knows.

There's very little that VAS3 doesn't know about the facilities and the school safety plans of Alabama's 1,536 individual schools.

Using back-end GIS technology with a front-end Google Maps interface, VAS3 provides a "digital footprint" of every physical detail of a school, including detailed information, photographs, first responder information and real-time camera feeds, all of which can be updated and shared in real-time.

"Rather than a tragedy like Sandy Hook or Columbine, this effort simply started with a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to map one school in each district across the state as a model," says Phillip Henderson, director of the Alabama GIS Program Office and the state's Geographic Information Officer. "Alabama is the first state in the nation to have an established tool (VAS3) that allows the appropriate personnel to view school safety plans and floor plans in a digital format online. As we put it together, we learned how to make it simple and how to make it easy to use. The State Department of Education saw its value, and from the grant effort came an initiative to take all of the paper school safety plans gathering dust in filing cabinets and digitize them. It next became a tool that could be used by first responders and government entities for planning — and if an event happens."

The Alabama Department of Homeland Security provided the initial funding for the statewide project and ongoing funding now comes from the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. According to Sarah Jones, Virtual Alabama Program Manager, VAS3 includes information on 51 items of interest within a school, and more layers continue to be added as schools request them. For example, the state mandate to map K-12 public schools does not require a photo of every room, but school administrators have come to realize they can use such photos as inventories. As far as the mapping requirement goes, schools can enter all of their own information at no cost, or at a very minimal cost a Virtual Alabama team will come to the school for several days to do a thorough mapping and hold a meeting with school administrators and local first responders.

"Sometimes it's the first time public safety and the school administration have met," says Henderson. "At one school, the headmaster said their plan was for all students to evacuate to the flagpole in front of the school, because it's a landmark that everyone knows, and the fire chief pointed out that the only fire hydrant is next to the flagpole. Getting people to the table together helps them make good decisions. The administrators know their children and are concerned about safety, but they're not trained as first responders. When you put them together, it benefits everyone."

Corporal Pamela Revels, supervising school resource officer for the Lee County Sheriff's Office, agrees about all of those benefits, saying that VAS3 has made school safety plans much more comprehensive.

"It's outside the box, it's current and it's relevant. VAS3 has replaced the six-inch binder paper copy safety plan that just sits on a shelf with a fluid, living accessible plan that can provide first responders with the information needed to give the best possible help in the shortest amount of time," Revels says. "Visuals make the whole plan come alive. Before, the paper plan might have said 'evacuate to the front of the building,' and now you can attach a picture of the exact spot. It helps all of us be on the same page."

Revels has a "home base" in a K-12 school with 300 students, but she also moves around the county in her role as SRO supervisor: "I know all of my schools very very well, but how well do people who are not there on a regular basis know them? With VAS3, there's a color code and numbering system that aids in a more concise response and includes mutual aid agencies."

Lee County has 14 schools with more than 10,000 total students. Schools range in size up to the 2,000-student high school in Smith Station that is among the largest in the state.

"When it comes to developing plans for your school, size really makes a difference. Having a program that can aid you with this is tremendous. Also, most people are visual learners, and this makes it easier for them to understand," Revels says.

"I think the fact that it is so user friendly is the biggest thing. You don't have to understand everything about a computer. When I say to people 'It uses that Google thing,' they relax," Henderson says. And Revels notes its versatility, pointing that whether it's a barricade situation (criminal), a gas leak (accident) or damage from a tornado (natural disaster), knowing the location of the gas shutoff valve could prove invaluable.

"I've been an SRO for 10 years and I've loved every minute of it," Revels says. "Critical incident planning has always been at the forefront, and I feel we've done a good job, but it's never good to be satisfied. We want to keep improving our practices, and this is one of the best tools out there to help us do that."

"We're working with counties and other state agencies to get better data all the time. It's not like we did it, we're done, next project. It's an ongoing effort. We're housed by ALEA and they're always suggesting things to add, and we're committed to keeping the improvements coming," Henderson says.

Jones says that one of those law enforcement-requested improvements is the addition of sex offender data on individuals living near schools and along bus routes, specifically near bus stops: "Schools can make bus drivers aware, and in some jurisdictions they even patrol those areas while the buses are running."

"This system just helps keep our kids safer. It's all about having pertinent conversations, information sharing and communication," Revels adds.

You can watch an overview of Virtual Alabama at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCpfOuP4AUU *and you can visit the website at* www.virtualalabama.gov. *For more information, contact Pamela Revels (334 -319-4173 or email* prevels@leecountysheriff.org; *Phillip Henderson at (334) 517-2561, email* Phillip.henderson@alea.gov; *or Sarah Jones at (334) 517-2539, email* sarah.jones@alea.gov.

MICHIGAN STUDENTS LEARN IT'S "OK2SAY"

By Becky Lewis
January 2015

Teens send dozens, hundreds, thousands of texts every month.

Since September 2014, many of the ones sent in Michigan have gone to the OK2SAY tipline.

Launched at the start of the 2014-2015 academic year, OK2SAY accepts tips via phone call, website, email, text messaging and smartphone app. By the end of the first semester, more than 400 tips had come in through those various routes, and an additional 191 came in during January.

Matt Bolger, assistant division commander for the Special Operations Division of the Michigan State Police, says the number of tips has far exceeded his

agency's expectations. Implemented in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook tragedy at the suggestion of Cadillac School District Superintendent and former Colorado school administrator Joann Spry, OK2SAY is based on Colorado's Safe2Tell tipline. Colorado started Safe2Tell after the 1999 Columbine shooting, and student use increased gradually over time; however, OK2SAY jumped out to a much faster start, possibly due to the many means of access offered in today's digital world.

"The majority of the tips relate to bullying or suicide. We refer those to the schools and to mental health personnel, rather than local law enforcement," Bolger says. "The kids have adopted this program as their 411 for anything dealing with their safety, which I think is great. We get reports on drug dealing, on gang activity, on cyberbullying."

And those tips have led to a number of success stories: "We had a tip about one student who planned to stab his brother, and tips on a number of possible suicides. One that comes to mind is a student who sent in a text and said he needed someone to talk to. Our staff member started a text conversation and found out the student had planned how he would kill himself and had even written a note. The tech reached to his school's SRO, who reached his parents and they got him help," Bolger says. "All in all, the students are embracing it and I can say with confidence that we've saved lives through suicide prevention."

OK2SAY received a total of 54 tips related to threats of suicide in the first semester, along with 163 tips on bullying and cyberbullying, and 13 on child abuse. Tips also addressed assaults, sexual misconduct, sexting, fighting, domestic violence, dating violence, employee misconduct and theft.

"The 410 tips we received in the first semester did exceed our expectations," says Sydney Allen, spokesperson for Attorney General Bill Schuette. The Attorney General's office launched OK2SAY with a rollout campaign that included personal visits by Schuette to eight schools, and "we believe that the Attorney General speaking directly to students was a very effective way to get the word out. Although the initial rollout has ended, schools may still request a trained presenter to teach students and parents what the program is all about."

OK2SAY operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, supported by staff in the State Police Fusion Center. Michigan used an existing school violence hotline as the basis for OK2SAY, but added an enhanced telephone system, computer software and staff to support the new service, which is open and accessible to everyone in the state with no enrollment or registration required. In addition to all of its various avenues for submitting a tip, OK2SAY includes an extensive

website with links to resources for students and parents on alcohol, anger, bullying, cutting, cybersafety, drugs, eating disorders and suicide, and access to an interactive map that will lead users to mental health resources in their communities. In addition, Tom Izzo, men's basketball coach at Michigan State University, has contributed his time for a promotional video.

"Bullying isn't limited to schools that have chosen to enroll in a program, and it doesn't discriminate between charter schools, public schools and private schools. Every student across the state should have access to confidentially report a tip about something that threatens their safety or the safety of others. That's why it's important to get the word out about OK2SAY to students, parents, teachers and administrators," Allen says. "The goal is to change the culture of silence that is often found in schools. It's really to give students the confidence and the freedom to know that it is 'okay to say' something to a trusted adult if something doesn't feel quite right. As the Attorney General says, 'if even one child's life is saved by OK2SAY, then it's been a success.'"

*You can learn more about OK2SAY at* http://www.michigan.gov/ok2say

CHAPTER 7

ILLINOIS SCHOOLS SHARE IPAD APP, INFORMATION

By Becky Lewis
August 2014

With the launch of a shared iPad app in summer 2014, all Illinois schools can be on the same "page" when it comes to their safety inspections…a page that no longer exists on printed paper.

The app originated with Director of Technology Phil Morris and Health & Life Safety Inspector Mark Bozik from the Kane County Regional Office of Education, where the tool has been in use since 2011. Kane County Regional Superintendent and President of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, Pat Dal Santo, offered the app to IARSS as a shared resource earlier in 2014. After a pilot phase, Morris conducted several statewide trainings in preparation for Illinois' launch coinciding with the start of the 2014-2015 school year.
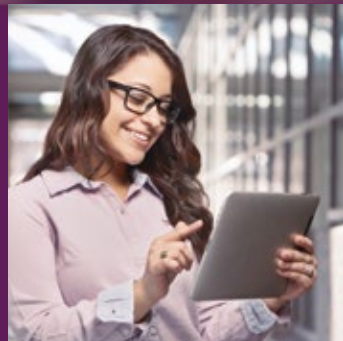
Inspectors can enter data as they conduct their inspections, rather than writing down information on forms attached to a clipboard, then later inputting data into several different systems. Because the app includes all required state forms, using it will allow schools across the state to pool their data, analyze it for trends and come up with shared solutions to common problems. Inspectors input the data directly via a web interface, and the iPad app populates data at the county and state levels as well as for individual schools.

Morris says that is a huge plus in dealing with a 200-plus point checklist developed with input from the public safety community. "It covers everything from extension cords to perimeter security. It's an interesting balance that makes sure the buildings are safe for students to be in every day."

"My personal belief about technology is that too often, we just substitute keying data into a computer for writing the same information down on a piece of paper," he adds. "This does more than just substitute a keyboard for a piece of paper. It enhances the data and provides us with history, so we can actually transform the information into something useful. Technology should help us become more efficient. Simple substitution does not do that."

Morris started Kane County on the path to greater efficiency in the early 2000s, developing a program that used Palm Pilots to record data from the annual safety inspections. As years went by, he explains that Palm Pilots became harder to find as technology advanced: "I was getting tired of trying to buy Palm Pilots on E-bay, and the regional superintendent asked whether the program could be adapted to an iPad."

Using FileMaker Pro to program the software, Morris also interviewed inspectors to gain complete understanding of their processes and worked to ensure compatibility with the remainder of Kane County's systems. With the launch of Version 1.0 in 2011, inspectors in Kane County could perform an inspection complete with photos, then plug the iPad in to download the report at their offices. Use of this initial online version enabled them to use email to contact school administrators in any of Kane County's more than 200 buildings about violations that needed to be corrected. With the statewide launch of Version 2.0, the process takes another step forward with implementation of the web-based interface.

"It's a tool that could easily be replicated and adapted to meet the needs of schools in other states," says Morris. Kane County used grant money to fund initial development, and the state's remaining 45 regional offices contributed small amounts of money toward developing Version 2.0. "Everybody is really happy with how well the app works and how easy it is to use."

For more information on the project, contact Phil Morris via email at pmorris@kaneroe.org.

CHAPTER 8

NEW NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY SETS IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM GOALS

By Becky Lewis
August 2014

Campus police chiefs and other public safety administrators working toward keeping the nation's colleges and universities safe have a new resource for technical assistance, training, research, networking… and many other potentially useful resources.

Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a component of the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Center for Campus Public Safety opened in May 2014 with immediate goals of identifying and prioritizing needs, helping constituents connect with existing federal and non-federal resources, promoting

best practices, and delivering training and technical assistance. That technical assistance is already under way, as Director Kim Vansell reports that specific inquiries have already begun coming in via the Center's toll-free number (866-817-5817) and email box (info@nccpsafety.org), and training is under development and coming soon.

"The first thing our training and technical assistance coordinator is working on is developing a Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigation and Adjudication training curriculum for campus officials involved in the investigation and adjudication process," Vansell says. "Our plan is to start with pilot training sessions and then expand with train-the-trainer sessions in each of the six International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators [IACLEA] regions. This will enable campuses all over the country to reach out to a nearby resource to obtain the training."

Vansell says that at least a portion of that training should eventually be available online at no cost, and the in-person version will be either no-cost or low-cost. Long-term training plans call for creation of a certificate in advanced educational studies in areas that include Title IX and the Clery Act, which may also involve both online and in-person components: "Many campus police chiefs come from municipal police departments and they may not have the background to help them with issues specific to campus policing. We want to help them understand what compliance looks like and how to implement it."

With trainings evolving and research into identified needs underway, the Center is preparing to launch a full version of its website, http://nccpsafety.org/, in late September. The expanded site will offer information on Center projects and training, a calendar of events and relevant news headlines. Vansell advises members of her target audience to check the site often for updates, and to sign up to receive email updates, including The Weekly Snapshot, a newsletter listing resources and new information.

"We're working with our partners and our constituents to determine the key areas where we should focus. Sexual assault is of course a major area, and mental health and threat assessment should be a primary focus for everyone. And underage drinking, suicide and drug abuse have been key for some time, along with issues such as civil disobedience and special event security," Vansell says. "We're working to identify where we should put our resources and efforts first."

One area already identified as a priority is the need for an online national directory of campus police chiefs and emergency managers, which would then facilitate networking and sharing of best practices and lessons learned. (This directory would be available only to vetted law enforcement officials). Other projects in the works include cooperating with the University of Vermont (both the university and the Center are located in Burlington) to expand, and eventually

become the sole host of, the university's legal issues conference. At present, the conference targets legal counsel and student affairs professionals; the expanded audience would include more campus safety professionals.

Another partner, the VTV [Virginia Tech] Family Outreach Foundation, has been developing a multi-disciplinary, standards-based program to "improve campus safety and empower officials to make informed decisions, and to help campuses conduct self-assessments and learn about best practices, and we will support them in their work. We'll also be working with various university faculty members and hiring research fellows."

And to pave the way for the more formal, long-term projects, Vansell and her staff are fielding requests for resources and using them as an informal needs assessment: "You can Google a question and get 20,000 hits, and that just leaves you confused. Our goal is to bring together all those resources, weed through them and point folks to the right ones in a user-friendly way. We also want to help them work together to share their experiences so they're not all out there alone."

You can visit the National Center for Campus Public Safety website at http://nccpsafety.org/site/contact.

CHAPTER 9

NW3C HELPS SROS FIND A PLACE IN "COMMUNITIES"

By Becky Lewis

There was a time when two preteen girls spending the evening together in a bedroom could fill a whole house with chatter and giggling. Nowadays, the clicks and beeps of smartphones make those evenings much quieter as texts and instant messages fly back and forth between the two girls sitting together in the same room and others not physically present. Others who may include their school resource officer.

Mixed in with the messages to friends, the visiting girl reaches out to tell the SRO that when she passed the next-door bedroom, she saw her friend's brother hastily shoving a gun under his bed. And ammunition. A lot of it.

"In order to make students feel comfortable coming to you, you've got to make yourself available and accessible through the social media communities they use and the ways they feel most comfortable communicating," says Lt. Chuck Cohen of the Indiana State Police. Cohen, a veteran of 20-plus years in law enforcement (primarily in the areas of electronic and cybercrime), serves as the narrator of "Social Media and School Violence," a new six-session, self-paced training made available through the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C). "We're not talking about being there in a covert manner, we're talking about a known presence so that students constantly interact with SROs and feel comfortable communicating with them."

Cohen points out the "communities" in which young people spend time have evolved from shopping malls and 24-hour restaurants to virtual ones. And in recent years, those virtual communities have become increasingly based on apps using mobile devices rather than on the World Wide Web accessed via a browser on a laptop or desktop computer. Technology constantly changes and evolves, and social media that is "in" now may be replaced in a matter of months, even weeks. Also, the popular online social network at one school may be completely unused at another in the same town.

In addition to being aware of the "app of choice" of students in a particular school, SROs need to know how to work with social media providers to obtain evidence and understand the various legal processes impacted by social media. It's also important to have team or supervisory involvement in an SRO's participation in social media, to protect both students and the SRO from allegations of misconduct.

"Social Media and School Violence" covers all of those aspects and more, according to NW3C's Jeff Lybarger. Law enforcement leaders from across the United States share their perspectives on social media and school violence, and the training includes a case study and an historical perspective on the evolution of social networks.

Also, as an online-only training, NW3C staff can update it on an ongoing basis. Lybarger explains that initially, NW3C offered the training via DVD, and after distributing approximately 1,000 copies in the first month, the center decided the online format seemed much more practical. Following its July 1 launch, "Social Media and School Violence" drew 343 views in its first 30 days online. (NW3C vets all requests to sign up for the training to ensure that only law enforcement professionals can access the modules.)

"We want SROs and other law enforcement professionals to know this training is available and it's free. It takes about two hours total to watch it all, but you can break it up so that it works for you," Lybarger says.

"We developed it because social media has become a huge part of kids' lives, and SROs need to understand what these sites do, how they work, and who to contact if they have an incident they need to investigate," he adds.

And for the SRO (or any other law enforcement officer) who needs to start with the basics, NW3C also offers "Social Media 101: What Law Enforcement Needs to Know," a 45- to 60-minute online training that provides general information on the most popular social networks, issues to consider and the related legal process. Lybarger says officers may want to start with this self-paced class, which includes a pre-test and a post-test, and a certificate of completion.

"Social media changes so quickly that we try to go back and evaluate the content every month. We get a lot of calls from officers who want to know "What does this site do?' 'What's the legal process?' and so on. It's a big need for law enforcement, and that's why we took this on," he adds.

NW3C also offers one-day, in-person training on a limited basis (18 sessions for 1,000 officers from November 2013 to June 2014), and recently added a two-day, hands-on class on cyber-investigation. (Those cyber-investigation techniques can also be found in an online training on the NW3C website.) Cohen helped NW3C develop and implement in-person trainings on cybercrime and social media for several years before being tapped to narrate the online social media training.

"The bottom line is to always take it seriously, whether it's an individual posting about violent acts or a tip you get from another student. You don't want to overreact, but you may never know what you've prevented," he says. "Often, officers and agencies plan and train a lot from the tactical perspective of how to contain an active shooter, and that is important. However, it's just as important to try to plan and train how to stop an incident before it starts."

The National White Collar Crime Center, working primarily with Bureau of Justice Assistance funding, has supported law enforcement's efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute economic and high-tech crime for more than 30 years. To register for "Social Media and School Violence," visit http://www.nw3c.org/training/specialty-training/social-media-and-school-violence. *For more information on other trainings, visit* http://www.nw3c.org/

CHAPTER 10

MCGRUFF TURNS TO TECHNOLOGY

By Becky Lewis
August 2014

McGruff the Crime Dog® celebrated his 34th birthday on July 1 not by getting a gift, but by giving one: McGruff Mobile, a free app that provides alerts and crime tracking information and promotes school, campus and community safety.

Launched on July 1, 2014, by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), and available for download from the Android Market and iTunes, McGruff Mobile displays recent crime activity and the names of registered sex offenders around a registered address. Users can enter as many addresses as they want to track, so they can keep tabs on activity around their own home, their younger child's school, their older child's college campus three states away, their elderly parents' home across the country: anywhere they have a special concern.

Features include:

- An interactive map displaying crimes and sex offenders in a neighborhood.

- Alerts and information sent via email to mobile devices in real time. Alerts include those focusing on law enforcement emergencies, crime and sex offender information, severe weather, hazardous materials and more.

- Crime prevention tips.

- A virtual Neighborhood Watch where users can share photos and information about suspicious activity with law enforcement and with other users.

"This is a natural outgrowth of the information we've already been providing on our website. It's an opportunity for McGruff to embrace new technology," says Michelle Boykins, NCPC senior director of communications.

"It really focuses on prevention. It gives our users critical information about what's going on in a neighborhood, along with information on how to get involved in crime prevention in that area through programs such as Neighborhood Watch. It gives tips on concrete things they can do, like not walking alone at night or not walking with your headphones in and not paying attention to your surroundings," she adds.
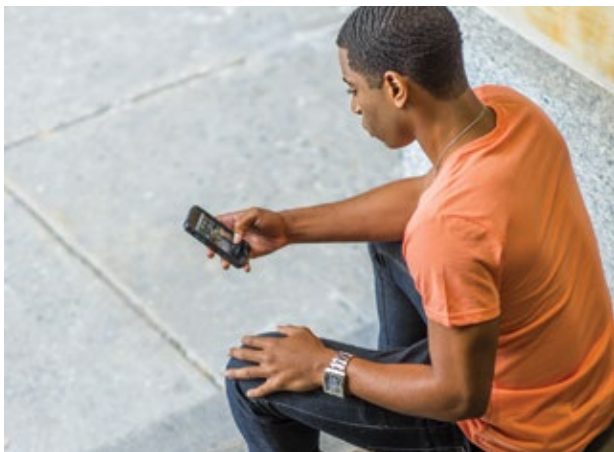
And using McGruff Mobile will give parents the opportunity to keep an eye out for their children even when the parents themselves cannot be nearby.

"College campuses are really their own mini-communities. Another community surrounds them, but they live within their own world. It's important to recognize that although campuses are made to feel very safe, crime happens there just as it does in other communities," Boykins says. "It's important to be able to keep a virtual eye on your children and on your elderly parents. You can't be everywhere and law enforcement can't be everywhere. If you recognize a potential hot spot or see activity increasing, McGruff Mobile gives you tools to address it and help prevent future incidents."

Because "taking a bite out of crime" through crime prevention is always NCPC's goal, the council has partnered with AlertID to offer McGruff Mobile free of charge: "We have a wide network of law enforcement practitioners, parents and teachers, and we've tried to get the word out that this is available, and that it's free. We want it to be a useful public safety tool, and we want to use technology in an engaging way so that we continue to do everything we can to help keep children, parents and their communities safe."

For more information on this and on other programs and services offered by the National Crime Prevention Council, visit www.ncpc.org

CHAPTER 11

COOPERATION IS THE KEY IN SCHOOL SAFETY PLANNING

By Becky Lewis
January 2015

Over the slam-slam-slam of locker doors, over the chatter of students who haven't seen each other since Friday, come the chilling words across the intercom: "This is not a drill. We are in lockdown." Students stare, bewildered. Lockdown? That's when the teacher closes the door and they all move to the back of the classroom. But they're not in a classroom. They're in the hall. What do they do?

Don Alwes, chairman of the Patrol Tactics section for the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA), says that because schools are perceived to be relatively safe, school districts have developed plans to stop theft and deal with natural disasters, but they don't plan thoroughly on how to keep "bad things" out.

"Most schools jump directly into planning on how to deal with emergencies, but you don't put those plans into effect until your security plan has failed," Alwes says. "Also, schools tend to have emergency plans that are not realistic or helpful. I've never encountered a school with a realistic plan on how to lock down a cafeteria or a gym full of kids, but a substantial number of shootings occur outside classrooms."

Because schools don't necessarily have experience in dealing with interpersonal violence, they fail to involve law enforcement in developing security and emergency plans: "For instance, when it comes to building a new school or remodeling an old one, how often do school districts involve local law enforcement in the design? Quite often, I hear law enforcement isn't called in at all until the building has been built. That's where cooperation ought to begin, followed by long-term continuous interaction between groups."

Although cooperation between school districts and law enforcement is key, joint efforts need to involve other agencies as well. When it comes to developing security and emergency plans, all stakeholders need to be invited to the discussion, including the local sheriff's office, state and federal agencies, local EMS and fire departments, and neighboring jurisdictions.

"The first thing I tell agencies is they need to put their differences aside and get past the administrative hurdles. They need to work together to figure out what's best for their community, and that always involves cooperation with other agencies," Alwes says.

"And of course it's important to work with the schools. Law enforcement can save lives by preparing the potential targets in our communities to protect themselves, because often, the shooting is over before law enforcement arrives," he adds. "Schools are important because that's where our most precious commodity is, but businesses, churches and hospitals also need to sit down ahead of time and plan."

That planning covers three areas, starting with threat assessment and management, then moving on to security plans, and finally to emergency plans. Law enforcement should work with schools and other organizations to identify threats and determine when to contact law enforcement, and to develop robust and comprehensive security and emergency plans. Additionally, the various law enforcement jurisdictions need to work with each other to plan and to train, which Alwes says is important for several reasons.

"If they pool their resources, they can get higher-quality training, both by having more funds to pay for it and by having more people actively involved in the training. Beyond the financial savings stemming from sharing the costs,

you learn how to operate with a different agency that has different policies and equipment, and you learn how to mesh the two together. In the event of an incident, you're going to have officers from a number of agencies responding. Why not start by sharing the cost of training and letting the officers train together? When you share the costs and share the training, great things come out of that."

To make those great things happen, Alwes says it is necessary to start with getting school districts and local law enforcement alike to acknowledge the need for training and cooperation, because they still believe "it can't happen here."

"My team was doing training at a school that had a major incident some years ago. I was checking a classroom that was probably no more than 20 yards down the hallway from the lobby where it happened, and discovered the door wouldn't lock. I asked the teacher if she had been there during the shooting, and she said 'yes, but it will never happen again, so we don't worry about the doors' not locking.' I hope she's right, but that's not the attitude we need to have," he says.

Don Alwes is a lead instructor for the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) with 24 years of law enforcement experience, specializing in the areas of school and workplace violence and active shooter response. NTOA provides law enforcement with a training resource as well as a forum for the development of tactics and information exchange. To learn more about NTOA training on school and workplace violence, visit www.ntoa.org.

CHAPTER 12

PROMOTING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT TO REDUCE RISKY BEHAVIORS

By Becky Lewis
January 2015

Don't cross the street without looking both ways. Don't go in the swimming pool unless someone is with you. Don't talk to strangers.

Including strangers you encounter on the Internet and social media.

The first three statements are such parenting staples that they've become clichés, but the fourth, and other parenting advice related to it, has not become ingrained in our culture. According to Dr. Stacey Kite, professor of Research in Johnson & Wales University's Educational Leadership Doctoral Program, the problems created by this lack are not going to go away.

"Our youth have grown up on the Internet and on their cell phones, and they learn to navigate faster and better than we do. We've given them virtually unlimited access and they're not mature enough to determine what is right, and we've never really taught them what they should be doing and how they should react," Kite says, adding that in her 10 years of research in this area, the numbers have either remained stable or gotten worse.

Research performed by Kite and her colleagues in Rhode Island and Massachusetts confirms nationwide studies that indicate 90 percent of students would not go to their parents if they encountered a problem during Internet or social media use, because "they feel like they need to handle this on their own, or they're afraid their parents would not understand and would take their technology away. Parents need to understand that just saying 'No, you can't use it' is not the answer."

"Parents need to be more involved in what their children are doing, but the solution is not to deny them access. They need to monitor their children's Internet and social media usage, and if parents find out their children have engaged in risky behavior, they need to use it as a learning experience rather than punishing them," Kite adds.

For example, she says, bullying is a learned behavior, and parents need to teach children that it is unacceptable behavior. Kite adds that Dr. William E. Copeland, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University, conducted a study about five years ago that found the precursors for bullying are the exact same precursors for committing domestic violence or becoming a sexual predator.

"Parents need to understand it's their job to monitor their children and teach them acceptable Internet and social media behavior, and the evidence suggests they don't. My own children know I'm going to monitor their online behavior, and we work on it together," she says. "Parents are not looking to find the resources that will help them teach these lessons, because they're out there. We've done several seminars in schools in Rhode Island, and the problem is the parents don't come. We may make more of an impact after there's a school shooting or a bullying-related suicide, but once the media coverage ends, people stop thinking about it."

The seminars are an outgrowth of ongoing research by Kite and her team, in which they have offered a survey instrument to high schools and middle schools throughout New England. Through 2014, they have surveyed approximately 10,000 Rhode Island and Massachusetts students, and are developing relationships with schools in Connecticut. Kite says results from individual schools can show educators where they have vulnerabilities and help inform their program

development. And those results have led to a number of success stories, including a program at Birchwood Middle School in North Providence, R.I., where the principal not only convinced students to stop bullying behaviors, he got them involved in a bullying prevention program. Birchwood's success was profiled on an episode of CBS News' 48 Hours titled "Bullying: Words Can Kill." (http://www.cbsnews.com/news/48-hours-shares-what-a-bullied-life-looks-like/)

Kite's team also has developed a tip sheet for parents with links to online resources, so that schools can provide information to parents who don't attend the seminars. And while her team is based in the New England area surrounding the Johnson and Wales campus in Providence, Kite says she has shared, and will continue to share, the survey instrument with schools in other parts of the country.

"My long-term goal is to bring awareness of the long-term risks of cyberbullying and Internet misuse. I also want society to be more empathetic and understanding. In many cases, victims are told 'Deal with it yourself' or 'You should be a bigger person,' "Kite says. "It's not a sign of weakness that you've been bullied."

For more information on the ongoing research at Johnson & Wales University, contact Dr. Stacey Kite at (401) 714-6056 or by email at Stacey.Kite@jwu.edu.

CHAPTER 13

SAFETY SAVVY PROVIDES THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

By Becky Lewis
January 2015

Got a question about helping your children deal with bullying? Safety Savvy can help. Need information on Internet safety? Safety Savvy can help. Looking for ideas about working with your child's school to promote a safer environment? Safety Savvy can help.

Available as a free app in both Apple and Android versions, Safety Savvy offers school safety-related information in areas including safe travel to and from school, classroom safety, bullying awareness, peer relations and extracurricular activities, as well as online safety information on developing family rules,

protecting passwords and usernames, setting limits, preventing cyberbullying and more. Although it is a product of the Texas Center for the Missing (TCM), a Houston-based missing persons organization, Safety Savvy has universal appeal.

"It's a lot of information, but we wanted to cover a multitude of areas that might have an impact on keeping somebody safe," says Beth Alberts, chief executive officer of TCM. "Most of the content is not specific to Texas, although there is a form that can be used to report a missing person to us. If someone outside the state uses that form, we're on call 24/7 and we will help them in whatever way we can, including referring them to a partner agency or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children."

In addition to the reporting form, the app includes a function to call 911 as well as information on preventing child abuse and abduction, travel safety and safety for seniors.

"I kept looking at it and wondering if there was anything we could cut, but it's all such good information. I've been in the missing persons field for almost 14 years and I've seen what helps," Alberts says. TCM staff pulled from educational materials and their experience in working with law enforcement, families and victims to develop the content for Safety Savvy, which was funded through a substantial donation made at a local fundraising event in 2013. A staff member suggested that developing an app would be a good use of the money, and in addition to spending the next year developing the content from training materials and staff experience, TCM also found a partner in a local development team that agreed to produce the app at a reasonable cost. Launch took place just before the holidays in 2014.
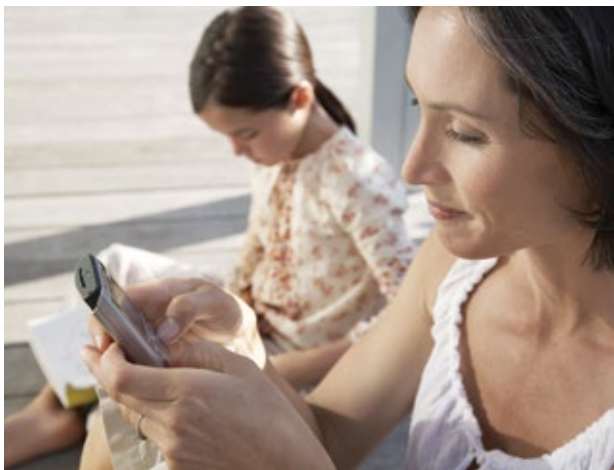
That staff experience also has led to a change in recent years in how TCM addresses the subject of abduction prevention in its trainings and materials: "We used to teach parents to watch their children on the street, because the majority of children were snatched going to and from school. In recent years, however, the trend has been more that they are lured online, so we've switched from a primary emphasis on street safety to online safety," Alberts says. That switch in emphasis in abduction prevention training also led to an increased emphasis on cyberbullying prevention and Internet safety in general, because "cyberbullying is so pervasive and so difficult to fight and prevent."

Toward that end, TCM staff members reach out to schools in the local geographic area to schedule safety training sessions, and staff work to develop ongoing partnerships with schools and with law enforcement. Alberts says TCM staff "like to think that our prevention and education efforts will decrease the law enforcement caseload. We take our relationship with law enforcement seriously and we want to prevent harm from coming to victims and families from being traumatized."

Texas Center for the Missing was formed in March 2000 after the disappearance of 17-year-old Gabriel Lester, who was reported missing from his private high school. After his remains were located four months later, his mother, Doreen Wise, founded TCM. You can download the Safety Savvy app through TCM website at http://centerforthemissing.org/

CHAPTER 14

APP USES "PEER POWER" TO HELP STOP CYBERBULLYING

By Becky Lewis
March 2015

After every presentation on cyberbullying, there are always students with comments or questions, most of them routine. But not all of them. One comment recently offered to Sgt. Tom Rich of the Summit (N.J.) Police Department by an eighth-grade girl certainly didn't qualify as routine: "I'm glad I go to a school that offers an app that helps students in trouble. If the school where I went to sixth grade had had it, I might not have tried to kill myself."

Understandably, that student stands out for Rich, who has been making presen-tations on cyberbullying in various schools, including David Brearley Middle-High School in Kenilworth, N.J, for a number of years. In February 2014, Brearley

participated in a pilot program to test a new smartphone/tablet application program that has proved a powerful tool to help students help themselves and their fellow students.

"Social media like Instagram, Snap-Chat, that's where students are at now. They want to take instant pictures and videos and send them, and this new app lets them do that," Rich says. With this mobile reporting tool, students can send screen shots to trusted adults or report anonymously, and it also offers 24/7 access to counseling services. Schools receive reports in real time and can immediately take steps to remediate situations, and all reports are time and date stamped and stored in the Cloud, allowing law enforcement to collect them as court-admissible evidence.

"Students can use it to make reports to help themselves, their friends and even other students they may not know well," Rich says. "One of the best success stories we've heard was about a 14-year-old boy with Asperger's who was being bullied. An anonymous report via this app brought the issue to the attention of school officials, and they put an end to the situation."

Brian Luciani, principal of David Brearley, says after his school participated in the pilot program using this online reporting tool, the school decided it worked so well that the tool has replaced paper forms from which administrators had to try to piece together investigations from scant, anonymous information.

"It's really a powerful tool that enables kids to take care of things themselves," Luciani says. "We're very very pleased with what it provides to students, parents, local law enforcement and the school."

The school has made the app available to its 660 students, and having it available has made those students generally more aware that they are responsible for what they see and say online: "There are still kids that do things that make you shake your head, but now you see other students photographing and filming all the time. In fact, the number of reports we receive has steadily dropped, because as students become more aware that other students are watching, they're monitoring their own behavior."

And because those reports include photos, videos and other details not possible with paper reports, Luciani and his staff have been able to take a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to incidents. For example, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, which is a scheduled half-day, is usually a low-key day given over to activities rather than classes. In 2014, reports via the app brought a planned fight to Luciani's attention, and school administrators stopped trouble before it began.

"This tool has provided a great opportunity for our kids to understand that they're responsible and that you don't have to be the target to make a report. Sometimes a bystander is the most powerful person at an incident, and can have a positive impact on what's going on," he says.

For more information on the success of David Brearley Middle-High School's switch from paper reporting forms to use of this app, contact Brian Luciani at Brian_Luciani@kenilworthschools.com

CHAPTER 15

PANIC BUTTON APP ALLOWS SILENT COMMUNICATION

By Becky Lewis
July 2014

Whether the intruder smiled and talked his way past the front office staff, or somehow got in undetected through a side door, he didn't know. What he did know when he heard the shots from the classroom across the hall, was that he needed to get the small children under his care into a closet and quietly out of sight. However, while maintaining complete silence, he pulled his smartphone from his pocket and activated the panic button app downloaded just last month at the school system's direction. Just activating it instantly let 911 dispatch know that the second-grade teacher in Room A17 had sent an emergency alert. In seconds, officers raced toward the school, accessing a map

in route that showed them the nearest entrance to the classroom and other physical details that shaved important seconds off their response time.

The mobile panic button app implemented by the town of Milford, Mass., earlier in 2014 can provide all that information and more. Based on "Smart911" technology, it routes cellular calls to the Milford Police Department while also instantly delivering critical information that can be used to facilitate a faster, more effective response. The mobile panic button directly integrates into the 911 call taking process, a best practice as highlighted by the National Emergency Number Association. By using the mobile panic button, the school system has the ability to upload a detailed profile that can include details such as class rosters, emergency contact details and the most direct route to a specific classroom. It allows for two-way communication if the caller can speak, but even when silence is essential, it still provides dispatch and first responders with a wealth of critical information via the detailed uploaded profile and the ability to communicate via text messaging.

"I like the idea that our teachers have access to emergency services without needing to use their voices," says Milford Superintendent Bob Tremblay. "You hope that you never need to call 911, but if, God forbid, we ever have a lockdown, the fact that we will have the ability to share information about the caller and the school without saying a word could save precious time. We learned from Newtown that getting detailed information to the right people in the shortest amount of time may not avoid a tragedy, but it can minimize response time and that is vitally important."
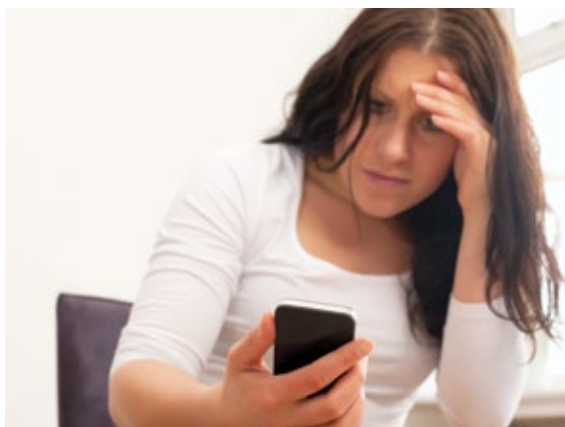
The school system has partnered with the police department to ensure that teachers in all of the town's seven schools have downloaded the app, and plans to incorporate its use into training and drills planned for the system's 500-plus faculty and staff members during the 2014-2015 school year. (Milford, located in Worcester County, has a population of approximately 28,000 residents, including 4,300 students.)

"We did some testing in the buildings to verify cellphone coverage," Police Chief Tom O'Loughlin says. "Some communities are using panic buttons that connect to a security alarm system, but they can be susceptible to abuse if they're fixed-mounted, and if they're on a fob that people carry with them, they can be misplaced or lost. Consider the cost for having an electrician wire an entire school system, and it can become prohibitive. With this, costs are minimal and the calls go directly to 911."

Tremblay says that he thinks the effort required to keep the information current also will be minimal since the system automatically reminds school officials to update the information every six months to ensure information accuracy.

"When you're under stress, you may forget the obvious things, such as the room number or the nearest entrance. In addition to the information uploaded into the profile, we have a red dot in every classroom that includes the name of the school, the room number and the nearest exterior door. This could be critical, especially for roving instructors or substitute teachers," Tremblay says. In another school safety measure, the Milford Police Department has also placed older, unused portable radio units throughout the schools. Administrators and teachers who take students outside can use them to talk to the police department and to each other.

"Bob Tremblay and our school system are very progressive, and school security is at the top of my department's list," O'Loughlin says. "There is nothing more important than protecting our schools."

For more information on Milford's use of the mobile panic button, contact Chief Tom O'Loughlin at Chief@milfordpolice.org *or Superintendent Bob Tremblay at* rtremblay@milfordma.com

CHAPTER 16

BEST PRACTICE SOLUTION CLOSES SCHOOL SAFETY GAPS

By Becky Lewis
September 2014

Even as she hears the gunshots echoing down the hall, the teacher presses the key fob she wears – a key fob that does much more than just activate an alarm. While she starts lockdown in her room by closing the door and moving her students to their secure area, the local dispatch center simultaneously begins searching for the intruder using the school's camera system, law enforcement officers speeding toward the scene receive up-to-the-second intelligence and the building itself launches into countermeasures that distract the intruder and disrupt his plans.

In mid-September, Southwestern High School in rural Shelby County, Ind., became the pilot site for what the Indiana Sheriffs' Association hopes will become a nationwide Best Practice Solution for school safety. The pilot system networks the school directly with the Shelby County Sheriff's Office (under Sheriff Mike Bowlby) and provides real-time notification to law enforcement; updates on the status of all classrooms; the ability to locate and track intruders, and launch immediate countermeasures; and added protection for teachers and students through an innovative hardened door system.

"This is immediate notification, whereas in most situations, it's typically three minutes until emergency services receives a phone call," says Stephen Luce, executive director of the Indiana Sheriffs Association. "Dispatch can actually track the shooter, providing a description and determining the type of weapon. They're in constant contact with the school. This gives responding law enforcement a place to start making a plan prior to arrival."

Details about the school's capability to launch countermeasures are being kept confidential, but Luce did say the school becomes, in a sense, a "smart building" that can distract an intruder and possibly cause him to move away from the students or even leave the building.

Dr. Paula Maurer, Southwestern Consolidated School District Superintendent, says several area SWAT teams have come to Southwestern High for training and "they have just been amazed at how this is going to change school safety. Our kids will all be in safe rooms and we won't have to figure out 'fight or flight?' We train the teachers that they are the shepherd of their safe room. They get students out of the hallway if it's between classes, and they get everyone behind the hardened door and behind a red line where an intruder cannot see them through the glass."

The red line serves as a visual aid to let students and teachers know when they have reached the area where they are out of an intruder's sight. Once behind it, a teacher can use a signaling station located there to report whether students are safe or under attack. In addition, teachers also have access to first aid materials and can use the station to report medical emergencies, which will help with EMS triage when first responders enter the building.

"The reaction of our teachers has been very positive. At Virginia Tech, students tried to hold doors closed, and at Sandy Hook, teachers used their bodies to protect their kids. We believe a teacher shouldn't have to make those difficult decisions. With this system, all they need to do is be the shepherd in the classroom and get their kids behind the red lines," Maurer says. "My administrators

don't have to walk into the hallway to see what it is going on; they can use the cameras. And the sheriff is immediately in control of the situation, thus turning the decision-making process over to those who trained to do it."

The use of this innovative system in the pilot project at Southwestern High is the result of the efforts of Mike Kersey, a deputy sheriff and SWAT team leader in Montgomery County, to close what he perceived as a gap in law enforcement and school preparation. Kersey, a 22-year law enforcement veteran, became involved in active shooter response after Columbine. He has seen an evolution in law enforcement tactics during that time period, but still concluded approximately four years ago that law enforcement and schools weren't working together well.

"When this happens, it's a community event, not just a law enforcement event or a school event. I was working with schools to train on the solutions available at that time, and I realized there were certain hurdles we still had to face. I wanted to find a way to clear those hurdles and make our response more effective," Kersey says. "I knew the timeframe was critical and there was a lack of immediate notification, not only notification to law enforcement but also notification to others inside the event. We also were not adequately protecting the physical space. Locking doors is an option, but as we've all learned, you get into a confined space and you can have a massacre. We needed to prevent the attacker

from getting access to potential victims and mitigate that danger as well, and if we can also interrupt his plans before law enforcement gets there, we can gain a tactical edge."

Working on his own time, Kersey found a piece here, another there of what he was looking for, but not until he located the vendor that provides the system used in this pilot project did he find technology that addressed all of his concerns. He then cultivated relationships with his sheriff, the ISA and the state Department of Homeland Security that facilitated the creation of the Best Practice System project.

"All along the way, the timing just seemed right. We all shared the same goal: we want schools to be a safe place for our students and teachers to go again. Schools should be a safe haven, but the reality is they are not and we need to change that," Kersey says. "We're not under the misapprehension that we can use this to stop every attack, but we think it can help mitigate an active threat situation and we hope it can serve as a template for other states to follow."

"I keep hearing this involves a lot of effort and expense, but how could you talk to a parent who lost a child at Sandy Hook and tell them the effort is not worth it?" he adds.

And Maurer concurs: "I want to adamantly say we have to do this for our kids. We now have a better way to protect them and we need to use this in every school."

You can watch a video about the ISA Best Practice Solution at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4JYOhBQ9fA. *For more information, contact Jessica Cirulli at* bpspresscontact@gmail.com.

CHAPTER 17

GUNSHOT DETECTION SYSTEM PROVIDES EARLY WARNING

By Becky Lewis
November 2014

Nothing disturbs the quiet as the students work on their test papers, heads bent, No. 2 pencils scratching. Nothing, that is, but the beep of a text message on their teacher's cell phone. A text message that tells her that just seconds ago, sensors recorded a gunshot in the lobby, two floors away at the other end of the building. And only seconds more will pass before a hurried line of students, tests forgotten, heads for the stairs and evacuation to safety.

Chief Joseph Solomon of the Methuen (Mass.) Police Department and Methuen School Superintendent Judith Scannell share a fervent hope that a scenario like the one just described never becomes reality in their town. But in the event that

it does, a pilot gunshot detection system recently installed in one of the town's four grammar schools can provide the early warning that will lead teachers and students to safe evacuations or necessary lockdowns, as well as lead law enforcement officers directly to the site of the gunshots.

"The system gives you enough information to determine whether to lock down or evacuate. If you're on the second floor of the west wing, and shots are fired on the first floor of the east wing, it gives teachers time to make an educated decision. And for law enforcement, it reduces the time to target," Solomon says.

"When they did the demo on November 11, they fired shots on the opposite end of the building. I absolutely could not hear the shots or any commotion, but I got the text that said 'Shot Fired' and gave the exact location. This speaks to the minutes that are lost when something tragic is going on in a building…the minutes where lives are lost," Scanlon says. "I think I speak for all superintendents everywhere when I say that the safety of our students is our number one priority. I'm not saying that I can 100 percent guarantee the safety of our students, because of course I can't, but this adds another layer of security."

The well-publicized drill that Scanlon referenced showed an audience of area police chiefs, school resource officers, school superintendents and elected officials just how effective the gunshot detection technology can be. A role-playing officer entered the building and fired a total of four shots, the first well out of earshot of the audience, the second from nearby and the third and fourth from yet another location. The school resource officer started a search immediately on receipt of the first text, and other officers joined in after an appropriate response time. Just over three minutes later, the demonstration ended, leaving an impressed audience to ply Solomon with questions for another 90 minutes. The group also heard from Democratic Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, who spoke about how technology originally developed for military use has been leveraged into a system that also has potential for public buildings, hospitals and office complexes.

The detection system uses not only acoustic sensors (as do other gunshot detection systems), it also uses infrared capability to detect the flash that accompanies gunfire, thus eliminating the possibility of false alarms generated by banging lockers and dropping books. For each confirmed shot, it provides a precise location coordinate and a time stamp, and generates an automatic call to public safety dispatch along with the text message to all teachers and staff. Developers have included an option to add cameras and/or a sound system that would provide an opportunity for direct communication.

"The system reduces the need to analyze the situation before you can react," Solomon says. "For example, with a traffic accident, by the time a bystander processes what is going on and calls 911 to relay the information, four to five

minutes have passed. The system takes care of all of that in approximately two seconds. None of our officers believed it could actually do what the developers claimed until they experienced it firsthand."

And the public has embraced the technology as well, so much so that there is a movement to have detection systems placed in the town's three remaining grammar schools and high school. That expansion, however, will require that Methuen locate funding to offset the costs. The developer provided the pilot system free of charge in return for beta testing feedback, which led to the no-cost permanent installation of a Version 1.0 system in August 2014. Solomon says the school selected as the pilot site is the largest in square footage of the town's schools, and its three-story building was selected purely because of its size.

"We were fortunate to realize the free demonstration for one of our schools, and I hope to eventually see it installed in all of them," Solomon says. "I think in the future, it should be mandated like smoke detectors."

For more information on the pilot gunshot detection system in use in Methuen, contact Chief Joseph Solomon at JSolomon@ci.methuen.ma.us.

CHAPTER 18

ROANOKE CITY USES SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUILD TRUST

By Becky Lewis
July 2014

Hey, Suze, I just drove past the high school, there's a bunch of emergency equipment outside. I didn't see any smoke, you think it's a bomb? A shooter? I'm on my way to an appointment, but I wonder if I should go back, try to find out what's going on?

No worries, Carol, I'm looking at the Facebook page now. It's broken water pipes near the gym. Part of the school is closed down, they're shuffling the kids to other classrooms. Just go on to your appointment, talk to you later, okay?

With a Facebook following that has doubled and redoubled in the past two years (increasing from 1,500 likes to more than 6,500), Virginia's Roanoke City

Public Schools, under the direction of Community Relations Coordinator Justin McLeod, have established the system's social media outlets as the trusted, "go to" source for information. By building the community's trust with open, daily communication, McLeod hopes that if Roanoke City ever does face a major crisis event, parents and the community know they can obtain the most accurate, current information from the school system, and thus won't tie up bandwidth and air time searching for news (or rumors).

Using material McLeod gathers from daily visits to schools, Roanoke City posts lot of photos and "sneaks in a little information" to build a daily following for positive news. To date the district – which includes 17 elementary schools, five middle schools, four specialty schools and two high schools – has experienced only minor emergencies related to weather and non-serious school bus accidents. When those happen, it's not surprising that a community with 13,313 students enrolled in the public school system generates intense social media traffic.

"We post our weather closings in English and in Spanish, via Twitter and Facebook, before we even call the local television stations. One of our weather-related postings drew 25,000 views. Sharing this information through social media has just taken off, and we've tried to use it to educate people about how we decide whether to close or delay school. We've given them sort of a behind the scenes look at things," McLeod says. "As the winter went on – and it was a bad one – we started to see a shift in the comments. People were saying things like "that makes sense" and "thanks for explaining that." It was a great way to use social media to educate parents. They now know we are the source for information and they go the Facebook page every day."

McLeod learned about the importance of laying that foundation of trust through Roanoke City's working with national school security experts, and through attendance at various educational conferences (including the summer 2014 National School Public Relations Association meeting, where Roanoke City won a publications and electronic media award). At that same conference, he also remembers hearing an example of what not to do in the event of a crisis: "There was a school that went into lockdown because of a serious bomb threat, and they sent a communication home saying it was because of a water main break. Once you've broken trust like that, you can never get it back. Superintendent Dr. Rita Bishop wants us to be as upfront as we can be with the parents, with the caveat that we're sure it's correct before we post it."

The intense social media efforts have come about as a result of the district's newly created crisis communications plan. Roanoke City developed the plan with input from the consultant team, as were other measures that Roanoke City has put into place to help make its schools more secure: "We have taken what we were advised to do and we've actually done it. A lot of school systems ask

for reports and then they sit on the shelf. When we got calls from the local news media after Newtown asking what we were going to do differently, we were able to tell them we already had security measures in place. At the same time, we began to hear a lot fewer complaints from visitors and greater appreciation for those security measures. At the end of the day, I don't like having to plan for this kind of event, but it's something we have to do."

McLeod involved his counterparts from local public safety agencies in the school district's planning efforts, and is grateful for Roanoke City's strong relationships with local public safety and with local media. In addition to involving public safety agencies in communications planning, the school district held press conferences during consultant visits, and brought the media in to write about training for faculty and staff as it took place. Also, Dr. Bishop and Police Chief Chris Perkins have a strong working relationship, and a total of 14 school resource officers help patrol the district's campuses.

And in the end, McLeod, like so many other school and law enforcement administrators across the country, hopes that none of these plans ever have to be implemented, but "if they do, my hope is that the community will know to come to us for information. We will be as open as we can, with the hope that people understand they may have to have patience. We won't be trying to keep information from them, we'll be gathering accurate information to post."

For more information about Roanoke City's communications efforts, contact Justin McLeod at jmcleod@rcps.info

CHAPTER 19

ONLINE PROGRAM BRINGS COST-EFFECTIVE, JOB-SPECIFIC TRAINING TO FLORIDA SCHOOLS

By Becky Lewis
August 2014

After racing from her classroom to pick up her son at soccer practice, she pulls into the parking lot to discover that the coach needs "15 more minutes." How to pass the time…it's not long enough to be worth pulling out today's exams to start grading them. Wait, there's that mandatory training on bullying prevention she has to finish this week…and all she has to get out is her smartphone.

With the start of the 2014-2015 school year, all nine member school districts of the Florida School Boards Insurance Trust (FSBIT) have free, unlimited online access to a suite of more than 300 online school safety trainings that can be accessed anytime, anywhere. School districts can pick and choose courses best suited to their school's needs, and further customize learning plans so that teachers, accountants, custodians and bus drivers all take the courses best suited to their own job descriptions.

"We used to create our own web-based trainings in-house, but we found the offerings with this program to be so much broader than anything we could do ourselves," says David Stephens, FSBIT director of risk management. "For the quality versus the price, it's much better than what we were doing. We would pick a subject, ask a specific school district to provide personnel for taping, and hire someone to do the video and narration. This is much more cost-effective in general, especially if you're doing it for a number of districts."

The system allows administrators to track training, monitor staff progress, download compliance reports and more. Written by national experts on school safety, the courses are school-specific rather than designed for general workplace training, and cover topics such as identifying and addressing causes of potential school violence, preventing crimes through enhanced physical security, bullying (including cyberbullying), and suicide awareness and prevention.

"It ranges from general safety information to very specific topics such as sexual harassment. The breadth of it is so wide there are courses that apply to all types of jobs. Florida has some of the largest school districts in the nation and they really are mini-municipalities," Stephens says.

FSBIT provides the member school districts with several training templates to use as a starting point; the districts then use the training program's flexibility to design curricula that meets their specific needs. Schools can elect to have groups take some trainings together and allow individuals to take others at their own convenience. Two member districts, Santa Rosa and Suwannee counties, ran pilot projects during the 2013-2014 school year and FSBIT received only positive feedback.

The system allows administrators to set up assignments and training plans for specific staff members, who can then take the 20- to 30-minute trainings on any Web-enabled device (they can even start a course on one device and finish it on another). Courses include interactive components that keep users engaged, and pre- and post-tests to help ensure staff retain what they've learned. (Each school

district can set its own criteria for the pass/fail rates needed to earn a certificate of completion.) And not only do staff members find the training is more convenient and engaging, it's far less expensive than bringing in a consultant to do an in-service training on a specific topic that might not apply to all staff.

"We always try to keep the need to increase the safety factor in the front of our minds. With this training, we can do it easily. We can be alert for teachable moments; for example, if there is a bus accident, we can send out an email pointing to an applicable training," Stephens says. "The Florida School Boards Association is very aware that when students and staff feel safe, they perform at a much higher level."

The Florida School Boards Association established the Florida School Boards Insurance Trust (FSBIT) in 1981 to self-insure property, casualty and worker's compensation as a direct response to the difficulties and expense school districts face in acquiring insurance protection at a reasonable and affordable cost. FSBIT also assists school districts in reducing risk management costs by providing training and services. For more information on FSBIT's school safety training program, email David Stephens at dstephens@fsbit.net

VIDEO ENCOURAGES VIEWERS TO PLAN FOR SURVIVAL

By Becky Lewis
February 2015

What would you do if the sound of gunfire disrupted your classroom?

Would you know how to immediately and safely get away? Would you know how to secure the classroom if your exit was cut off? If forced to confront an attacker, would you have a plan for success?

What would you do?

A new video produced by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, *Surviving an Active Shooter,* not only asks those questions, it also provides answers. Using graphic imagery to depict simulated attacks on a college campus, in a mall and

in a workplace, the free video (available for viewing at http://www.activeshooter.lasd.org/) emphasizes the most important steps to take are to stay calm, think clearly and plan your actions in advance.

Sgt. Harry Drucker says the agency's video production department began planning *Surviving an Active Shooter* after the Aurora, Colo., theater shooting in 2012: "We talked about how emotional impact causes people to remember what they see and used that as our guiding light. We used graphic imagery and staged our scenarios in locales where younger people tend to spend time. We would have preferred not to need to make the video, but these things are happening not just in the United States, but worldwide."

Surviving an Active Shooter points out that on average, there are 20 active shooter attacks with four or more casualties in the United States each year. Although chances of being involved in an incident are still slight, it says "in the middle of a senseless attack, the why doesn't matter. What matters is surviving."

Drucker says after exploring various financial options, the department used special training funding to create *Surviving an Active Shooter*. A companion video for law enforcement, which will be available to vetted agencies on request, was filmed at the same time using the same locations: a mall food court after closing, a college campus during break and a warehouse after business hours. LASD used a mainly volunteer cast, although some Screen Actors Guild members were paid small amounts for speaking roles. The agency also received donations of food from local businesses to feed the nearly 400 volunteers during the on-location shoots. Members of the film industry donated time for post-production work as well.

In addition to being able to access *Surviving an Active Shooter* on the LASD website, law enforcement agencies and school administrators interested in using it as part of a training program can request a copy via digital download, download the transcript and find links to resources from agencies such as the American Red Cross, the FBI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The law enforcement tactics video will replace another training video created by LASD shortly after the Columbine shooting in 1999, because tactics have changed greatly since then, moving from waiting for reinforcements to the first officer on the scene going in to search for and confront the shooter. Drucker says LASD used experts in the field of tactics to develop the strategies used in the law enforcement video and to inform the script for *Surviving an Active Shooter,* which cautions viewers to be careful about running toward and reaching out to law enforcement, even if it is to thank them for being there.

"When law enforcement officers first arrive on a scene, their first goal is to neutralize the threat, not care for the wounded. If there is still shooting going on, their mission is to stop it," Drucker says.

"We're a law enforcement agency, but part of our job is to keep people safe, and part of that comes back to education. We try to educate the public in various ways, for instance reminding them around the holidays not to leave their packages from the mall in plain sight in their vehicles," he adds. "With something like this, it's like going back to fire drills. You hope it never happens, but if it does, you need to know what to do."

For more information on Surviving an Active Shooter, *or to inquire about the new LASD law enforcement training video, contact Sgt. Harry Drucker at (562) 946-7984, email* HJDrucke@lasd.org.

CHAPTER 21

KNOXVILLE "TAKES A STAND" AGAINST BULLYING

By Becky Lewis
March 2015

You are such a disappointment.

You have no friends.

You will never be good enough.

Statements that far too many young people hear every day, from their peers and from their families.

Statements that make up the cornerstone of an award-winning series of public service announcements jointly produced by the Knoxville (Tenn.) Police Department and that city's Hardin Valley Academy.

Separate anti-bullying campaigns by the two partners intersected in spring 2012, when students in Hardin Valley's Leadership class saw Knoxville PD's "Take a Stand Against Bullying" billboard campaign and came up with the idea of asking the local law enforcement agency to partner with them on the PSA initiative. The police department already had a number of other projects underway (see sidebar, "School Safety Advocacy Council Honors Knoxville Police Department With National Anti-Bullying Recognition Award ") through a U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance grant administered by the state Office of Criminal Justice Programs, and teaming up with the students on the PSAs seemed like another piece that fit into the project.

According to Ramona Dew, Knox County Coordinated School Health Supervisor and then-teacher at Hardin Valley, she challenged her Leadership class to come up with an initiative to change the culture of the school in fall 2012: "They came back and said we needed to do an anti-bullying campaign before someone in Knox County kills themselves. That is, in other places, initiatives seem to start after something happens, after someone dies in a car accident or commits suicide."

The group first set out to address the issue with a series of 30-second sound bites filmed in the school's hallways and shown during morning video announcements. Then, in spring 2013, the group came back to Dew with the idea to reach out to Knoxville PD. Dew contacted the department, and the Safety Education Unit agreed to partner with the students, telling them to "write the scripts and we'll bring them to the screen." The students did just that, writing scripts that touch on cyberbullying, mocking students' academic struggles, shunning their company and more. In addition to writing all of the dialog, Leadership class students – not drama club members – do all of the acting as well.

"We worked with them to create 10 wonderful public service announcements, with the students doing all of the writing and acting while we provided technical assistance and filming support," says Knoxville PD Capt. Bob Wooldridge, who heads the Safety Education Unit. Training Specialist Aubrey Maples provided logistical support, and technical support personnel Julie Small and Eric Miller took care of the videography and post-production editing.

"When the filming started in spring 2014, our project U anti-bullying campaign had already been going on for two years, but this opened up a new conversation: What's going on? What are they doing? It had an impact on our school, and the students who were involved have gone to speak at other schools in Knox County as well," Dew says. "We show the PSAs in our city's middle schools as part of our projectU campaign and ask students if they have seen similar incidents happening in their school, and to think about how they can have an impact. The idea is that everybody has a choice to make and 'U' can make a

difference. Our Leadership class efforts didn't end with the PSAs, because it's about living this every day in school and impacting those around you."

"At the National Bullying Conference (where Knoxville PD received an award; see sidebar), I was asked what was the best thing about our campaign. I would definitely say the partnerships with, and commitment from, the community, parents, teachers, principals and students. That's one of true keys to recognizing bullying: heightening awareness and being able to deal with it. Having the student involvement in designing and writing these PSAs helps the community make a difference when it comes to bullying," Wooldridge says. "We've put the videos out on our website for everyone to see, and I hope they go viral, because they're a tool that law enforcement agencies and schools across the country can use. I'd like to see it help students across the country see that bullying is everywhere and they can "Take a Stand.' "

"ProjectU isn't a specific curriculum, because the needs and culture of every school is different. It's about getting students involved in responding to needs and making a change," Dew says. "I would love to be able to help other schools do something like this. Teaming up with KPD has helped my students learn that it takes a collaborative effort, and many different entities need to be involved in order for a project like this to succeed. "

You can view the PSAs on the Safety Education Unit's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuAyjRuIcNhHi6Gcib3Chdw. *For more information on the project and how you can do something similar in your community, contact Capt. Bob Wooldridge at (865) 215-1514, email* bwooldridge@cityofknoxville.org *or Ramona Dew at (865) 594-3735, email* Ramona.dew@knoxschools.org.

School Safety Advocacy Council Honors Knoxville Police Department With National Anti-Bullying Recognition Award

On Feb. 25, 2015, the Knoxville Police Department Safety Education Unit received a national award from the School Safety Advocacy Council for its anti-bullying campaign. In addition to working with Hardin Valley Academy students on the PSA initiative, other parts of the project included the following.

Anti-Bullying Town Hall Meeting. This free event on April 17, 2014, featured Kirk Smalley, a nationally known speaker whose 11-year-old son committed suicide because of bullying, and an anti-bullying panel discussion moderated by local news anchors. More than 150 people attended the event; an estimated 20,000 watched on television and another 1,000 viewed via live streaming.

Anti-Bullying Summit. This free event for Tennessee law enforcement and educators on July 30, 2013, provided lectures and information on signs and symptoms of bullying, cyberbullying and social media, and adult bullying in the workplace. Some 468 persons attended.

Billboard campaign. Lamar Advertising, which developed the logo and campaign materials, donated display space on local billboards.

Social media and anti-bullying curriculum. Trained officers and training staff from the unit developed an eighth-grade lesson plan presented at the invitation of local schools. This one-day,

one-classroom presentation focuses on topics such as the abuse of drugs and alcohol, self-esteem and recognizing bullying. Officers also use a pre- and post-training survey developed by the University of Tennessee. It will continue beyond the life of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant.

"Boo at the Zoo" and summertime booths at Knoxville Zoo. Officers and staff greet visitors and hand out anti-bullying literature and giveaway items, including the popular "Take a Stand Against Bullying" wristbands. This project will continue beyond the life of the BJA grant.

Other giveaway items and community presentations. This effort included miniature "Take a Stand Against Bullying" footballs tossed into local high school crowds by cheerleaders and booths at various community events, including National Night Out. These efforts will continue beyond the life of the BJA grant.

"I'm just so proud of our officers and our training staff. Our partnership with Knox County schools has been wonderful," says Capt. Bob Wooldridge. In addition to receiving the SSAC award, the Safety Education Unit received an internal unit commendation for its efforts.

"None of this would have been possible to achieve at this level without our community partnerships. We always say we can't do it alone," Wooldridge says.

CHAPTER 22

SCHOOL SAFETY TRACKER OFFERS "FOUR IN ONE" VALUE

By Becky Lewis
April 2015

Look, on your smartphone! It's an anonymous reporting tool. It's an emergency operations planner. It's a school safety audit program. It's a drill tracking program.

It's School Safety Tracker, a program developed by the Texas Region 20 Service Center in San Antonio and offered free to schools throughout the state.

Aubrey Independent School District, under the leadership of Superintendent Debby Sanders and Police Chief Scott Collins, recently started using the system that Collins dubs "a four-in-one value" for the school district located in a town of less than 3,000 residents.

"We look at it as a way for students to report incidents in a timely manner. In today's world, students use their smartphones all the time. And this is an app they can put on their phones and actually use," Sanders says. "By using School Safety Tracker, we hope that we can avoid incidents on campus, whether it be drugs, bullying or something else."

"Students don't want to call 800 numbers anymore. They want to use their technology," Collins says. "And overall, it's very thorough and it's very practical. It's just an easy way to keep track of everything in one place, and there's a tremendous savings on paper costs as well."

Collins explains that students or parents can download the app to their smartphones or tablets and use it to submit tips anonymously. The tips come to his office, and he reviews them and distributes them to the district's high school, middle school and two elementary schools as appropriate.

"All tips come to the chief, who then sends it to the principal of the appropriate campus. If the tip is a concern about a serious emotional issue, it will go to the counselor who can start an intervention. If a small child says a fifth-grader is bullying him on the bus, it will go the principal and the bus driver," Sanders says. "Obviously – and we hope we don't have this – if somebody is selling drugs, we will involve the police. If the report happens to be an emergency situation, we won't just send an email and hope somebody sees it, we'll follow up with a phone call."

Communication with users of the app works both ways; the school district can use it to send push notifications to all registered users about weather-related school closures or planned fire drills. (Texas school districts must perform fire drills every month, along with tornado drills and other safety-related drills.) School Safety Tracker keeps tabs on all of them, allowing for easy review by the fire marshal and administrators. It also keeps track of medical information for the district's approximately 2,200 students, bus routes and other aspects of Aubrey's emergency operations plan.

"We can take our tablets out in the event of an emergency rather than lugging a big book around. Administrators and teachers can pull the plans up on their phones or tablets wherever they are, and that's a huge safety deal when you're evacuating kids," Collins says.

Using School Safety Tracker to do required school safety audits is another "huge deal" in savings of time and paper: "You're required to do a school safety audit every three years using an extensive set of forms from the Texas School Safety Center. With this app, we can do these audits on a tablet and it keeps track of everything for us. Before, we had to fill out 17 sheets of paper per school, so it's a huge savings in paper as well as time," Collins says.

And Sanders adds that in addition to the required tri-annual full report, the safety audit function allows school districts to input ongoing timely safety updates: "If you're walking around and see something that looks unsafe, you can put it in the system at that moment. You don't have to wait for the three-year audit."

But even with all of School Safety Tracker's other useful aspects, in the end it's the reporting function that proved its biggest attraction to Aubrey ISD.

"The obvious first draw in signing up for the app is the students are always on their smartphones, and with the app, we can get kids more involved in keeping themselves safe," Sanders says. And Collins adds, "This makes my job easier because I can't be everywhere at once. This gives me lots of eyes and ears in the community."

For more information on Aubrey's use of School Safety Tracker, contact Chief Scott Collins at (940) 668-3900 X1201, email scollins@aubreyisd.net. *To learn more about the app, visit* http://www.schoolsafetytracker.com/index.php.
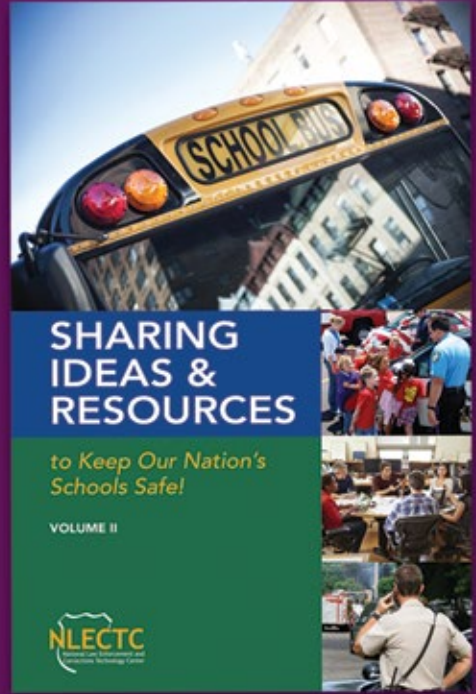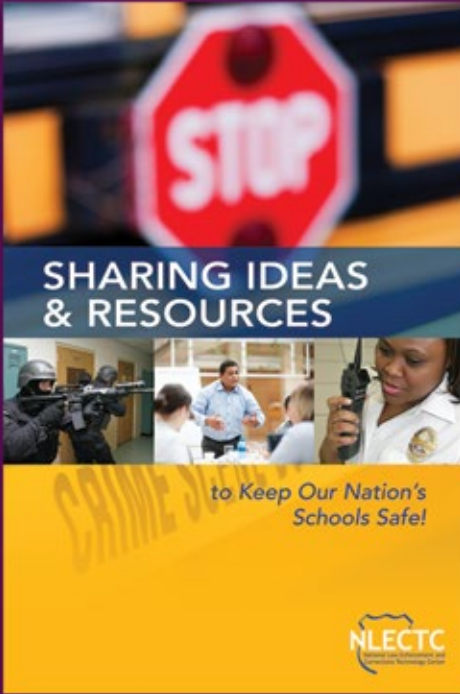
CONTACT
INFORMATION

Mark Greene, Director, Policy and Standards Division
National Institute of Justice
U.S. Department of Justice
810 Seventh St., NW.
Washington, DC 20531
(202) 307-3384
Mark.greene2@usdoj.gov

Lance Miller, Director
Justice Technology Information Center
700 N. Frederick Ave.
Bldg. 181, Rm. 1L30
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
(800) 248-2742
(301) 240-6731
lmiller@justnet.org

Visit http://www.schoolsafetyinfo.org for access to up-to-date publication and website resources. New success stories similar to the ones in this publication are added on an ongoing basis. To suggest a success story topic, contact Senior Writer Becky Lewis at rebecca.l.lewis@leidos.com

SHARING IDEAS & RESOURCES

to Keep Our Nation's Schools Safe!

NLECTC
National Law Enforcement and
Corrections Technology Center

SHARING IDEAS & RESOURCES

to Keep Our Nation's Schools Safe!

VOLUME II

NLECTC
National Law Enforcement and
Corrections Technology Center

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Innovation • Partnerships
Safer Neighborhoods

NIJ

NLECTC
National Law Enforcement and
Corrections Technology Center