

Safe School Presentation

By Tony Nowak



Introduction.

My name is Tony Nowak, I am a retired Joliet Police Officer who has multiple years of experience working in law enforcement and with the safe school program of Joliet.

- 1992-1996 started my career as a deputy with the Cook County Sheriff Department
- 1996 began my career with the Joliet Police Department as a patrol officer.
- 1998 - 2001 I was a Project SAFE (Schools Are For Education) School Officer for the Joliet Police Department:
 - Worked at numerous schools in District 86
 - Helped devise safety programs for kindergarten through H.S. students.
 - Was responsible for calls of service in the area of a specific elementary school
 - Made connections with families and students in that area to reduce crime
- 2001 - 2006 Neighborhood Oriented Policing Team (NOPT) for the Joliet Police Department
 - Community service officer responsible for receiving all calls for service in the assigned area.
 - Worked with community and States Attorney's Office to reduce calls for service in my area
 - Made connections with family and children to reduce crime
 - Received Joliet Police Officer of the Year in 2004

After working in the school program and NOPT, I continued my career with the Joliet Police Department serving as a detective and patrol officer until I retired in 2020.

History of Joliet's safe school program

- In order to understand the progression of our Project SAFE (Schools are for Education) program established in 1995 it is important to read the attachment titled Synopsis of History of The NOPT (Neighborhood Oriented Policing Teams)
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/136v0l2XI3lfQkWrTDEYENjqUaj_J_lxTNUJ1HORzD5Q/edit?usp=sharing

Safe School Project in Joliet

In 1993 Joliet was one of the first departments in the country to start the process to establish safe schools. This was prior to the Columbine School shooting that occurred in 1999, which changed the narrative on how school safety protocols were developed and implemented. Project S.A.F.E. School's initial goal was to allow every child to feel accepted and part of the school while providing alternatives to crime through positive direction. Officers were encouraged to be extremely proactive in the community. Most officers assigned to the unit coached their respective schools sports teams as well as adapting to the different demographics. For example, one officer assigned to a school that contained a large enrollment population of hearing impaired children, learned sign language to communicate with those children. Here is the link of the detailed memorandum sent to each respective schools in our district describing in detail the responsibilities of the officers along with the district.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uGR3jEpCINiZ0Q6K2sKFQsx-W4ob4JjPljrBUWYaMg0/edit?usp=sharing>

The next 2 slides are the brochure that was put out to the public describing the benefits of Project S.A.F.E Schools.

The Joliet Police Department's S.A.F.E. Unit was created in 1996 and consists of ten officers working in three separate school districts. Officers are currently assigned to schools in the Joliet Public Grade School District 86, Troy Consolidated School District 30C, and Plainfield Consolidated School District 202.

Summer Camp



Every year the Joliet Police Department along with the Joliet Park District sponsors a summer youth program. The location provides the backdrop for many activities and lessons that help promote positive values. The youngsters have the opportunity to interact with the officers on a different level, participate in fun activities, and see a vast array of fascinating presentations.

Afterschool Programs



Right Moves for Youth of Greater Joliet is an incentive based program for students in 5th through 8th grade. Students are motivated by police officers and volunteers to remain in school and improve their behavior and academic achievement

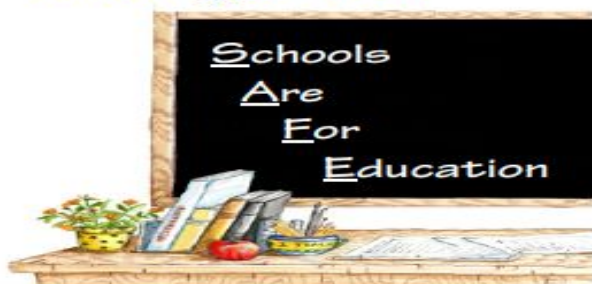
Student Mentoring

The student mentoring program is an afterschool program in which many S.A.F.E. Officers participate. The program is a great way for the S.A.F.E. Officer to work one on one with those students in need of academic assistance.



G.R.E.A.T. is the primary accredited gang and violence prevention program taught in the schools today. All S.A.F.E. Officers are certified G.R.E.A.T. instructors teaching in their school and nearby parochial schools.

S.A.F.E. Officers also teach I-Safe Stranger Danger, Internet Safety, Self-esteem and many other topics as the need arises.



S.A.F.E. Schools Unit

Lt. Gregg Glomb
Office 724-3115 Pager 241-3941

East of Larkin Avenue

West of Larkin Avenue

Sgt. John Panizzo

Ofc. 724-3120 Pager 241-3367

Sgt. Dwayne Killian

Ofc. 724-3120 Pager 241-0361

Officer Paul Albright

Pager 241-5711

Sator Sanchez
Woodland

T.E. Cullbertson

Parks Cultural Academy

Officer Brad Price

Pager 241-1772

William B. Orenic

Troy Craugwell

Troy Heritage

Troy Middle

Officer Louis Zaknoun

Pager 241-5826

A.O. Marshall

Gompers Junior High

Forest Park

Officer Marty Ward

Pager 241-1939

Hufford Junior High

Marycrest

Sandburg

Officer Marcus Mitchell

Pager 241-0468

Washington Junior High

Union School

Keith

Officer Larry Brooks

Pager 241-6174

Timber Ridge

River View

Wesmere

Officer John Peters

Pager 241-5713

Thomas Jefferson

Cunningham

Pershing

Farragut

Officer Adriana Prokuski

Pager 241-0785

Thomas Jefferson

Aux Sable

Meadow View

Plainfield

Officer Dan Wooton

Pager 241-2960

Dirksen Junior High

Lynne Thingpen

Officer Craig Vesper

Pager 241-3951

Ridge Elementary

Drauden Point

Charles Reed

Our Motto

Working With The School
Districts And Community To
Provide A Safe Environment
In Which To Learn; Providing

Alternatives To Crime Through
Positive Direction; And Educating
Administrators, Parents, Teachers,
And Students.



Chief Fred Hayes

"The SAFE program brings students, teachers, parents, neighborhood residents, and the police together. Everyone becomes more familiar with each other for the good of the community."

*Working With The Community
For A Safe City*

JOLIET

Police Department



*S.A.F.E.
Schools*

- Unfortunately after 9/11 all government grants went to Homeland Security and funding was significantly reduced for community policing programs. Joliet was able to sustain our Safe School Program till 2005. Due to reduced staffing levels in patrol, Joliet was unable to have assigned officers in schools.
- After the Uvalde School Mass shooting on May 24th, 2022 and the news coverage, I began realizing the lack of direction that most communities have in school safety and reducing mass shootings. I was determined to bring the Project S.A.F.E School's program back.
 - I met with the Senior City Council member and head of the Public Safety Committee Jan Quillman, who was equally interested in bringing the SAFE School Project back and arranged a meeting with myself and the Chief of Police Bill Evans.
 - Chief Evans is extremely proactive and cares tremendously about ensuring the safety our citizens and children and getting our schools' safety at a level the rest of the country will want to follow.
 - Due to the Joliet Police Department currently being understaffed in patrol, it was suggested by Chief Evans along with Councilman Jan Quillman, Joe Clement, Susanna Ibarra and myself to try and initiate a program to address these concerns similar to what other jurisdictions have implemented. Hiring armed retired police officers in their respective school districts was suggested. Minooka and other school districts have implemented different forms of this program with tremendous success. It has been extremely well received not only by the school districts but the communities they serve.
 - When Joliet's patrol is properly staffed in the future, we can review the possibility of replacing our retired officers with younger sworn Joliet police officers.

- We have had meetings with experts in obtaining grants to help initially fund the return of the Project S.A.F.E Schools program in Joliet. We also are looking to start a 501c nonprofit organization to allow businesses in the area to be able to contribute as well.
- We feel having the police department, along with the city and school districts working together we can accomplish ensuring the safety of the children in our schools.

In closing I believe the following are the reasons having police officers assigned to schools is imperative to reducing mass shootings.

- In Uvalde, officers waited for an hour to engage the suspect, one officer actually stated “ If it was my child I would have went in “
- Officers assigned to schools care about the kids like teachers, who at times during school shootings shielded their students from the violence and injuries. With officers who are invested in the students and are invested in the school, self-preservation is not part of the equation.

- When I was a Safe School Officer along with Chief Hayes, at the time, we decided to increase the school officer's area of responsibility. In doing so, officers would get all calls for service that resulted in police reports for all the students at their respective school.
- Officers would conduct follow-up visits to see if there were problems at students' homes. Officers were then able to supply the tools necessary to provide assistance to the families and kids.
- If our program was established in Uvalde, there is a strong possibility that the shooting would have been thwarted. The officer would have seen the police report, where months prior to the shooting the suspect threatened to kill his family members. The officer could have red flagged that report and possibly obtained a warrant to seize his guns and require him to go through the courts and receive psychological help.
- Some children due to social exclusion and lack of parental support, can experience extreme pressures which cause them to act out in violent behavior.
- If we raise the troubled youth with all resources that the Project S.A.F.E School's program offers and provide them the support needed, they will never want a gun in their hand. What a difference it will make!!

Tony Nowak

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