



## CITY OF MUSKEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM



August 27, 2010

Greetings from your neighbors at the Muskego Police Department,

Summer is definitely coming to an end. You can tell by the shorter days, the little nip in the air during the evening, and the parents doing cartwheels in the front yard as the school bus picks up the kids. Here are some of the things that have kept us jumping lately:

- August 19, 2010 – An employee of Veolia Solid Waste on College Ct. reported the window on her gold 2001 Chrysler Sebring was smashed. Our investigation leads us to believe that the heat, or a possible defect in the window caused the damage.
- August 21, 2010 – A resident in the W20300 block of Monterey Dr. had a concrete lawn ornament taken from the front yard. The ornament was described as a 24" tall boy holding a goose, and weighing 50 to 60 lbs.
- August 24, 2010 – A 4 ½ foot tall wooden bear lawn ornament, weighing 200 lbs., was taken from a yard in the W19700 block of Timberbrook Dr. between 11:00pm on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and noon on August 24<sup>th</sup>.
- August 24, 2010 – A GPS unit and prescription medication were taken from a car parked at International Sales, S73 W16582 Janesville Rd.
- August 24, 2010 – A resident in the W15000 block of Cornell Cir came home to find his home burglarized.
- August 26, 2010 – Employees at Pick N Save reported a male white subject fled the store after stealing several bottles of liquor. Officers have identified a suspect.

As always, if you have any information on these, or any other incidents, please contact the Muskego Police Department at 262-679-4130.

### **The Internet and Your Kids**

As the kids start back to school, I am struck by how different things are, and how many opportunities and advantages kids have over when I was a kid. Never mind that kids today can watch TV on their phones, while our phone was attached to the wall by a cord and the TV was a piece of furniture as big as the sofa; or that they can text each other without ever taking their phone from their pocket, while we had to hunt and peck with two fingers in typing class. The biggest advantage our kids have today is the Internet. It has literally opened the whole world to them, and has the potential to be the biggest influence in our children's lives. That potential also makes it one of the biggest threats our children face.

It used to be a lot easier to spot the sickos who crawled from the sewer to hurt our children. And it was harder for them to identify our kids. Not any more. Now they could be right in your kid's bedroom with them and you wouldn't even know it. A lot of times your kids won't know it either, until it's too late.

The Internet has replaced the school and public libraries as the source to go to when researching homework. And many teachers give assignments that can only be completed on the Internet. The kids have no choice; they have to use the Internet. Now, don't get me wrong, I have no problem with the schools teaching the kids how to use the Internet, and utilizing it as a teaching tool. The Internet is here to stay, and our kids need to know how to use it. And I know that the schools work hard to teach our children Internet safety. What I am saying is, parents need to do their part too, and not leave the job to just the schools.

The biggest thing you can do is make sure you know the sites your kids are on, and who they are talking to on the computer. The FBI website has a Parent's Guide to Internet Safety. It has some great information and suggestions for keeping your children safe, including what you can do to minimize the chances of an on-line exploiter victimizing your child. I have include some of their suggestions here:

- ✓ Communicate, and talk to your child about sexual victimization and potential on-line danger. *Thinking things like this can't happen in Muskego is naïve and dangerous. They call it the World Wide Web for a reason.*
- ✓ Spend time with your children on-line. Have them teach you about their favorite on-line destinations. *And when checking their social networking websites, like Facebook, remember that they may have more than one profile, and the one they show you is not the "real" one they communicate on.*
- ✓ Keep the computer in a common room in the house, not in your child's bedroom. It is much more difficult for a computer-sex offender to communicate with a child when the computer screen is visible to a parent or another member of the household. *In every instance of "sexting" photos we investigate, the photos are taken on cell phones or cameras in the bathroom, or on webcams in the bedroom.*
- ✓ Utilize parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software. While electronic chat can be a great place for children to make new friends and discuss various topics of interest, it is also prowled by computer-sex offenders. Use of chat rooms, in particular, should be heavily monitored. While parents should utilize these mechanisms, they should not totally rely on them. *Our kids are often smarter than we are when it comes to computers, and can find ways around the settings.*
- ✓ Always maintain access to your child's on-line account and randomly check his/her e-mail. Be aware that your child could be contacted through the U.S. Mail. Be up front with your child about your access and reasons why. *Make sure you see all the accounts.*
- ✓ Teach your child the responsible use of the resources on-line. There is much more to the on-line experience than chat rooms.
- ✓ Find out what computer safeguards are utilized by your child's school, the public library, and at the homes of your child's friends. These are all places, outside your normal supervision, where your child could encounter an on-line predator.
- ✓ Understand, even if your child was a willing participant in any form of sexual exploitation, that he/she is not at fault and is the victim. The offender always bears the complete responsibility for his or her actions.
- ✓ Instruct your children:
  - to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met on- line;
  - to never upload (post) pictures of themselves onto the Internet or on-line service to people they do not personally know. *Once its on the Internet, the whole world has it forever;*
  - to never give out identifying information such as their name, home address, school name, or telephone number;
  - to never download pictures from an unknown source, as there is a good chance there could be sexually explicit images;
  - to never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing;
  - that whatever they are told on-line may or may not be true.

The website has many more great tips. Check it out at:  
<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>

I don't want to scare anyone, but we are seeing more and more cases of children being exploited on the Internet, and we need to be proactive if we are going to protect our kids. Remember, if it doesn't look right, it probably isn't, and you can't always rely on your kids to make the right decision, their instincts just aren't as sharp and experienced as yours. They have enough friends. They need parents watching out for them.

Until next time, have a good week, and stay alert and stay safe,

*Lt David Constantineau*

**REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY IMMEDIATELY  
 MUSKEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT – (262) 679-4130  
 IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911**