

Local teacher makes child safety part of her students' lesson plans

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This year, Honeywell's Got2BSafe Program awarded Marti Jones, who served as a fifth grade teacher at Exeter Elementary School during the 2007-08 school year, a \$500 gift certificate for promoting the program's safety rules.

"During the time when Rowan Ford was missing some of my students knew her family and wanted to talk about it, so I decided to take a week and focus on safety," said Jones. "This happened close enough to where my students live that the kids really started asking questions."

Several students read details about the rape and murder of the Stella girl in the newspaper, which brought up more questions, said Jones.

"I left the discussion pretty open for my fifth grade students, but if they asked a question that I felt uncomfortable answering, I told them to ask their parents," said Jones.

Using the Honeywell Got2BSafe Program's four safety rules, "check first, go with a friend, it's my body and tell a trusted adult," Jones incorporated safety education into a week-long lesson plan.

"We had an open discussion and talked about safety and some of the things that the kids thought they should do in certain situations," said Jones. "Then, in small four-person groups, the students researched articles about kids who were kidnapped and presented the findings to the class. After the findings were presented, we had a group discussion about the presentations.

"We talked about telling someone to stop if you feel uncomfortable with what they are doing to you," said Jones. "We also talked about finding another adult you can trust and telling them what is going on. We practiced, in class, telling someone if something wrong is happening to you."

Jones said that through research the students found that many kidnapped children are victimized by individuals that they know.

"I never thought something like Rowan Ford's murder happened in a small community until it happened in Stella," said Jones. "When we did the research, we found that many of these cases touch small communities and it is almost always someone that the child knows."

Jones sent her lesson plan and a short essay about safety education to the Honeywell Got2BSafe Program and was selected as a first prize winner in the program's annual safety education contest.

Jones plans to use the \$500 gift certificate that she received from Honeywell to purchase materials to continue teaching safety in her first grade classroom at Monett Elementary School next year.

"When I teach safety to first graders, I will need to use a different approach," said Jones. "I will look for safety posters to place on the classroom walls and incorporate safety information in open readings and current event discussions."

Jones, who taught at private Christian schools in Missouri before accepting a position at Exeter last year, plans to incorporate safety education into her lesson plans each year.

"With the basic rules of Got2BSafe I believe that I can teach children what they need to know about how to be safe," said Jones. "We may live in a safe community for the most part, but dark things can still happen in small communities."

The Got2BSafe Program is a partnership between Honeywell and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The program was created in 2003 to encourage teachers and parents to provide children with child safety education.