

# The Daily Item

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## **Lynn Woods teacher honored in Got 2B Safe competition**

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LYNN - Lynn Woods Elementary School kindergarten teacher Pamela Laramie understands the concerns that many parents have when they send their young children to school for the first time.

How will they handle their emotions away from home? Will they make friends or be picked on? Most importantly, will they be safe when they are at school and learn important lessons about avoiding dangerous situations?

Laramie has focused a lot of attention on that last question recently and it has paid off in the form of a \$500 gift certificate to Staples stemming from her First-Prize finish in the Honeywell Got 2B Safe competition last month.

Incorporating lessons on how to stay safe around strangers into her everyday classroom teaching, Laramie decided to enter the essay contest and explain to the company how she goes about teaching young children how to stay safe around strangers.

Laramie disguises herself by putting on a white "stranger" hat so that the students can identify when she is role-playing. Going on the principle that 80 percent of what children learn happens when they are actually doing the thing they are trying to learn, Laramie makes her "stranger danger" lessons interactive.

"Role playing is a great way for youngsters to express themselves and have a sense of control over their learning, plus, participation is key," she wrote in her essay. "Puppets for those too shy and other props will be useful tools in that they are sometimes key elements in actual abductions." The safety lessons are based on the four Got 2B Safe rules of safety: Check first with parents and guardians before accepting gifts, rides or invitations, use the buddy system and never go anywhere without a friend, "It's My Body" which teaches children to say "no" to unwelcome advances and to tell a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable.

"I talk about safety informally in my classroom all the time, because in a way I am really the first 'stranger' these kids are ever going to see and have to spend the majority of their day with," she said.

Overall the contest awarded 105 teachers from 30 states with a variety of prizes, including five Grand Prize winners who received a \$10,000 classroom makeover.

Laramie's career began as a lunch aide in the Lynn Public Schools 15 years ago and she has worked her way up the ladder, working her first year as a kindergarten teacher this year at Lynn Woods.

She said she has received a lot of positive feedback from parents who are glad to see their children learning the basics of safety and feel good knowing that they can leave the youngsters in her care with the comfort of knowing they are both safe and learning how to remain safe.

"All efforts are certainly in the best interest of the students and not intended to scare them," she said. "It will serve as a reminder of the potential tragedies that can be avoided by practicing safe habits."