

# LAKE COUNTY NEWS

## **Middletown teacher receives national honor for child safety**

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MIDDLETOWN – Lake County International Charter School second grade teacher Vanessa Halliday's efforts to increase the safety of her students has made her a national standout.

Honeywell and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children recently unveiled a classroom makeover for Halliday, grand prize winner of the third annual Got 2B Safe! Awards Program that recognizes teachers committed to keeping children safer from abduction and sexual exploitation.

This year, 105 teachers from 30 states were honored, including five Grand Prize winners who have created effective techniques to teach children the important safety rules in the Got 2B Safe! program.

"It is critically important that we do everything we can to protect our nation's children from abduction and exploitation," said Tom Buckmaster, president, Honeywell Hometown Solutions.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 797,500 children (younger than 18) were reported missing during a one year period of time, resulting in an average of 2,185 children reported missing each day. Though many of these children are recovered quickly, these staggering numbers highlight the need for increased child safety programming in our nation's schools.

In 2003, Honeywell and NCMEC created the Got 2B Safe! program to arm teachers, parents and children with vital child safety skills. This year, five Grand Prize winners received a free classroom makeover from a professional designer valued at \$10,000, and 100 First Prize winners received \$500 worth of school supplies. To enter, teachers submitted a lesson plan or essay demonstrating how they taught the Got 2B Safe! Four Rules of Safety.

Halliday's Grand Prize winning essay detailed how she applied the Got 2B Safe! Four Rules of Safety in the classroom through creating a skit and song performed at their school assembly. The performance, which featured a Got 2B Safe! safety song, was video-taped for future school presentations.

"The importance of arming our educators, parents and guardians and ultimately, children with child safety tools cannot be underestimated," said Ernie Allen, president and CEO, NCMEC. "We believe that teaching children about personal safety should be a top priority for everyone, and we are excited to partner with Honeywell on this important program that recognizes these exceptional educators."

The Got 2B Safe! program provides four simple rules for children to follow with the help of their families and teachers. Additional information is available at [www.got2bsafe.com](http://www.got2bsafe.com).

**Got 2B Safe! Four Rules:**

1. Check First: Children should always check with parents and guardians before accepting gifts, rides or invitations from anyone, including friends, acquaintances and people they don't know.
2. Go With a Friend: Simple and straightforward – never go anywhere alone. Being with another person in public is safer and more fun.
3. It's My Body: Teach your children they have the right to say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others.
4. Tell a Trusted Adult: Teach your children to TELL a trusted adult – parent, guardian, teacher, etc. – if anyone or anything makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.