

Teacher Honored for Work in Abduction Prevention

July 14, 2009

By Kaitlyn Schroyer

SPRINGFIELD -- Each year about 797,500 children go missing, of which 2,185 are reported daily to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. However, nationwide, teachers are changing that fact with the education of their students in abduction prevention.

Honeywell Hometown Solutions is helping those teachers with the Got 2B Safe! Program. Designed to arm teachers, parents and children with vital child safety skills, the program recently awarded 105 teachers from 32 states for their efforts -- five grand prize winners and 100 first place winners. The winners were recognized for their dedication in teaching child safety to students.

One of the first place winners, who received a \$500 gift certificate for school supplies, was physical education and health teacher Cindy Coughlin, from Alice B. Beal Elementary.

"We started our program last year to help with understanding the community and the students' surroundings," Coughlin said. "The program includes things like walking in the buddy system and not going near cars or strangers."

The four step lesson includes "Check First," "Go With a Friend," "It's My Body" and "Tell a Trusted Adult."

"Check First" involves the child checking with parents or guardians before accepting gifts, rides or invitations from anyone. "Go With A Friend" is all about never traveling anywhere alone. "It's My Body" teaches children to say no to any unwelcome, uncomfortable or confusing touch or actions by others, and "Tell a Trusted Adult" teaches the child to tell an older person they know they can trust if anyone or anything makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.

"The program makes it a lot safer for the children to walk to school," Coughlin commented. "Before the students walked alone or their parent brought them and now, the parent can feel comfortable with the child walking to school. They are also meeting new friends."

With the money from the award, Coughlin and school counselor, Sandra Collins, hope to purchase much needed supplies for their classrooms including ink cartridges, paper products and more.

"It's always good since the economy isn't so great. We can really use things at our school," Coughlin said. "It's all for the students."

"Honeywell has a long standing commitment to family safety and security. With Got 2B Safe! we are helping to protect our nation's children from abduction and exploitation," said Tom Buckmaster, president, Honeywell Hometown Solutions. "We are thrilled to honor these teachers for their efforts to provide life-saving lessons to their students and bringing vital awareness to such an important issue."