



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

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West Valley Senior Lead Office (818) 374-7630
Sergeant Frank Avila

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ON-LINE SAFETY

PARENTS REMINDED TO KEEP THEIR KIDS SAFE ON INCREASINGLY POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

In recent years, many free online social networking sites have come into existence and have become increasingly popular among minors, especially teenagers. Estimates suggest there are over 200 social networking sites in existence; some of the most popular sites boasting registrants numbering in the tens of millions, with hundreds of thousands of new registrants per day. These sites allow individuals to communicate with each other and to form networks. As a registrant of these sites, a member can create a "profile" which is a unique webpage established so that the member can identify himself/herself to others. These websites allow its members to customize their profiles with features including a forum for outside viewers to access photographs and details about the member, including physical attributes and personal information, as well as to access comments and thoughts posted by the member. Viewers of the member's profile may also contact the member via e-mail or instant messenger, unless otherwise restricted. Special Agents and task force officers associated with the FBI's Innocent Images National Initiative, and their counterpart law enforcement officers around the country, have reported the increased use of social networking sites by sex offenders who troll sites in order to locate and communicate with potential victims. The websites' popularity in developing new friendships makes it possible for sex offenders to seek victims by joining the site. Although some of these websites have a specific age requirement in order to join, research has shown that minimally effective or non-existent monitoring by both parents and website operators have made it possible for underage children to join. The FBI has successfully fostered relationships with willing companies that operate social networking sites in efforts to aid law enforcement in the detection of online sexual predators, in addition to establishing a partnership that will contribute to a safer online environment.

This advisory should serve as a reminder to parents and legal guardians that their vigilance is necessary in monitoring the use of the Internet by minors under their supervision. Some tips for parents or guardians are listed below:

- Monitor your child's use of the Internet at all times. With regard to social networking sites, discuss safeguards with your child and explain the need for your involvement in setting up restrictions for access.
- Ensure your child is not misrepresenting his or her age while on the Internet. Even if a minor does not post personal information on their profile, a predator may track him or her down by perusing the profile of one of his/her friends, on which your child might be featured.
- Read and exercise the safety tips listed on the site of which your child is a member, and report inappropriate behavior directly to the website.
- Place your child's computer in the family room to facilitate monitoring of online activity.
- Restrict your child's profiles and groups on social networking sites to people your child knows personally; do not allow access to individuals your child has met through the Internet. Most sites allow for parents to block questionable individuals from contacting their children by viewing their child's profile.
- Children should be discouraged from posting personal information.

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children operates a Cyber Tipline at cybertipline.com that allows parents and children to report child pornography and other incidents of sexual exploitation of children by submitting an online form.
- Complaints received by NCMEC that indicate a violation of federal law are referred to the FBI for appropriate action. Violations of state or local law are referred to the appropriate authorities.

In Los Angeles, the FBI and its partners in local, state and federal law enforcement comprise the S.A.F.E. Team (Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement). The SAFE Team is one of dozens of Crimes Against Children Task Forces in the United States, led by the FBI's Innocent Images National Initiative located in Baltimore, Maryland. SAFE Team members include the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol, California Department of Justice, Orange County Sheriff's Department, the United States Attorney's Office and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, in addition to part-time members including the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Los Angeles Unified School District Police Department and the California State Department of Parole.

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To learn more about staying safe online, visit the following organizations listed in this newsletter.

ENCINO:

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Contact Officer Scoggins for information on the next Tarzana Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Federal Trade Commission – <http://www.onguardonline.gov/>

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft, and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC manages OnGuardOnline.gov, which provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you be on guard against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information.

National Crime Prevention Council – <http://www.ncpc.org/> and <http://www.mcgruff.org/>

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a private, nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur. Among many crime prevention issues, NCPC addresses Internet Safety with kids and parents through www.mcgruff.org and public service advertising under the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign — symbolized by McGruff the Crime Dog® and his "Take A Bite Out Of Crime®."



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Contact Officer Ham or Officer Olivares for information on the next Lake Balboa Neighborhood Watch Meetings.

GetNetWise – <http://www.getnetwise.org/>

GetNetWise is a public service sponsored by Internet industry corporations and public interest organizations to help ensure that Internet users have safe, constructive, and educational or entertaining online experiences. The GetNetWise coalition wants Internet users to be just “one click away” from the resources they need to make informed decisions about their and their family’s use of the Internet.

Internet Keep Safe Coalition – <http://www.ikeepsafe.org/>

iKeepSafe.org, home of Faux Paw the Techno Cat, is a coalition of 49 governors/first spouses, law enforcement, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other associations dedicated to helping parents, educators, and caregivers by providing tools and guidelines to teach children the safe and healthy use of technology. The organization’s vision is to see generations of children worldwide grow up safely using technology and the Internet.

RESEDA:

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Next Neighborhood Watch Meetings – *September 12 and October 10 – 7: 00 p.m.*

**Ann Kinzle Community Room located in the West Valley Community Police Station,
19020 Vanowen St., Reseda**

i-SAFE – <http://www.i-safe.org/>

Founded in 1998 and endorsed by the U.S. Congress, i-SAFE is a non-profit foundation dedicated to protecting the online experiences of youth everywhere. i-SAFE incorporates classroom curriculum with dynamic community outreach to empower students, teachers, parents, law enforcement, and concerned adults to make the Internet a safer place. Join them today in the fight to safeguard children’s online experience.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – <http://www.missingkids.com/> and <http://www.netsmartz.org/>

NCMEC is a private, non-profit organization that helps prevent child abduction and sexual exploitation; helps find missing children; and assists victims of child abduction and sexual exploitation, their families, and the professionals who serve them.

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Contact Officer Scoggins for information on the next Tarzana Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

National Cyber Security Alliance – <http://www.staysafeonline.org/>

CSA is a non-profit organization that provides tools and resources to empower home users, small businesses, and schools, colleges, and universities to stay safe online. A public-private partnership, NCSA members include the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Trade Commission, and many private-sector corporations and organizations.

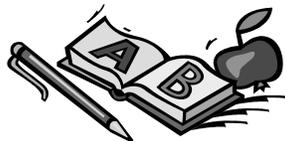
Staysafe – <http://www.staysafe.org/>

staysafe.org is an educational site intended to help consumers understand both the positive aspects of the Internet as well as how to manage a variety of safety and security issues that exist online.

Wired Safety – <http://www.wiredsafety.org/>

WiredSafety.org is an Internet safety and help group. Comprised of unpaid volunteers around the world, WiredSafety.org provides education, assistance, and awareness on all aspects of cybercrime and abuse, privacy, security, and responsible technology use. It is also the parent group of Teenangels.org, FBI-trained teens and preteens who promote Internet safety.

The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY(1-866-653-4261.) Watch a new video, How to File a Complaint, at ftc.gov/video to learn more. The FTC enters consumer complaints into the Consumer Sentinel Network, a secure online database and investigative tool used by hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.



Now that school is back in session, please don't forget to keep your MP3 player, iPod, laptop computer, digital camera, GPS, cell phone, wallet, check book, credit cards out of sight when you leave a vehicle. Don't create an atmosphere that is conducive to a thief.

Remember “LOCK IT-HIDE IT- KEEP IT!”