

## *How it all did begin?*

Safety Town, a safety education program, was founded in 1937 in Mansfield, Ohio, by Traffic Commissioner Frennd Boals and Kindergarten teacher, Ms. Ruth Robbins. It was designed to teach various areas of traffic safety to pre-kindergarten children in a free community program.

This program has been sponsored by the City of Mansfield and funded by private donations ever since that time. This generous support has enabled the City to continue this program without cost to children and their families. It has kept the same basic concept of teaching pre-kindergarten children traffic safety.

As times have changed, so have we. The program now includes pedestrian safety, bike safety, stranger safety, drug awareness, fire safety, school bus safety, outdoor safety and seatbelt safety through constructive play, puppet shows, coloring, songs and visual media.

## *How Do I involve the community?*

Inform the public on what the program involves:

- How they can be a part of it (Request Donations from area businesses, organizations and individuals)
- How they resister their children or grand-children.
- Use the media (submit an article as a news release, free public radio announcements, etc.).
- There are many resources available for material for a free community program including local businesses
- Involve your local police department and fire department, health department, local hospital, post office and your local school district

## *How Can I create a Safety Town Village?*

The Safety Town village consists of:

- Miniature buildings, streets, crosswalks and sidewalks, street signs and a traffic light.
- Miniature buildings can be constructed by a local carpenter's union or local prison population with donated materials or materials purchased with donations
- Village streets can be a permanent part of our local elementary school playground or a temporary structure large enough for children to ride through
- Street signs and a traffic signal were donated by your local city sign and signal department or can be purchased through a supplier.
- Tricycles or an other age appropriate transportation may be purchased for the children to ride in Safety Town to learn to read and obey traffic signs.

The main objective is to create an environment for children to practice what they have learned through constructive play.

## *How Do I Set A Curriculum?*

- Our program is 3 hours per day for 10 days during the summer before the children enter kindergarten and can be varied according to your needs.
- Have a daily theme (see Parents Guide to Safety Town) which is taught through games, crafts, coloring pages, songs, movies and special guest appearances.
- A daily theme can include but is not limited to traffic and pedestrian safety, stranger and drug safety, bicycle and animal awareness, home safety and emergency telephone use, police interaction, fire safety, school bus and seatbelt safety, and outdoor safety.
- The program should be conducted in a regular elementary school classroom setting with table and chairs and a carpet for group activities

## *Who Do I Need to Hire?*

- The director must be able to relate to children well, be organized and a good problem solver. The director must work well with the community organizations and be an experienced supervisor.
- Teachers must be able to work well with children and their parents, be an excellent communicator, organized, able to follow directions and be willing to work on a schedule. Teachers must be willing to adhere to the daily course schedule closely and teach safety rules that are reinforced by crafts, music and games.
- Teacher's aides must work well under a schedule, be willing to follow directions and work well with children. Teacher's aides will assist teachers and children in their safety lessons by preparing the classroom for activities and craft projects, supervising children and participating in activities with the children such as games and songs.
- The outside staff must work well with children in the Safety Town Village. They must be willing to work directly with the children in small groups, walking beside them as the ride on the "streets" and walk on the sidewalks, teaching them to obey traffic signs and signals and how to cross the street. The outside staff must be willing to assist in preparing crafts and doing set up as needed.

## *What Resources Do I Have?*

- Your local police department for special guests, materials and program support
- Your local Library for age appropriate safety books, coloring material, craft ideas
- Your local elementary school for age appropriate art projects, music, coloring pages and curriculum suggestions
- City/Village government for financial and material support

## Where do I start?

Community involvement has been the key to our success. Each year, starting in the fall, we send a donation request letter, along with an informational brochure to area business, organizations and individuals requesting monetary donations.

Early in the spring, we invite a special guest from our local police department, fire department, U.S. Post Office, hospital, school bus garage, the telephone company and the local Red Cross to be a part of the Safety Town program. All or most of the organizations will already have a child education program in place and will provide an experienced speaker with visual aides as well as material for the children to take home to their parents.

Parents usually begin registering their children for Kindergarten about 6 months prior to the start of school. Schools usually will set up a time for parents to come to the school to register. This is an excellent time to have parents register their children for Safety Town. Provide registration forms for each school within your school district along with an informational brochure about the program. Note: Registration forms should include emergency contact information and a waiver of liability.

## What are our goals for Safety Town?

While pedestrian and traffic safety continue to be emphasized in the Mansfield Safety Town Program, other important lessons for pre-school children have been incorporated as well. The intent is to provide a well-rounded safety "primer" through repetition, interactive activities and structured play for children regarding present everyday dangers.

These are some eye opening statistics on regarding safety issues involving children.

- Children suffer a higher risk of disability or death through preventable injury than all childhood diseases combined.
- Seventy Percent of all fire ending in a childhood death are started by children.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian accidents are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries to children
- Each year over 1,000 children are poisoned by household products, plants and drugs. Most of them are pre-schoolers and occur before lunch and supper when children are hungry or thirsty.
- Each year, 200,000 are injured on the nation's playgrounds. 148,000 of these injuries involve equipment, and most are a result of falls.
- The U.S. Department of Justice statistics of kidnapped children in America estimated that 114,600 non-family abductions are attempted each year, with approximated 3,200 to 4,600 being successful.

Statistical information is a consolidation from various web sites and printed safety material



### Need More Information?

#### Contact:

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Web: <http://ci.mansfield.oh.us> and follow the police link



City of Mansfield, Ohio

Division of Police