

SAFETY

School Violence: A Deadly Pattern Calls for Action

NewsUSA

(NU) - Are schools safe? Considering the number of tragic events that have occurred at schools across the country in recent years, this is one question every parent, teacher, administrator and community member is having a hard time answering.

The recent shooting in Red Lake, Minn., put another act of classroom violence on the map. This tragedy, as well as other high-profile school shootings such as the one at Columbine High School in Colorado and others in Tennessee, Oregon and Michigan, clearly show that school violence is not limited by geography or demographics.

This deadly pattern has stirred concerns about school safety, gun control and the need to address the roots of such violence in the nation's schools.

To raise awareness of school safety and security issues and to help make schools more safe, the National Crime Prevention Council, best known for its 25-year-old beloved icon, McGruff the Crime Dog, developed the Be Safe and Sound initiative in collaboration with National PTA. This public education effort, funded by the Allstate Foundation, Assa Abloy Group and the Security Industry Association, mobilizes parents to work with school officials and policymakers in creating an environment where students feel safe.

The initiative distributes publications that help parents and others learn the ropes to becoming



Parents, school officials and policymakers can help make schools a safer place.

involved in school safety issues. Its "Caregivers' Guide to School Safety and Security," for example, outlines specific actions they can take to help improve school safety and includes an overview of security guidelines.

Another helpful resource is the "School Safety and Security Toolkit: A Guide for Parents, Schools, and Communities." This guide gives parents and community members the tools they need to work with school administrators and policymakers to assess the safety and security of schools and plan for improvements.

"Until we put school safety at the top of the community agenda, our schools — and our children — will continue to be vulnerable," said Alfonso E. Lenhardt, president and CEO of the National Crime Prevention Council.

To learn more about the Be Safe and Sound initiative, visit www.ncpc.org/besafe.