

Optimist Safety Day all about the kids

Published: Wednesday, May 16, 2012

http://www.berksmontnews.com/articles/2012/05/16/southern_berks_news/news/doc4fb419178cb74395907127.txt

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For Journal Register News Service

What can you do to keep your child safe?

That was the focus of the Daniel Boone Optimist Club's Youth Safety Day held May 5, at the Lake Drive Recreation Area in Douglassville.

"The event is about educating our youth and the community and making it a safer place," said Shawn Moore, chairperson of Youth Safety Day.

Parents learned about measures they could take to help keep their children safe and what to do in the case of a variety of emergencies, and children learned how to be safe while doing what kids do – like riding bikes, swimming, and playing with animals.



News photo by Dawn Wivell Alexander Rosario, a first grader at Monocacy Elementary with Ben Levensgood, Bike Safety Trainer, and Christy Staudt – both from WalkBikeBerks.

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The club invited a variety of exhibitors, from the Boyertown Area YMCA who taught kids and adults about water safety to Party Animal Express who shared information about animal safety to Plumb Line Physical Therapy who taught kids how to safely fill their backpacks to avoid injury.

The Optimist Club and participating exhibitors were able to combine safety education with hands-on activities and fun.

Children had the opportunity to go through the Amity Rescue Kids Safety House, which, according to fire Chief Michael Zomolsky, is a fire prevention prop. The inside of the safety house is a simulated home, complete with kitchen and bedroom, that helps teach children fire safety tips and fire awareness. Before leaving the "house," the kids experienced a live (and perfectly safe) smoke demonstration to practice escape drills.

In addition, Amity Crime Watch was on hand to register children's bikes, so that they could be identified if the bike was lost or stolen. The bike's serial number, color, make, and model, were recorded, and a tag placed on the bike. If the bike is found, it can be returned to the correct person.

The kids could also participate in a bike rodeo, sponsored by WalkBikeBerks and BikeLine. Before each child entered the course, Justin Care from Bike Line checked each bike – brakes, tires, etc. Then Ben Levensgood, Bike Safety Trainer, checked their helmets and gave them tips about helmet fit and safety. Then as the kids had a chance to show off their bike riding skills, they were given additional tips about bike safety.

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Just for fun, Reading Phillies Screwball was on hand, Bouncing Fun Time was there with a moon bounce, and there were lots of prizes – kids' bikes, Reading Phillies Tickets, and gift certificates to Lords & Ladies, Little Nicky's pizza, and Chick-fil-A.

On a more serious note, CHIP, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Freemasons, was also there. They addressed one of a parent's worst nightmare – a child gone missing.

They offered free "purple packets" to interested parents. These packets provide law enforcement officials with important materials that can help locate a child if he or she should ever go missing or become separated from a parent.

The kit contains a simple DNA kit, a fingerprint and ID card, and a DVD of your child.

For the DVD, children are asked a series of questions that capture speech patterns, mannerisms, and other things that could help identify your child even if their appearance is altered. W. Richard Dillon, a representative at the CHIP table, said this DVD can save time getting your child into the Amber Alert system.

For more information about the CHIP program, call 1800-266-8424 or go to www.pagrandlodge.org.

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was also there to share the hazards of innocent-looking, coin-sized lithium button batteries that are located in many electronic devices.

If a small child swallows one of those batteries, which are located in everything from remote controls to musical cards, it can become lodged in a child's throat and cause a chemical reaction that could burn through the esophagus within a few hours.

This year the Optimist Club added a 5K walk/run to the day's events to help raise money for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

The Daniel Boone Optimist Club's next big event is Community Days Sept. 7 to 9. For more information go to www.danielbooneoptimist.com.