

NEWS RELEASE



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Students Learn About ‘Cyber Bullying’ and Steps to Create a Safe and Secure Online Experience

Verizon and i-SAFE Partner for Cyber Safety Week and Provide Online Safety Education Events

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. -- Internet safety experts are teaching middle and high school students steps they can take to have a safe and secure online experience and address issues such “cyber bullying” through i-SAFE education and awareness programs.

The first program, held Monday (Feb. 1) at the JFK Middle School in Northampton, kicks off a series of 12 Internet safety seminars this week -- Cyber Safety Week -- at schools in western Massachusetts – in Pittsfield, North Adams, Northfield and West Springfield, in addition to Northampton.

The sessions are being held by Verizon and i-SAFE, the leader in online safety education, and funded by a \$45,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation. They cover a wide range of topics,

including: cyber predators, cyber gangs, identity theft, leetspeak (online code words), mobile romance (dating services over cell phones) and multiplayer online games.

Monday's event was hosted by Northampton Mayor Clare Higgins, Northampton Schools Superintendent Isabelina Rodriguez and Verizon New England President Donna Cupelo.

Among the 26 million students receiving i-SAFE training nationally, more than 326,000 of them are in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Cyber Safety Week events are expected to reach at least 4,000 more students.

The sessions for students are aimed at encouraging them to learn the steps they can take to remain safe online and then share that knowledge with their friends and families. Similar sessions for parents raise awareness and help provide them with tools to protect their families online.

Verizon and i-Safe have partnered to hold similar Internet safety programs in several states across the country.

Verizon is engaged in Internet safety on multiple fronts. The company provides customers with an industry-leading slate of online cybersecurity tools and educational programs that empower parents and children. Verizon also works closely with law enforcement to assist with investigations involving crimes against children, and partners with organizations like i-SAFE to deliver tools and information to various segments of the community.

Cupelo said, "Online technology provides endless opportunities for students and families, through the use of simple tools students can ensure they feel safe and secure while online and provide their parents piece of mind."

Data collected by i-SAFE also show that 35 percent of Massachusetts students tell their parents "almost nothing" or "nothing" about their Internet-only friends. And 30 percent of fifth-

through twelfth-graders said their parents would disapprove or punish them if they knew about all their Internet activities. To date, i-SAFE has helped educate more than 26 million students and more than 250,000 adults nationwide through Congressional funding and corporate partnerships.

More information about Verizon's Internet safety initiatives can be found at

www.verizonnationalmedia.com/familycenter/ and

www.verizonfoundation.org/core/internet_safety.shtml.

About i-SAFE Inc.

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE Inc. is the leader in e-Safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate and empower students, parents, seniors, and community members to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experiences. i-SAFE provides knowledge that will enable them to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful online behavior, and to respond appropriately. This is accomplished through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to students, parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. i-SAFE is the only e-Safety foundation to combine these elements. i-SAFE Inc. is recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization. www.i-SAFE.org

About the Verizon Foundation

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its free educational Web site, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2009, the Verizon Foundation awarded more than \$67.5 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the U.S. and abroad. It also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in an additional \$26.1 million in combined contributions to nonprofits. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation's largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 5 million hours of community service since 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizonfoundation.org.

About Verizon

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a global leader in delivering broadband and other wireless and wireline communications services to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving more than 91 million customers nationwide. Verizon also provides converged communications, information and entertainment services over America's most advanced fiber-optic network, and delivers innovative, seamless business solutions to customers around the world. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of approximately 222,900 and last year generated consolidated revenues of more than \$107 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

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