



Network of Victim Assistance

2370 York Road • Suite B1 • Jamison, PA 18929
215.343.6543 • www.NOVABucks.org

n e w s r e l e a s e & MEDIA ALERT

For Immediate Release

23 September 2008

Contact:

Barbara Hisiger, NOVA Director of Development & Community Relations
215.343.6543 or bhisiger@NOVABucks.org

NOVA Launches Internet Safety Initiatives for Bucks Kids

*Assistant DA Speaks on Real Cyber Crime,
Verizon Kicks Off School Program on Internet Safety*

On Friday, October 3, at 10:30am, the Internet safety initiatives launched this summer by Network of Victim Assistance take center stage at the Oliver Heckman Elementary School in Langhorne. NOVA's new corporate partner, Verizon spearheaded by William B. Petersen, President of Verizon Pennsylvania; Bucks County's First Assistant District Attorney David W. Zellis; Mark Schweiker, President & CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, NOVA board member and chair of its Voices Against Violence Campaign; and NOVA educators will present several elements of the program—developed by NOVA—to students, teachers and parents.

The 30-minute presentation includes a brief talk by Zellis on cyber crime and cyber bullying, honoring the student winner of the summer "Surfing for Safety" art contest, revealing the new Internet safety tips mousepad that will be placed on classroom computer desks throughout the county, and recognizing Verizon's generous grant to NOVA to support the its Internet safety programs.

DA's office

Zellis will speak to the fourth and fifth graders about his personal and professional experience with the very real and compelling dangers the Internet poses for unsuspecting kids and their families. The prosecutor's presence here follows on the heels of his participation in the September 22 summit of community leaders, "Working Together to End Bullying," which was sponsored by the District Attorney's office, Central Bucks Interfaith Council and NOVA, and held at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit in Doylestown.

"In my job, I'm reminded every day of the many dangers the new technologies pose," says Zellis. "There will always be those who by intention or by ignorance use the Internet to harm others. We need programs such as these by NOVA that make our kids aware and that make us as parents and community leaders aware and responsible for the safety of all our young people."

Verizon Commitment to Internet Safety

Customers look to Verizon to help them enjoy a safe experience on the Internet while giving them the full benefits that the broadband experience delivers. Verizon believes it has an opportunity to empower people to keep children safe online. Its Safety & Security website also links to a number of Internet sites designed to help parents learn new ways to protect their children online, including links to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, StaySafeOnline, iSAFE and OnGuard Online.

Verizon proudly supports NOVA's county-wide Internet safety initiatives to help keep the entire county safe. Verizon's \$24,500 grant has made possible the design and production of the mousepad and supports ongoing efforts that provide Internet safety education and awareness programs to students, parents and teachers across Bucks County.

"Verizon is extremely pleased to partner with NOVA's efforts to reach more of Bucks County's youth on Internet safety. NOVA's education and awareness programs are critically important," Petersen states. "By opening a dialogue with our children about the safe use of the Internet, we can shine a bright light on this issue. By educating our young people to use these powerful online tools responsibly, we can advance a culture of trust, respect and accountability on the Internet, just as we do in our schools, homes, businesses and society."

October 3 program

On October 3, former Pennsylvania governor Mark Schweiker—President & CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, NOVA board member and co-chair of its Voices Against Violence Campaign—will accept Verizon's check on NOVA's behalf.

"As a long-time supporter of NOVA's mission, I know how important its Internet safety initiatives are to the overall health of our community here in Bucks County and beyond," says Schweiker. "Verizon's grant helps to make possible the great work that NOVA's educators do in developing such vital programs and delivering them to the young people, teachers and families who need this most. We're deeply gratified by Verizon's generosity and commitment."

NOVA and Verizon will jointly reveal the Internet Safety Tips mousepad recently designed and produced through Verizon's sponsorship, and will present the student winner of the summer "Surfing to Safety" art contest that provided the artwork for the mousepad. NOVA will distribute 3,500 mousepads to elementary and middle schools across Bucks County—putting a reminder of how to use the Internet responsibly at students' fingertips.

The media is invited to attend the 10:30-11:00 presentation at the school on Cherry Street and Maple Avenue. The full roster of those participating include

from Bucks County District Attorney's office: *David W. Zellis*, Bucks County First Assistant District Attorney

from Verizon: *William B. Petersen*, president of Verizon Pennsylvania

from NOVA: *Mark Schweiker*, President & CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, NOVA board member and co-chair of Voices Against Violence Campaign; *Barbara Clark*, executive director; *Karen Lasorda*, president of Board of Directors; and staff educators involved with the Internet safety programs, including *Mandy Mundy*, director of education, *Mary Worthington*, elementary education coordinator, *Melissa Stack*, marketing intern, and *Mallory Bosler*, education intern

others: *Brian Kern*, principal, Oliver Heckman Elementary School (Neshaminy School District); *Isaiah*, age 12, student winner of summer Internet Safety art contest *and other students, teachers and parents*

More to do, more kids to reach

This summer NOVA took its Internet safety program to fourth through sixth graders at seven lower Bucks County summer camps run by the Latino Leadership Alliance and the YWCA of Bucks County. As part of the program, it ran an art contest that resulted in the artwork that appears on the Internet safety mousepad.

Although NOVA conducted more than 250 programs on cyber safety to youth in schools and community centers in FY2007-2008, it has still reached only 10 percent of the at-risk population. With Verizon as its partner, NOVA's goal is to continue to expand its outreach with additional programs that reinforce awareness of Internet vulnerabilities and safe, respectful use of computer and cell phone technologies.

#####

ABOUT NOVA

Network of Victim Assistance supports, counsels and empowers victims of sexual assault and other serious crimes and works to eliminate violence in Bucks County through advocacy, community education and prevention programs. Founded in 1974, NOVA is a non-profit 501(c)(3), community-based organization operating out of three offices in Jamison, Perkasie and Levittown. Services are made possible through the financial support of federal, state and local government grants and contracts, United Way of Bucks County, corporations, foundations and private donations. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. For more information, go to www.NOVABucks.org.