

Fire district pilots national safety campaign in schools

The Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District was selected by the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal's Office to participate in a pilot program called "Sound Off." The Sound Off program includes three fire safety lessons that were developed for students in second and third grade. Topics include smoke alarms and how they work, hunting for fire hazards in the home, and escape planning. The unique part of this program is that students perform a safety survey of their own home with their family, and if issues are found with their smoke alarms, the Fire District will install new ones free of charge.

Six Fire District volunteers started the program in Sisters before spring break, and have visited second- and third-graders at Sisters Christian Academy, Black Butte School, and Sisters Elementary School. Total children contacted through this program since March 2019 is 167. Because this is a pilot program, a pre- and post-test will be used to show what the children have learned, and results

will be shared with program developers.

The Sound Off program was developed by a company called Young Minds Inspired, in conjunction with the Center for National Prevention Initiatives at Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI). This is the third year that MPHI has received grant funding through a FEMA Fire Prevention Safety Grant, and Oregon is the 10th state to pilot the program.

The goal of this program is to ensure that every family has working smoke alarms in their home and understands the need and importance of a home fire escape plan. Fire Safety Manager Doug Green said, "Working smoke alarms give families critical extra time to put their escape plan into action and safely exit the home. Even 40+ years after the introduction of the Life Safety Code (NFPA 101), requiring smoke alarms to be installed in every home, a large segment of the population lives with too few or no working smoke alarms. The Sound Off program is another tool in our toolbox to try and increase the percentage of



Sisters firefighters visited with students at Sisters Christian Academy to promote home safety, including smoke alarm installation, fire hazards in the home, and family escape plans.

homes with working smoke alarms in Sisters Country."

Gretchen Lane, second-grade teacher at Sisters Elementary School said, "The Sound Off fire safety program provided valuable information to both students, parents, and staff alike. The lessons were engaging, interactive, and informative, providing good practice and a stronger knowledge base of fire prevention, smoke alarms and home escape plans. The home connection allowed for parents to be involved in their students' learning, helping to test their home equipment and talking with them about these important life lessons."

"I personally experienced the home connection piece of this program with my family as well. The Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District visited my home and installed the proper number of smoke alarms to keep my family safe. Only working smoke alarms can protect the ones you love, and I feel fortunate to live in a community who offers such a valuable outreach program to the schools!"

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