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THURSTON HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING

Some offer help to at-risk youth

*One researchers says
preventing violence
in the schools involves
a three-part strategy*

By Teri Meeuwse
Higher Education Editor

Responding to an event like the Thurston High School shooting involves managing the media, providing counseling for those involved, and giving medical attention to those hurt in the shooting.

But responding to the short- and long-term effects of such a tragedy involves three major parts, according to a University researcher.

Jeff Sprague, a researcher with the Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, said school safety, social environment and the identification of at-risk kids are important factors in dealing with potentially harmful events at school.

The most immediate concern following an event like the Thurston shootings is the school's safety, he said. Adding preventive measures, such as locking all doors during school hours, installing metal detectors and adding security officers to the campus are important in preventing violence.

"Schools could add metal detectors that are similar to airport metal detectors," he said. "Airport metal detectors were installed 20 years ago in response to terrorist threats and they seem to have been working fine."

The "it won't happen here" mentality often holds schools back from adding physical preventive measures, he said.

The social involvement of the community is another major factor in violence prevention.

"The schools and the community need to set up a system of screening for anti-social behavior in kids," Sprague said.

While a very small percentage of youth have anti-social behavior problems, there are major warning signs to look for including: family characteristics, history of negative behavior, legal problems, death, divorce, academic problems, bad peer relations and non-compliance with rules and regulations.

"They don't have to have all of these characteristics," Sprague said. "They only need just a few."

Besides identifying at-risk kids, providing help within the schools is necessary, he said. Learning to identify and manage student behaviors, creating a relationship between parents and the school, and positive reinforcement are important.

"Schools need all the help they can get, including resources," he said. "It's like when you have a really bad headache, you take more aspirin. Well, schools have big headaches, but don't have the resources."

Community members can help schools control the "headaches" by volunteering in schools, increasing funding and opening the doors so the relationship between

the community and school is defined, he said.

University students, for example, may choose a career that may help the community youth, he said. Learning more about social issues, keeping in contact with a child at least once a month, getting involved within the school and volunteering with community agencies are all good ways to get involved with the next generation, he said.

Another way for the community to help at-risk youth may be to create a new learning atmosphere, according to Bill and Cate Lay. Parents have the opportunity to enroll their sixth- to 12th-grade students in a semi-military style, registered alternative education school in the Springfield area. Pioneer Youth Corps of Oregon enrolls students who are at risk or who have already experienced minor offenses in the community.

"We target those who fall through the cracks," Bill Lay said. "These kids are those who aren't good enough for the regular school system, but not bad enough for Skipworth [Juvenile Detention Center]."

The students wear uniforms and are ranked officers, he said. They are taught courtesy and military drills and are honored with colored awards to wear on their uniforms.

"Students are more likely to hide away paper awards," Lay said, "so we give them awards they have to wear and be proud of."

Update: Kinkel being held at Skipworth

Continued from Page 1

and shot multiple rounds of ammunition into a crowd of students, media conferences have revealed more information regarding the suspect and issues surrounding the ongoing investigations during the last few days.

On Friday, suspect Kipland Philip Kinkel appeared at the Lane County Circuit Court and was charged with four aggravated counts of murder — his two parents and two Thurston students.

Kinkel entered the downtown courtroom dressed in an Oregon sweatshirt and protected by Teflon body armor Friday afternoon. He was escorted by police through a crowd of reporters who were required to stand behind a yellow line 20 feet from the courtroom.

An arraignment was set for June 16, at which time the defendant will enter a plea.

Kinkel will be tried as an adult for the deaths of Thurston students Mikael E. Nickolauson, who died Thursday, and Benjamin A. Walker, who died Friday morning, and his parents, Faith and William Kinkel. Both parents died Wednesday afternoon after Kinkel was arrested and suspended from school for possession of a stolen weapon on school grounds.

At the time of Kinkel's appearance at the courthouse, Lane County Sheriff Jan Clements released more information regarding the suspect's residence, 88082 Chita Loop, where investigators first arrived Thursday afternoon.

However, investigations and the removal of the bodies were halted several times in order to respond to the threat of possible explosives at the residence.

At one point, more than 15 homes within a one-fourth-mile radius of the residence were also evacuated.

Clements said Friday that the Eugene Police Department's Explosives Disposal Team and Lane County Sheriff's Office personnel were asked to first search the house to determine whether the scene was clear of all explosives.

During the initial search on Thursday, a number of boxes containing chemical substances and fireworks were discovered under the house in a crawl space.

Clements said personnel was impressed by the intricacy of the devices.

"They were very sophisticated," Clements said. "When you are considering that a 15-year-old was behind it, remarkable is not an overstatement."

At that point in the investigation, Clements said he had no idea why the explosive devices were placed throughout the home, and investigators were unable to tell if the parents had been aware of the devices.

"You don't know how private is private," he said. "Whether or not they should know or shouldn't know, I can't assume anything."

Clements said it was hard to think rationally about the situation. "I don't know how to get inside of someone's head."

But on Friday a second device was found along with two crude pipe-bomb type devices. One was hidden inside a fire extinguisher.

None of the explosives were detonated; however, area residents reported hearing explosions Thursday night, which the sheriff's department said were used to clear the devices safely from the house.

In addition to explosives, Clements said instructive Internet printouts and other written materials on bomb-making were found. A number of small devices also were discovered in a dresser drawer, including an empty grenade.

Investigations continued Friday

morning, which allowed forensic technicians to begin analyzing the gunshot wounds the parents sustained.

Although the investigations were stopped a number of times, Clements said the investigations were being dealt with as soon as possible.

Lane County Sheriff's Deputy William Miltonberger's daughter Teresa sustained a head injury and was still listed in critical condition as of Monday afternoon.

During the past few days, the Springfield Police Department was also able to clear up rumors about the suspect.

Springfield police said rumors that Kinkel was using Prozac are unverified. Police currently do not have access to medical records; however, according to a press release, at the time of Kinkel's arrest, there was no evidence or behavior leading officers to conclude that Kinkel was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In a press release on Saturday, Springfield police reported that Kinkel had a standard Buck pocket knife taped to his leg at the time he was placed in an interview room at the police station. Kinkel then proceeded to move his handcuffed arms from behind his back to his front, at which point he lunged at an officer with the knife. The officer used pepper spray to subdue Kinkel.

Kinkel is now lodged at the Skipworth Juvenile Detention Center in Eugene.

A funeral for Nickolauson will be held today at 1 p.m. at the Eugene Christian Fellowship, 89780 N. Game Farm Rd. Ben Walker's funeral was held on Monday.

A memorial service for Bill and Faith Kinkel will be held at Springfield High School on Friday at 7:30 p.m.