

# Children learned a valuable lesson

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They enlisted the help of Grand Ronde schoolchildren and many brought their own children to help the effort.

"They enjoyed it and learned quite a bit," said Grand Ronde Police Department Sgt. Jake McKnight, the Tribe's first police officer, and one of those who participated in the exercise. He brought four of his children and one of their friends: Lucas McKnight, 14; Trey Lindekugel, 15; Jerron Lindekugel and Jalyssa Lindekugel, both 11; and friend Manny Spinks, 15.

"That was one of the biggest things for role players, knowing what you have to do and what the cops are going to do. That's the reason I wanted my kids in it. They're not going to do these kinds of exercises at school," McKnight said.

During exercises, children lined up along a bank of lockers, sat against a wall and hid behind a door. Some were told to run this way or that as groups of four-person police teams moved past them diamond-style, or in a Y, with guns pointed and ready, checking each door as they passed it.

Some children had to sit still and stay down and some had to scream as if their lives depended on it.

Police teams stormed the building facing a number of different possible threats.

Police participants learned during one raid that they focused too much on the shooter. With the apparent shooter down roughly in the middle of the room, another role player down by one wall and a child hidden behind the door, four officers with their guns pointed at a downed shooter left many potential threats uncontrolled.

Group after group of law enforcement personnel completed the exercise with police on opposite sides of a downed shooter, meaning that if the shooter moved and one officer had to shoot, another officer was in the line of a potential ricocheted bullet.

Teams were told again and again to grab a child and find out where



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

From front to back, Kaleb Reid, Nick Colton, Dyami Eastman and Julius Roan Eagle run from where an active shooter is as law enforcement rush to find the shooter during an active shooter training exercise at the former Grand Ronde Middle School on Wednesday, Jan. 2.



Damien Findley, left, is told by Mike Herbes, a training coordinator with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, to stay still as he hides on top of lockers during an active shooter training exercise at the former Grand Ronde Middle School on Wednesday, Jan. 2.

the active shooter(s) were and soon caught on to how valuable small eyewitnesses can be.

Different scenarios included a shooter in one room, a shooter in two rooms, hostages and blackouts. The situations were devised and overseen by Mike Herbes, a state trainer from the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards

and Training.

Herbes also reviewed how the raids went.

"You want to dominate, eliminate and then what?" Herbes asked a group. "Control," he said, answering himself. "You want to control the room and that means all the people in it."

Before the raids, Herbes gave participating officers a couple of hours of PowerPoint descriptions that broke the process down into bites, including proper mindset, locating the shooting, room combat, common formations and room clearing.

Police learned to take on known dangers first while covering themselves and their team members as they went by open doors. To simulate the sound of shooting, participants smacked blocks of wood together.

Police learned whom to shoot by looking for hands holding weapons. Sometimes cell phones in hands also look like weapons so Herbes stressed that a little study of photographs of individuals holding different objects would help. A hand holding a gun doesn't really look like a hand holding a cell phone or texting, indicating that even when time is vital, it pays to study details.



Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department Chief Alvin LaChance Jr., second from left, listens as Mike Herbes, a training coordinator with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, goes over his group's performance in an active shooter training scenario at the former Grand Ronde Middle School on Wednesday, Jan. 2. On the right is the man who played the active shooter role.

Oregon State Police developed this program in the late 1990s in response to the 1998 Thurston High School shooting in Springfield, and the agency has been training local police forces in the techniques ever since. With the recent shooting of schoolchildren in a Newtown, Conn., elementary school, the training took on even more timeliness and importance.

Statistically, not many mass murderers live long enough for the police to confront them because they often kill themselves when the police arrive.

On hand for the practice sessions was Senior Trooper Kendra Raiser, a former SWAT team negotiator for Oregon State Police.

"Everybody should have the experience of working on a SWAT team," Raiser said. They practice in a variety of situations once a month, she added.

Also on hand was State Trooper Jess Oliver, a SWAT team member who helped clear the lower level of Clackamas Town Center during the December shooting that killed

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