



2018 Rhododendron Festival Court

Introducing Princess Andrea Sanchez



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Coronation: Thursday, May 17th, 6:30pm

Florence Event Center 541-997-1991
Tickets \$10 Adults, \$6 Students
eventcenter.org



Above left, Florence Police Commander John Pitcher outlines specific techniques to deter a shooter during an active situation. Above right, Siuslaw Middle School Principal Andy Marohl discusses reunification drills as part of the training.



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

ALICE

from 1A

Pitcher emphasized to teachers that simply waiting until a shooter was out of bullets, or was killed by a first responder, was almost never the best plan.

"When we do the ALICE presentation, we are hoping it gets people thinking so they can survive an incident, and from the responses I received, I believe the teachers and staff did just that," he said.

According to Pitcher, the more proactive approach to dealing with an active shooter situation will better prepare teachers to take affirmative action when put in a life-threatening situation.

He also hopes information shared with Siuslaw teachers will save lives. He stressed the need for staff to evaluate the situation and, if necessary,

take positive action to deter, stop or evade an active shooter.

"The day went very well," Pitcher said. "The teachers and staff were very receptive to the information and took the scenarios seriously, realizing how important they will be if needed. I had several teachers and staff come up after the presentation and discuss ideas they had that they believe would benefit them in a particular situation."

While the ALICE training does recognize that other deadly weapons could be used at a school under attack, it also recognizes that the overwhelming number of murders on school campuses across the nation are committed using firearms.

Siuslaw Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak oversaw Friday's training and believes the teachers received valuable practice in the event of a future attack.

"The administrative team has spent quite a bit of time planning how the district

would reunify families at an off-site location in the event of some sort of emergency," he said. "This was an opportunity to run a test on those plans. We wanted to find the loose ends and find any potential pitfalls of the plan, if we had to do this in the case of a real event."

"Plans are great, but people are the variables in such operations and staff need an opportunity to practice and adapt if necessary."

One of the training segments that seemed to provide a positive discussion point to the day was a presentation from School Resource Officer (SRO) Brandon Bailey.

Bailey's presentation centered on the advantages an SRO can bring to any attempted attack on a school district. Having an SRO was mentioned on more than one occasion as a plus for teachers and students, especially if confronted with a deadly situation.

"I observed the entire staff to be actively involved in the

ALICE training and procedures that were taught by Commandeer Pitcher," Bailey said. "I was approached by multiple school staff members asking me specific questions about the 'what ifs.' The ALICE training absolutely did its job by giving people a different perspective on how to better protect themselves and their students."

Grzeskowiak said that while the training was unsettling at times, the benefits gained far outweighed any negatives.

"Teachers and staff were appreciative of the training. Even though it was only a drill, it was overwhelming for some. The drill work only touched upon two pieces of a very complex puzzle," Grzeskowiak said. "Many people had questions about the bigger picture and we were able to answer them individually, which was a relief to them."

He emphasized the importance of identifying and reuniting students and parents after an event, as well as where everyone should go.

Grzeskowiak added that one of the important lessons learned from the drill was the importance of relaying correct information, adding that speculation and rumor will only increase problems during evacuation or reunification. He emphasized that sharing accurate information may be critical in subduing an attacker.

"As we think about scenarios, we need to be flexible and adaptive. Whether it is during evacuation or reunification, our plan provides a framework but we will need to adjust based upon a multitude of factors. ... It is unfortunate that we have to consider reunification drills as educators, but that is the world we live in today so we will be as prepared as possible."

Pitcher also said the reunification process provided a valuable learning opportunity to the attendees.

"The scenario that really tested their procedures was the reunification drill and I heard a lot of good comments about what they thought went well and areas they believe need some attention," he said.

One aspect of the training that seemed to be a point of strong agreement was the benefit of having an SRO on campus moving forward. These observations were echoed by Grzeskowiak and many of the teachers who spoke during the discussion portion of the training.

"The response to the SRO program this year has been incredible," Grzeskowiak said. "Having the SRO on campus has helped to alleviate the concerns of many students and their parents."

According to Grzeskowiak, House Resolution 4909, "STOP School Violence Act of 2018," seeks partly to bring supplemental funding to school districts for security efforts.

"If community members are interested in supporting school safety, voicing their support for this additional funding is a great place to start," Grzeskowiak said.

For more information on ALICE training, visit www.alicetraining.com.

VOICE YOUR OPINION!

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National Boys & Girls Club Week

A place to become...

April 9-13



Come celebrate with us!

Event: Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County Open House

Description: We're rolling out the blue carpet and inviting all our friends to tour our CLUB and see how The CLUB is a place to become.

Date: April 9, 2018

Time: 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Location: Boys & Girls Clubs Teen Center
1501 Airport Road
Florence, OR 97439



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

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