

'THIS PROGRAM BENEFITS THE KIDS'



JIM WITMER/DAYTON DAILY NEWS

KETTERING SAFETY VILLAGE participants stop at a street corner and get instructions for a safe crossing by instructor April Harning during the first day of activities.

Orchard Park becomes Safety Village

Kettering sponsors week of instruction for children preparing for kindergarten

By JOANNE CLODFELTER
For the Dayton Daily News

KETTERING — For the next several weeks, Orchard Park Elementary School, 600 E. Dorothy Lane, will be transformed into Safety Village, where children participate in a weeklong program teaching basic safety to prepare them for kindergarten this fall.

The Safety Village is sponsored by the city of Kettering and

coordinated by Billie DeBrosse, safety coordinator for the city.

"This program benefits the kids," DeBrosse said. "They have more confidence in themselves at the beginning of school, whether they walk to school or ride the school bus. It also gives them a feeling for what it's like to be in a classroom."

Each day of Safety Village has a specific agenda. The kids may sit in a classroom and sing songs

about wearing seat belts, or practice escaping from a "fire" in the Safety House, a model house set up in the parking lot.

The focus of the first day is for each child to learn to say his name, address, city, state and phone number. Each day, the children are asked to state this personal information, so at the end of the week they are confident in repeating the information to another person.

Rebecca Schneider and Sylvia Harlow, both safety supervisors for Kettering, lead the classroom exercises. Both have been involved with Safety Village for more than 20 years.

Harlow said she enjoys working with the children in Safety Village. "The first day, they don't know what the word 'pedestrian' means. By the end of the week, they know so much more."

Schneider said the kids enjoy

the ride to Lincoln Park in a school bus. For many, this is their first ride on a school bus.

Siblings and parents also have the opportunity to participate in Safety Village. Younger siblings do arts and crafts in a nursery setting; older siblings participate in a personal safety and self-defense program.

Classes for parents review what

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SAFETY

Child car seats can be evaluated by Kettering firefighters

CONTINUED FROM 1

the children are taught and include topics targeted to parents, including child safety seats, home fire safety and personal safety.

Ethan Klussman, a Kettering firefighter and paramedic, is among a team of professionals spending Wednesdays at Orchard Park Elementary, in conjunction with Safety Village, to evaluate the fit of the child safety seat in the parent's automobile.

"It's great," parent Debbie Miller said of the Safety Village program. "As a parent, you can only remember to tell your kids so many things. This is my second time in the parents' class, and I've learned more."

Tom Weaver agreed.

"It helps having someone else tell your child something is important. Often a child tunes a parent out and, when someone else says it, the child listens. It's great."

Katie Metzmaier said she's been looking forward to having her child attend the program for three years.

"I go home and talk to my husband about everything we learned in class. My husband and I discussed gun safety yesterday after I had it in class. We'd never discussed gun safety before."

To schedule an appointment to get a child seat evaluated, call 296-2411.