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Safety Tips Shared at School Symposium

By Aline Weiller

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March 25, 2010 (WESTON, CTO) -- With images of downed trees and wires fresh in the minds of many, the Parent Education Symposium -- Helping a Child in a Medical Emergency -- was quite timely. Held on March 18th at the Intermediate School, the Symposium was attended by parents, members of the public, and EMS volunteers alike as safety information was given via panelists, literature, and simulated emergency stations.

Unfortunately, natural disasters are not the only times safety is a concern; accidents occur in day-to-day life, requiring a quick and appropriate response. With spring sports and other outdoor activities on the horizon, the Symposium also helped prepare parents for the most common emergencies that come with the territory of caring for kids.

Nisan Eventoff, EMT and Director of Injury Prevention and HeartSmart, was the facilitator for the evening and helped coordinate the event with Weston's PTO. A panel of Weston EMTs fielded questions, then invited the crowd to break out into rotating, interactive groups. Among the topics covered were CPR & choking, injuries involving blood, broken bones, allergies and insect bites, first-aid readiness and seizure, shock and heat stroke. The night's message was a positive one, with a focus on injury prevention and dialing 911 without hesitation. "If you're even thinking about calling us, call. We're in your neighborhood and can

get there fast to assess the situation and provide immediate care,” urged EMS Volunteer and Training Officer, Michael Schlechter.

Among the evening’s helpful tips were these top ten:

Call 911: Weston EMS offers fast, free-of-charge medical assistance.

Identify your location first: Indicate your town and address before a connection is lost.

Clearly mark your home: Have your mailbox and/or house numbered, especially if you have a shared drive.

Unlock your doors: Unlock doors so medical personnel can enter quickly and easily.

Inspect the environment: Inspect the accident’s area for clues like empty medicine bottles, sharp objects, etc.

Register for “Code Red”: Sign up for this emergency communication system at www.westonct.gov.

Take a CPR Course: Update or learn life-saving CPR skills; courses are offered year-round.

Don’t drive an injured person to the hospital: Some injured should not be moved; let an ambulance transport them.

Keep current medications: Those with life-threatening allergies or serious medical conditions must keep up-to-date medicines on their person (i.e., epinephrine auto injector).

Assess home hazards: Keep medicines and/or chemicals locked away, eliminate fire hazards, use safety gates, etc.

Parents left the event better equipped to handle those “what if” situations and gained a newfound confidence to deal with childhood emergencies. “No one likes to think about a child becoming sick or injured. However, the reality is that parents and caregivers are the first responders in a crisis. The Symposium was a vehicle to empower the lay community with appropriate bystander protocols. Clearly, Weston EMS did an effective job of imparting this important information,” said Parent Programs Chair, Dana Katz.

EMS panelists also invited the community at large to join their organization and help provide emergency services to Weston residents. Volunteers must take a 6-month evening course and pass two state-wide exams for certification. Those interested should contact Giselle Vogel at 203.227.9172. The EMS depends on funding from Westonites for operating expenses, life-saving equipment, ambulances and paramedic service. Tax deductible donations can be sent to Weston EMS, P.O. Box 1163, Weston, CT 06883 or online at www.westonems.com.

The PTO Parent Programs committee schedules free, town-wide symposiums throughout the year. The PTO seeks to provide high-quality, in-depth programs to help support the well-being, social development and educational experience of children in Weston. Your input for future programming is welcomed and may be directed to WIS Parents Program Chair, Dana Katz at familykatz@optonline.net.

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