



Identifying and Intercepting School Violence Through Cyber-Investigations. 3 Day Training

BACKGROUND:

The national project for the National Exchange Club is the prevention of child abuse. This is done primarily through educational efforts. Nationally there is a great risk facing our students today. All too often we get news of shootings taking place at a school. In many of these cases the violence is perpetrated by a student in the school. In these cases, the shooter has publicized warning signs or even intentions of committing the act. Naturally, we want to do something to try prevent this, but what.

There is a member of Exchange who has been successful in preventing school shootings. His name is Det. Rich Wistocki (ret) and if you have attended national conventions in the past, he will be familiar to you. He has presented at the conventions numerous about cybercrimes and protecting children.

On November 30, 2021 there was a school shooting at Oxford High School in Oxford Michigan, 4 students were killed and 7 others were injured. There had been social media postings in which could have been interpreted as warning signs. Det. Wistocki reached out to Dawn Porter, a fellow club member after the shooting. He told her that he had the means to prevent future events and wanted to get it in the hands of those that need it. Dawn Porter is a Regional Vice President for the National Exchange Club and she reached to me. She knew that my background was in law enforcement and that I lived in the suburban Detroit area (the area that the shooting had occurred). I was also employed as a substitute teacher at Lincoln Park High School. Within the day I was in conference with the Chief of Police and Superintendent of Schools about Identifying and Intercepting School Violence Through Cyber-Investigations. This is a two-day training that Det. Wistocki presents. I forwarded a short video about the program and two days later a Zoom meeting was arranged. By the end of the week, we had the venue and training dates set.

The two-day training was attended by officers and school officials throughout the state of Michigan two months later. The attendees rated the training at a 5 on a scale where 5 was the best. Most reporting that it was the best that had attended. On the second day of the class, one of the attendees showed a posting from his area where a student was displaying a gun. This case was worked on in the class and was resolved without incident. Because of the amount of information shared in this class, the evaluations were all 5's out of a 1-5 evaluation scale. The common comments were, this needs to be "One More Day." As a result, this two day class is now a **THREE DAY CLASS**.

The Exchange Club was the catalyst for this training. Prevention of Child Abuse was the goal. The Exchange Clubs of the Michigan District donated to the effort and the Exchange Clubs of Lincoln Park and Trenton were hosts. The clubs handled registrations and organized breakfast snacks as well as luncheons for the officers.

The importance of this training cannot be over stressed. It is needed in every community that has a school. The training will help officers in other investigations as well. It is evidence based as well. In the 2023/2024 school year, attendees arrested 55 suspects due to the tools they learned in the class that have stopped the planning of school violence. This year alone, in the 24/25 school year, there have been 38 arrests of threatening to shoot up a school and 1/3 of those arrested had weapons or bomb making materials to carry out their threat.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Exchange Clubs have a good relationship with police departments. We work together to make our communities better places to live. We honor officers with Police Officer of the month. Utilize these contacts to introduce the training to them. Do not let them say that they already have the training. I would be extremely surprised if they did. There are videos of the training that they can be shown and testimonials of officers who have taken the class. We also have contacts with schools through our ACE and Youth of the year programs. Take it to your Principal, Superintendent or School Board. Use Det. Wistocki and me as a resource to help. I view Exchange Clubs as facilitator and host. You know the need; you have the wherewithal and desire to make it happen.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

- 1) **Venue.** Det. Wistocki need a location for approximately 25-50 with unrestricted Wi-Fi, Table set up with electric plug in for the students lap top, dry erase boards, POST IT paper on an easle to stick to the walls and a training room will work. A screen or electronic board will be needed. IThe goal is to have as many officers attend at the lowest cost.
- 2) **Attendees.** Once you have the venue and date of the training you will need people to fill the seats. On the school side we expect the Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals, Deans, Social Workers and IT staff to attend. Many times School Administration cannot train and be away 3 days in a row. Therefore, they are only required to attend the first day but they have the option to attend at least 2 of the days. We expect the IT professionals from the school to attend all 3 days. We also want any police officer, police detection and SRO to attend all three days. We would really like your local prosecutors office to attend as well.
- 3) **Promote.** Issue a press release and invite the media to the opening.
- 4) **BE THE HOST.** The club paid for his meals and took him to an Exchange Club meeting one night. He could also speak to your membership. Welcome the attendees at the opening session. Try to anticipate the needs of the group: The local Exchange club will provide beverages and snacks at breaks, meal service.
- 5) **Funding:** In **Option #1**, The total cost for up to 50 officers and school administration to attend the three day training is \$6,000 plus travel, which is approximately \$2000. Law Enforcement departments have training budgets that can be used depending on the state. Many schools also have campus safety grants this class qualifies for. Some School Districts and Police Departments split the cost of the class 50/50.
- 6) If your police department wanted to take **Option #2**, instead of paying for the entire training, the host police department could **get two free seats** if they host. Therefore, they will not have to pay anything for the training, but they do have to fill the class from 25-50 people to put it on by using their contacts with the school and other area law enforcement departments. Detective Wistocki would then set up an online registration and each attendee would pay \$300.00 each for a 3 day class.
- 7) **Ask for help.** Det. Wistocki was very helpful in getting the training going and he will help in the same way. I have attended the class, have law enforcement as well as Exchange experience and will be glad to help. Call Tom Karnes at 313-999-7429. Or call / email Detective Wistocki at 630-461-0044 or email richwistocki@besureconsulting.com