



Sharing Ohio's Best Program

Recognizing Outstanding Community Policing



Agency of the Month

Lima Division of Police

July 2024

Lima Noon Optimist Safety City

The Lima Police Department / Lima Noon Optimist partnered together in 1978 to create Safety City. At Safety City, Schools come for Field Trips in April and May each year. During these Field Trips, school children ranging from preschool, kindergarten, and first grade come out to learn many safety tip utilizing the radKIDS and D.A.R.E. programs. During these Field Trips, children learn about good and bad people. How to identify a bad person and the tricks they may use in an attempt to take them. They are taught the radKIDS stance, how to yell, "No", to draw attention to themselves, and run to a trusted adult to get help. They are also taught about gun safety and bicycle safety. They are taught to never pick up a gun, even if they think it is a toy, they are to get a trusted adult. For bicycle safety, they are taught to wear a helmet to keep you head safe, what the signals are for stop, left turn, and right turn.

After that portion, the children go into the "Officer David L. Vastano" Survive Alive house. In that house they are taught about storm, tornado, and fire safety. The house has apps where they are able to simulate storms, tornado's, and fire sounds. They even have a smoke machine hooked up to the vents in the house so the children learn to get down and crawl out during a fire.

After they are done in the house, the children are taken outside to ride bicycles on the streets of Safety City. They have stop signs, a working traffic signal, and a railroad crossing to utilize for the children to show what they have learned to be safe. There are several miniature buildings here for the children to see. These buildings are replicas of businesses throughout the Lima community. The streets here have line like roads and speed signs. In 2023, from April 18-May 19, they had 33 Field Trips come through totaling 1,020 children.

In the summer, they have the Safety City Summer Academy for children ages 5-9 years old. This takes place all four weeks in June and the two weeks after the fourth of July. The Safety City Summer Academy signups are at the end of March and there are 360 spots available. This year, all 360 spots filled up in less than three hours. The Summer Academy has six weeks and two classes each week, Monday - Friday. There is a 9am-11am class and a 12pm-2pm class. Each class is made up of thirty children from Lima, Allen County, and the surrounding counties. They have even had children come from the Columbus, Ohio area, and one from Kentucky.

The Summer Academy also utilizes the radKIDS and D.A.R.E. programs. They teach good and bad people, gun safety, bicycle safety, storm, tornado, and fire safety. They also teach the children radKIDS self-defense and they practice these moves on pads here. They talk about different scenarios, such as the trick bad people may use to take you, safety in the home, outside in public places, and talk about good touch, bad touch, and uncomfortable touch. They talk about having a family password in the event a bad person tries to pick you up saying they were sent to get you. They talk about having a safe meeting place in case there was an emergency in the home and everyone had to get out. A safe meeting



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place is needed so they know everyone is out of the home. They children are also able to ride bicycles on the streets of Safety City. They have bicycles here for all the children to use.

At the end of each week, there is a graduation held to recognize each child that has attended these classes. They invite family and friends to attend to hear what all the children have learned. They are then allowed to walk around Safety City to see what all they have to offer and do for the children who attend.

In the fall, they have an Open House for the community. They have businesses here passing out food and let people come see what they do here. They want the public to come see Safety City. They also have an annual Safety City Trick-or-Treat. Businesses come and pass out candy for all who attend.

This past year, Safety City had 6,336 people come through the gates to attend the events they have here. Safety City was built in 1978 and is still going strong. It is run by a Lima Police Department Officer. Safety City is all about keeping children safe. And will always be here to teach children those valuable lessons on safety.