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News Release

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Over 60 Wales Elementary Students Learn How to Be Prepared for Disasters and Emergencies

STEP Program Teaches Students How to Assemble Emergency Kit, Develop an Emergency Plan with Their Families

WALES, Tuesday, May 6, 2014 — Over 60 students at Wales Elementary School learned how to be prepared to respond in the event of a disaster or emergency during an event at the school today.

The students participated in the STEP, or Student Tools for Emergency Planning, program. The statewide program teaches 5th graders how to be prepared for various disasters and emergencies, how to assemble an emergency kit, and how to develop an emergency plan with their families.

“The STEP program is so critical because emergencies and disasters can happen at any time to anyone,” said Chris Otto, principal of Wales Elementary. “We’re excited to teach the STEP curriculum and give our students the tools and knowledge they need in order to have confidence in an emergency situation.”

This is the fourth year that STEP is being offered to schools in Wisconsin and the first year that Wales Elementary is participating in the program. This year, the STEP program is supported by a \$15,000 AT&T Innovation & Investment Award, as well as grants from Walgreens and the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation.

During the event, 7th grade Girl Scout students performed a skit highlighting the important information students should remember in a disaster or emergency situation. Students also heard from AT&T representatives and State Sen. Paul Farrow (R-Pewaukee) about actions they can take to be prepared in an emergency situation.

“When an emergency happens, it is very important for our young people to know how to respond and act quickly,” said Senator Farrow. “The great thing about the STEP program is that it not only teaches students how to prepare for emergencies, it also encourages them to share that information with their parents and communities.”

Nearly 150 schools from across Wisconsin are participating in the STEP program this spring. To view the list of participating schools by county, please visit: <http://ready.wi.gov/news/2014/STEP2013-14SchoolRundown.pdf>

AT&T has a long-standing commitment to disaster preparedness and business continuity, and is the first company in the nation to earn U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) certification for disaster preparedness.

“We know how critical it is to be ready and prepared to respond in the event of a disaster or emergency,” said Scott T. VanderSanden, president of AT&T Wisconsin. “Not only are we proud that our network operations are state-of-the-art when it comes to performing both during and after a disaster, but we are also proud to help prepare Wisconsin families to respond to emergencies through our support of the STEP program.”

The STEP program provides teachers with all materials to teach the curriculum at no cost to the schools, including instructor guides, DVDs and copies of student handouts. All students participating in the program also receive an emergency kit to take home, which includes a flashlight, first aid kit and emergency blanket. The basic lesson is only one hour of instruction, but teachers can expand the lessons to cover eight hours of materials.

For more information on STEP, please visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/step/>.

This is the second year that the STEP program has been supported by a \$15,000 AT&T donation. The AT&T Wisconsin Innovation & Investment Award program provides funding to local organizations that enhance and give back to their communities. The program is focused on awarding grants to organizations and programs that improve the community by advancing education, enhancing the environment, promoting economic development, or delivering other community services.

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