



MADISON, WI, Tuesday, January 5, 2016 — 11,000 students across Wisconsin will learn how to be ready for an emergency, thanks to the STEP program. STEP (Student Tools for Emergency Planning) is a turn-key classroom curriculum for teachers to prepare 5th graders for various emergencies and disasters, including tornadoes, flooding and storms. The program also shows students how to put together an emergency kit and develop an emergency plan. STEP is administered by the Department of Military Affairs Division of Emergency Management.

More than 40 volunteers from the AT&T Pioneers, Wisconsin Emergency Management, and the Wisconsin National Guard assembled 11,000 starter emergency kits and other STEP materials which were sent out to 185 schools across the state. Major General Don Dunbar, Adjutant General and Wisconsin's Homeland Security Advisor, stopped by to thank the volunteers for their efforts. "Getting students excited about emergency preparedness is the goal of the STEP program," said Maj. Gen. Dunbar. "Students bring emergency preparedness information that they learned in the classroom back home. They are able to encourage their parents, siblings and friends to put together their own family disaster plan and disaster kits to help them be better prepared for emergencies."

During a visit to Sun Prairie's Royal Oaks Elementary School in December, Major General Dunbar joined Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch to announce the return of the STEP program to Wisconsin classrooms, thanks to a \$15,000 Innovation & Investment Award from AT&T. "When disaster strikes, it's important that Wisconsin communities know how to respond and act quickly," said Lt. Governor Kleefisch. "The STEP program not only teaches students how to prepare for emergencies, but it also encourages them to share that information with their families. We are excited to kickoff this program to help schools like Royal Oaks Elementary and others across the state prepare their students for emergencies and disasters."

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. Since 2012, AT&T has provided \$58,000 to support the STEP program in Wisconsin.

"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 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."

"Emergencies and disasters can happen at any time to anyone, and that's why we think it's important to prepare our students," said Principal James Ackley. "We're excited to participate in the STEP program and help give our students the confidence and potentially life-saving tools they need to respond in an emergency situation."

Wisconsin became the first state in the Midwest to teach the STEP program during the 2010-2011 school year. 40,000 students have participated in the program over the past six years.