



Press Release

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Students at Foster Elementary in Appleton Learn How to Be Prepared for Disasters & Emergencies

STEP Program Teaches Kids How to Assemble Emergency Kits and Develop an Emergency Plan with Their Families

APPLETON, Monday, March 12, 2018 – With severe weather this spring fast approaching, nearly 130 students at Stephen Foster Elementary School in Appleton learned today how to be prepared to respond in the event of a disaster or emergency.

The students in 4th, 5th and 6th grades are participating in the STEP program, which stands for Student Tools for Emergency Planning. The statewide program run by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) teaches students how to be prepared for various emergencies and disasters, including blizzards, tornadoes, flooding, storms and fires. The program also shows students how to put together an emergency kit and develop an emergency plan with their families.

“Disasters and emergencies can happen very quickly to anyone, with little to no warning, and that’s why we think it is so important to prepare our students,” said Jamie Kimball, 5th & 6th grade teacher at Foster Elementary. “Through the STEP program, we are preparing our school’s young leaders to have the confidence and skills they need to respond appropriately in an emergency.”

Students heard from officials with Outagamie County Emergency Management, Wisconsin Emergency Management and AT&T, as well as State Representative Amanda Stuck, about actions they can take to be prepared in an emergency or disaster situation.

The STEP program is being funded this year through a \$10,000 Innovation & Investment Award from AT&T Wisconsin and a \$10,000 donation from the Wisconsin Wireless Association.

“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.”

Teachers are provided with all STEP materials 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. The basic lesson is only one hour of instruction, but teachers can expand the lessons to cover eight hours of materials.

“The STEP program helps prepare our students, so they are not afraid and know what to do in an emergency,” said Rep. Stuck. “It is also a great conversation starter for families about the plans they should have in their homes for severe weather season and potential risks like fires.”

Wisconsin became the first state in the Midwest to teach the STEP program. Over 52,000 students have participated in STEP since the program began during the 2010-11 school year. Another 12,000 students are expected to participate in the 2017-18 school year in 150 schools around the state.

For more information on the STEP program, please visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/STEP/default.asp> to view a STEP video and download a brochure, or contact Joy Staab at joy.a.staab.mil@mail.mil or 608-242-3079.

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 \$78,000 to support the STEP program in Wisconsin through the AT&T Wisconsin Innovation & Investment Award program. The program provides funding to organizations that improve the community by advancing education, enhancing the environment, promoting economic development, or delivering other community services.

Additionally, [AT&T](#), in a public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority, has a plan to build, operate and maintain a highly secure wireless broadband network for Wisconsin’s public safety community. FirstNet will bring advanced technologies that will help first responders save lives and protect communities during disasters and emergencies.

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