

Orland Park Police to Host Internet Safety Program *Parents of Internet Users Encouraged to Attend*

ORLAND PARK – With more than 200 million Internet users in the United States, the need for Internet safety continues to be a serious concern among law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

The Orland Park Police Department will host its **Internet Safety Program** on **Tuesday, May 12** beginning at **7:00 p.m.** Tailored for parents of Internet users, the one hour informational program will be held in the training room of the **Orland Park Police Facility**, 15100 South Ravinia Avenue. Parents are encouraged to attend without their children.

While some parents may not be familiar with MySpace and Facebook, chances are their children are. These on-line services have been described as “a cyber combination of a yearbook, personal diary and social club.”

Sites like MySpace, Xanga and Facebook allow users to create personal websites to which others have access, depending on the level of access the user allows. They also allow instant messaging, chat-room activity and blogging.

The increase in the number of personal website services has increased the dangers of unsuspecting teens sharing personal information on the Internet, being easy prey for sexual predators.

Information related to sexting, cyber bullying and virtual world topics including “Second Life” will be discussed. Parents need to be aware of the dangers surrounding new technology and how to react when the new technology is inappropriately used.

“This seminar gives parents the information they need to help protect their kids from the predators who lurk in cyberspace,” said Orland Park Police Chief Tim McCarthy.

“This program has been very well received when we’ve offered it in the past. It’s a real eye opener for parents,” said Sergeant Tom Lynch.

Orland Park Police Investigators Steve Sutherland and Doug Kein will conduct the village sponsored seminar.

“Most parents have no idea what personal information their kids are sharing on websites like MySpace and Facebook,” Sutherland said, adding, “They need to find out before the wrong people have access to information they shouldn’t.”

Personal information includes pictures, names and addresses, schools they attend, class schedules, cell and phone numbers and many other less obvious things such as the name of their school team, ethnic background or even a nearby mall.

“Even kids who don’t list their names and addresses can give enough personal information such as the kind of music they like or the kind of boys they like for a predator to use to con their way into a kid’s life,” Sutherland added.

Parents need to know about the personal networking sites and how current technology literally allows the predator to enter their homes via web camera and instant messaging.

Pre-registration is not required. For more information, call the Orland Park Police Department at 364-8117.

McCarthy added, “This is a must see seminar for all parents whose kids are using the Internet.”

PHOTO CAPTION

The Orland Park Police Department will host its Internet Awareness for Parents Program on Wednesday, May 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Orland Park Police Station, 15100 South Ravinia Avenue. Pre-registration is not required. For more information, call the department's non-emergency number at 364-8117.