

SAFE KIDS Educates Area Children on Fire Safety



Ronald McDonald poses for photos with area children for Safe Kids and Alachua County Fire Rescue's fire prevention program.

each of the teachers with a fire safety T-shirt. McDonald's encouraged children to create home fire safety plans by offering free French fries for each completed plan and holding a contest for the best plans. SAFE KIDS produced a TV public service announcement encouraging children not to be afraid of firemen who come into their houses to rescue them.

Fires and burns injure more than 40,000 children each year. Nationwide there is a home-fire death every 170 minutes. Most of the people killed in fires started by children are under 6, and such fires are the leading cause of death for preschoolers. Roughly three out of every four fires started by children involve lighters.

Fire safety is one of the key areas of injury prevention focused on by SAFE KIDS, which coordinates community-wide efforts for promoting and implementing strategies to prevent unintentional childhood injuries through community awareness, education and public policy.

Safe Kids at Shands Children's Hospital partnered with Alachua County Fire & Rescue and McDonald's to educate families about creating fire escape plans, fire prevention and 911 calling. In addition, Safe Kids launched a program to provide special smoke detectors to hearing impaired children.

As part of the fire prevention program, more than 15,000 school children participated in a fire safety curriculum. Firefighters visited

more than 27 schools with their engines and fire protection gear and invited students to tour the fire engine, spray the hose, try on youth-sized fire gear and receive safety information. Additional safety demonstrations included a 911 simulator, Any the Ambulance and the hazard house. Additional events were held at area McDonald's to reinforce the fire safety message.

SAFE KIDS provided each student with a grid for their fire escape plan. In addition, SAFE KIDS provided



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