

February 2006

Hello there, Parents! We at the Fall River Police Department would like to take this opportunity to thank you for offering us this chance to assist you in the daunting challenge that is raising children these days! We feel that no one knows your children better than their parents, but we also know that no one person can know everything there is to know about the dangers and pitfalls that our children face on a daily basis. Our mission is to help you in any way we can to guide your children around these pitfalls and trap doors and, in some cases when they absolutely cannot avoid a situation, to help them muddle through it wisely and safely.

This month, we thought we would begin our short article by letting parents know that we are intensely interested in the children of our community and how they develop through their formative teen-aged years. We take this interest because although a child only has one set of parents, really a child belongs to the community and vice-versa because the actions the child choose to take directly impacts the community as a whole. Conversely, the actions taken by the community often have a direct impact on the child's perception of honesty, fairness, integrity and sense of civics. Hopefully through active participation in our children's lives, we can instill in them these and other essential character traits necessary to see them successfully to their adult lives.

To that end, each month in this column, we will attempt to address certain issues, such as *Internet security, drugs/alcohol, and driving behavior* to name a few, which we feel will be helpful and informative to you in reaching our ultimate goal. Obviously we cannot address each topic at great length in each installment, nor will we address a particular issue which is at the forefront of your mind each month. So, if there we touch on an issue in which you would like more in-depth information on or if there is a particular topic you feel should be covered sooner rather than later, or even if you just have constructive criticism to pass along which would help us make this column more useful, please feel free to contact Police Chief Brent Van Gysel and give him your feedback.

Of the many things we are planning to share with you through this column, one thing we would like to address this month is the fact that we are seeing quite an increase lately in juvenile arrests in our area! The arrests have involved many violations, from possession of alcohol and drugs/paraphernalia and smoking regular tobacco products to disorderly conduct and curfew violations. We would like to ask that each parent stay actively interested in their child's daily activities, such as who they hang

around with, where they are staying overnight, do you know their friends' parents, etc. So often we arrest a child for possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, etc, and the first thing out of a parent's mouth is: "That's impossible! My son/daughter doesn't do that!!!" Not only does that make our job more difficult, but the parent ends up looking foolish when it is proven that their son/daughter does indeed "do that!"

You as parents have one of the most difficult jobs in the world: raising children! Don't make that job more difficult on yourselves by fooling yourselves and trying to be "friends" with your children—they have more than enough friends in their lives! Be their guardians and their guidance counselors. Search their rooms and their clothing; check up on them when they say they are going somewhere for the evening; make sure you know who they are spending time with; set a curfew and enforce it; know what Internet sites they visit; what video games they play; what movies they watch. As we mentioned before, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

With that said, please know that we are on your side and we will attempt to assist you in every way with these difficult chores if you wish—all you need to do is call the Fall River Police Department at 484-3707 and one of us will be happy to help if we can.

Until then, stay safe and best wishes until next month!

The Fall River Police Department