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EDITORIAL

Firefighter Super Heroes Teach Kids about Fire Safety

Hundreds of kids wait in anticipation in the cafetorium of Wally Watkins Elementary School in Wylie as firefighters known as the “Wylie Wild Bunch” take the stage to teach kids about the importance of fire safety. The twenty-five minute fun and laugh-filled superhero themed program covered a range of topics including the importance of having working smoke detectors in the home, stop, drop and roll, home escape plans, cooking safety, and how to remain calm and dial 911.

The scene has been played out in Wylie to thousand of kids in twenty schools, daycares and private schools this year alone. A superhero known as Safety Man played by Firefighter Brian Moriarty, Dr. Danger played by Firefighter Richard Hollien, Bill played by Firefighter Casey Nash, and Ted played by Firefighter Brandon Storm, have managed the impossible...grabbing the attention span and captivating a room full of hundreds of elementary school students.

“These programs work...they are very effective,” says Wylie Fire Chief Randy Corbin. “It’s critical to teach fire prevention and safety at a young age. Studies show, and our in-house testing proves, that children will retain and apply these principles (fire prevention/safety) for the rest of their lives.”

Each year a representative sample group of Wylie children are tested on fire safety concepts prior to watching the clown program and following the program. Not only does testing enable the department to measure the programs effectiveness, but future programs can be designed and focused on the fire prevention/safety areas that tested low.

“Elementary kids are a key audience when it comes to teaching fire safety,” says Wylie Fire Marshal Steve Seddig. “Following the presentation, the students return home and are very persistent and persuasive with their parents to check their smoke detectors, develop an escape plan and be prepared.”

The program is updated annually and the planning and production of the presentation begins months in advance with scriptwriting, set design, staging and soundtrack development. Success of the fire safety/prevention program can be attributed directly to the support of the entire Wylie Fire Rescue Department and the community. Each show requires a team of firefighters to load/unload the set and props, set up the audio and interact with the kids throughout the show.