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WYLIE FIRE DEPARTMENT



Wylie firefighters Brian Moriarty (left), as Safety Man, and Richard Hollien, as Dr. Danger, present a fire safety program to students at Watkins Elementary School.

Photo submitted by
 CRAIG KELLY

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'Superheroes' teach students about fire safety, prevention

By **CRAIG KELLY**
 Contributor

A group of Wylie firefighters, known as the "Wylie Wild Bunch," recently entertained and educated hundreds of Watkins Elementary School students about the importance of fire safety.

The superhero-themed program, which has been played out in Wylie to thousand of kids in 20 schools and daycares this year, covered a range of topics including smoke detectors, stop, drop and roll, home escape plans, cooking safety and how to remain calm and dial 911. Firefighters Brian Moriarty, Richard Hollien, Casey Nash and Brandon Storm have all participated in the events.

"These programs work...they are very effective," said 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 of fire prevention and safety for the rest of their lives."

Each year, a representative sample group of Wylie children are tested on fire safety concepts before and after watching the clown program. Testing not only enables the department to measure the programs effectiveness, but also design and focus its future programs on the fire prevention/safety areas that tested low.

Planning and production of the presentation begins months in advance with scriptwriting, set design, staging and soundtrack development. And each show requires a team of firefighters to load and unload the set and props, set up the audio and interact with the kids.

"Elementary kids are a key audience when it comes to teaching fire safety," said 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."

Craig Kelly contributes to neighborsgo on behalf of the city of Wylie.