

Police search for child accoster, address rumors

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Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer wants parents to know the facts about recent reportings of a man accosting girls in the area.

Due to rumors and exaggerations being spread by children and parents, according to school liaison officers, Dwyer said he decided to have district children carry home a letter from his office this week. He is doing so to set the record straight as to what has and is happening in the case.

He states only two of the five incidents reported involve a criminal action. The first occurred in Livonia on Jan. 29 and the other the next day near Hillsdale Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

The other incidents reported to the department have been suspicious in nature with no overt actions taken toward children, he stated.

"No incidents have happened since the last one" he said. In that case, on Feb. 6, a 9-year-old girl told police a man in a black Ford Explorer rolled down his

window to ask her something and she ran away. It happened near Hillsdale Elementary.

The suspect has been described by other witnesses as driving a dark Explorer with four doors.

Because of the media attention to the case and a reward being offered, Dwyer said the department followed up on about 75 tips.

While most proved fruitless, Dwyer said detectives are more closely examining several of the tips.

"In these types of incidents you have to be honest with the citizens because kids are in jeopardy," Dwyer said about the early warnings. "I would prefer to have this person know we're after them than have another incident."

Surveillance around schools has not let up, the chief said. "We've been working with Livonia police on this," he added.

Dwyer said due to the media coverage, it is possible the suspect has decided to move away from the area or stop his actions.

In the Jan. 29 case, a man exposed himself to two girls near Botsford Elementary in Livonia.

The man also grabbed the two girls who ran away.

In the Jan. 30 case, a man drove by two girls near Hillsdale and asked them to perform a sex act and then drove away.

Hills police are offering a \$2,000 reward to anyone with information that leads to the apprehension and conviction of the suspect. He is described as white, 5-foot, 11-inches tall, 20-30 years old with a thin build, with messy hair possibly pulled back in a ponytail.

The vehicle in the incidents has been described as a black or navy Ford Explorer with four doors.

Anyone with information is asked to call the department at (248) 473-9895.

The chief in his letter is encouraging people to be child watch volunteers. The next meeting of the program is at Hillsdale Elementary at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 19. Contact officer Bonnie Unruh of the crime prevention unit at (248) 473-9632 if you have any questions about the program or to reserve a seat.

Rocky seeks anti-terrorism information

Michigan residents who think they know how and where future terrorist attacks may occur can submit their ideas through the Internet under an innovative anti-terrorism effort launched by state Rep. Andrew Raczowski.

Raczowski, an officer in the Army Reserve, is asking Michigan residents to take part in scenario planning, a proven brainstorming method to prepare for large-scale emergency situations.

"People across the state have sent money to Sept. 11 funds, but many have a deep desire to do more. In essence, this is one way to serve your country," Raczowski said. "Scenario planning is serious business. The ultimate goal is prevention. If we can recognize a potential target or method, we can take steps to prevent a nightmare scenario from becoming reality."

FROM THE CAPITOL

So-called scenario planners currently are envisioning future terrorist attacks that may occur in the United States. The federal government has even relied on the imagination of Hollywood film writers to think of potential targets and modes of operation.

Michigan residents can e-mail their ideas to Raczowski at Raczowski@cs.com. The ideas will be compiled and given to the governor, top officials in Michigan's Army and Air National Guard and the state's military advisor. Submitted scenarios will remain confidential.

"Scenario planning is an effective and important way for Michigan residents to get directly involved in the fight against terrorism," said Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills. "This is a chance for people to possibly help their state and country prevent future disasters."

"President Bush in his State of the Union address called for people to get involved in the war against terrorism. With scenario planning, there's no age constraint, exercise regimen or long hikes overseas. The only requirement is to be an imaginative thinker."

The 37th District lawmaker said he will accept ideas indefinitely. Residents do not have to use their names. "Of course, the best-case scenario would be not to have any further terrorist attacks at all, but we must think out of the box when it comes to protecting ourselves, our families, and state," he said.

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