

Security Health Plan: Investment in Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department supports fire safety education for children

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MARSHFIELD – The third leading cause of death in the U.S. for children ages one to fourteen is fire-related, according to the National Safety Council. In 2017, 127 children died from fire and smoke inhalation. Fire prevention and safety training can curb these numbers, which is why the Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department is invested in fire prevention, education and awareness for local children.

“Fire education and safety are important so kids learn how to be careful around fire and how to avoid hurting themselves and others,” said Pete Fletty, Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention at the Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department. “Our goal is to spread fire safety messages and take a proactive approach to prevent fires, fire-related injuries or death.”

Security Health Plan Privacy Specialist Allison Wein nominated the Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department for Security Health Plan’s Employee-Driven Corporate Giving grant. Each month Security Health Plan awards a \$1,000 grant to a different charity or organization that is nominated by a Marshfield Clinic Health System employee. Employees are encouraged to nominate organizations making a positive difference in the community.

The funding from the grant was used to purchase an interactive, robotic learning

tool called Ava the Ambulance. Through music, sound effects, lights and movement, Ava teaches children about fire prevention and hazard awareness. Recently, the department was able to purchase Freddy the Fire Truck, and the addition of Ava the Ambulance will aid in education at school assemblies, classrooms, station tours, fairs and exhibits.

Wein nominated the department for the grant as she understands the importance of teaching children about fire and hazards at a young age, and recognized that this tool would help children learn in a fun way. She heard about the robots from her son who did job shadowing at the department in early 2020.

“It’s so important to teach children about fire safety and what to do in an emergency. These tools will help the Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department teach kids how to be aware and safe – and do so in a way that is fun and engaging for them,” Wein said.

The robots provide an interactive, exciting experience for children, helping to reinforce safety messages, and reduce the chances of unintentional fire-related injuries.

“Freddy and Ava will not only be used in schools and classrooms, but also during other events in the Marshfield area such as Get Fired Up for Safety, Hub City Days, and the Central Wisconsin State Fair. Freddy and Ava will certainly help us connect with young children in a fun way while we spread our message of fire prevention,” said Fletty.

Although the department’s in-person fire prevention events were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they created a short educational video featuring Freddy the Fire Truck that was shared with local schools this past fall. The video can be found on the Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department’s YouTube channel. They are looking forward to introducing Freddy and Ava to the community in live settings soon.

Fletty explained that community partnerships and support, like through Security Health Plan and Marshfield Clinic Health System, are key to helping achieve their mission.

“Without support from our community, we wouldn’t be able to purchase useful fire prevention equipment like Freddy and Ava,” Fletty said. “It helps us live our mission

to protect and preserve lives and property through assessment, prevention, education and response. We're very grateful for the support!"

Anyone interested in contributing to the Marshfield Fire Prevention Program may contact the Marshfield Fire and Rescue Department at 715-486-2094.