

PORTLAND Neighbors

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Delivered to 10,000 households and businesses in the Deering, East Deering, Woodfords, North Deering and Riverton neighborhoods.

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Child Safety is Mike O'Neal's Business

by David Moran

"Don't talk to strangers." Have you ever given that advice to your children? Do you believe that your children follow this advice?

According to Mike O'Neal, a part-time patrol officer for the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department who recently launched Guard-A-Kid of Maine, teaching children how to recognize dangerous situations and how to react to those situations is the real answer.

Why doesn't the "keep away from strangers" advice actually keep children safe? Because children who see an adult more than once start viewing that adult as "familiar," Mike explains, and not a stranger whom they should avoid.

Close to Home

Mike, who has a degree in criminology in addition to his practical experience with the sheriff's department, is clearly focused on protecting children. He became interested in Guard-A-Kid when his daughter brought home an ID card form from school which he felt was inadequate. Later, he saw informa-



Mike O'Neal takes Owen Dionne's fingerprints at First Lutheran Daycare on Auburn Street. In addition to child identification, his Guard-A-Kid service provides other child safety products, such as a wireless child locator, Stranger Safety and Kid Escape DVDs, and a board game.

tion a friend's daughter had posted to her MySpace.com web site.

Liked What He Saw

Mike immediately noticed that there was too much personal information posted - information predators could use to target his friend's daughter. Mike's instincts took over. He researched child-protection companies to see what they offered. Mike discovered Guard-A-Kid and liked what he saw.

Guard-A-Kid's primary focus is child identification. It documents a child's physical description, provides fingerprinting by an FBI-quality digital laser scanner, photographs, and emergency contact information. This data is provided on wallet-size ID cards, a full size ID, and a CD-ROM.

Your Worst Nightmare

Why is child identification important? Consider living through your worst night-



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Highlights:



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**Ambassadors of Hope
For The Future**

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... and much more



Mike, who lives on Deering Run off the Washington Avenue Extension, has started working with schools. He recently attended a parent/teacher meeting of the Lisbon Elementary School. Parents, he said, were impressed with the program. In fact, one woman in attendance who owns her own day care thought the product was so good that she plans to introduce it to families she comes in contact with.

Michelle Frank, a daycare owner in the Portland area with young children of her own, liked the product well enough to join Mike in Guard-A-Kid of Maine. As a parent, Michelle feels that having such information at one's fingertips is essential. And as she noted, "Anything can happen to anyone, at any time. It pays to be prepared."

Personally Tested

In addition to child identification, explained Mike, Guard-A-Kid provides other child safety products, such as a wireless child locator, Stranger Safety and Kid Escape DVDs, and a board game.

Has your child ever wandered off on you in the middle of a crowd? The wireless child locator is perfect for the situation: with a press of a button, a loud alert will start chiming on a teddy bear receiver attached to your youngster. During testing of this device with his own daughter in the Maine Mall, Mike determined where his daughter was by the way everyone's heads turned in response to hearing the alert signal.

If you would like to learn more about Guard-A-Kid, Mike is available to speak to groups or individuals about child safety. Contact Mike at 797-0414, 1-800-679-4256, or email moneal@guardakid.com

Neighbors

Neighbors is published monthly and mailed to over 11,000 households and businesses within the neighborhoods of Deering, Woodfords, Riverton and North and East Deering.

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