



Press Release

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Students at Eagle Point Elementary in DeForest Learn How to Be Prepared for Disasters & Emergencies

Donations Totaling \$20,000 from AT&T and the Wisconsin Wireless Association Help Continue Statewide STEP Program in Wisconsin

DEFOREST, Monday, November 20, 2017 – During a visit to Eagle Point Elementary School in DeForest today, Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Major General Don Dunbar, Adjutant General and Wisconsin's Homeland Security Advisor, announced the return of the STEP program to Wisconsin classrooms, thanks to \$20,000 in donations from AT&T and the Wisconsin Wireless Association.

The STEP Program stands for Student Tools for Emergency Planning, and teaches students how to prepare for disasters and react to emergencies.

“When disaster strikes, it’s important that Wisconsin communities know how to respond and act quickly,” said Lt. Governor Kleefisch. “The STEP program not only teaches students how to prepare for emergencies, but it also encourages them to share that information with their families. We are excited to kick off this program to help schools like Eagle Point Elementary and others across the state prepare their students for emergencies and disasters.”

STEP is a turn-key classroom curriculum for teachers to prepare 4th and 5th graders for various emergencies and disasters, including blizzards, tornadoes, flooding and storms. The program also shows students how to put together an emergency kit and develop an emergency plan.

“Getting students excited about emergency preparedness is the goal of the STEP program,” said Maj. Gen. Dunbar. “We want students to bring the emergency preparedness information they learn in the classroom back home, so they encourage their families to put together their own disaster plan and disaster kits to better prepare for emergencies.”

The program is being funded this year through a \$10,000 Innovation & Investment Award from AT&T Wisconsin and a \$10,000 donation from the Wisconsin Wireless Association.

AT&T has a long-standing commitment to disaster preparedness and business continuity, and is the first company in the nation to earn U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) certification for disaster preparedness. Since 2012, AT&T has provided \$78,000 (including today's donation) to support the STEP program in Wisconsin.

"We know how critical it is to be ready and prepared to respond in the event of a disaster or emergency," said Scott T. VanderSanden, president of AT&T Wisconsin. "Not only are we proud that our network operations are state-of-the-art when it comes to performing during and after a disaster, but we are also proud to help prepare Wisconsin families to respond to emergencies through our support of the STEP program."

During today's event, students at Eagle Point Elementary in DeForest learned how they can be prepared in the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

"We never know when a disaster or emergency might happen, and anyone can be impacted – even young people. That's why we think it's important to prepare our students," said Principal Ann Schoenberger. "We're excited to bring the STEP program to Eagle Point and provide our students with the knowledge and information they need to respond appropriately in an emergency."

Teachers are provided with all materials at no cost to the schools, including instructor guides, DVDs and copies of student handouts. All students participating in the program will also receive an emergency kit to take home, which includes a flashlight. The basic lesson is only one hour of instruction, but teachers can expand the lessons to cover eight hours of materials.

Wisconsin became the first state in the Midwest to teach the STEP program. Over 52,000 students have participated in STEP since the program began during the 2010-11 school year. Another 12,000 students are expected to participate in the 2017-18 school year in 150 schools around the state.

For more information on the STEP program, please visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/STEP/default.asp> to view a STEP video and download a brochure, or contact Joy Staab at joy.a.staab.mil@mail.mil or 608-242-3079.

The AT&T Wisconsin Innovation & Investment Award program provides funding to organizations and programs that improve the community by advancing education, enhancing the environment, promoting economic development, or delivering other community services.

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