

DESERT HOT SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY STUDENTS TEACH PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

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By Joan L. Boiko

Eight [Desert Hot Springs High School Public Safety Academy](#) (PSA) students put their training into practice last week when they walked [Two Bunch Palms Elementary School](#) second and third graders through a “pop up city” culminating with a safe arrival at school.

The pedestrian safety program, funded by [Riverside University Health System](#) through a grant from the [California Office of Traffic Safety](#), is part of [Desert Regional Medical Center's Trauma Prevention Program](#). As individual classes of students entered the Two Bunch Palms multi-purpose room, they were greeted by the PSA students and broken into small groups to go through the pop up city stations, with each providing an important message about pedestrian safety.

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Stations included a railroad crossing, home with a car ready to back out of the driveway, traffic light and crosswalk, tool shop and a corner crosswalk with oncoming traffic. The PSA students guided the younger students through a variety of scenarios, asking them questions such as, "What do you think this sign means?" (at the railroad crossing) and "What colors are the back lights when a car is backing out of the driveway?" When they safely arrived at school (the last station), participants reviewed what they had learned and received a special sticker as evidence of their achievement.

As small groups went through the mock city with half of the PSA students in attendance, the remainder of the students played Simon Says and Red Light, Green Light as they learned the difference between what to do when you see a red, yellow or green light.

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(Photo courtesy of Palm Springs Unified School District)

According to the [National Highway Safety Administration](#), pedestrian fatalities have risen 10 percent. In the Coachella Valley, Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs rank higher than the national average as a result of distracted drivers and pedestrians. In order to help address the issue, DRMC's Trauma Prevention Program established a community outreach educational safety curriculum for local high school students.

While last week's program was provided for second and third grade students at Two Bunch Palms, DRMC Trauma Prevention Program Coordinator Gael Whetstone, RN, said the program could be offered at other grade levels or at other schools sometime later in the year.



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