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Scholastic Crime Stoppers: Reducing Crime in our Schools

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School crime and violence is always a topic of great importance to teachers, parents and students. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that in 1999, students were victims of about 2.5 million crimes at schools: 1.6 million thefts and 880,000 nonfatal violent crimes, including about 186,000 serious violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault). In comparison, students were victims of 2.1 million crimes away from school.

So, what is the answer? The fact is that teachers and law enforcement officers cannot be everywhere all the time. That is why we need to get the students to take an active role in reporting crime. Who knows their peers better than the students themselves? Implementing a Scholastic CrimeStopper program is like "deputizing" hundreds of students to help law enforcement combat crime.

According to the FBI, the implementation of a Scholastic CrimeStoppers program is one of the best and least expensive crime prevention strategies in middle and high schools. CrimeStoppers offers students a safe outlet for reporting crime. An anonymous tip hotline or a tip box allows students to report incidents such as drugs, weapons, vandalism, and bullies without the fear of retaliation. To overcome the students' lack of interest to get involved, CrimeStoppers offers cash rewards of up to \$300 for successful tips leading to preventing and solving campus crimes.

Scholastic CrimeStoppers evolved out of CrimeStoppers International. In 1983, an officer with the Boulder, Colorado, Police Department established the first Scholastic CrimeStoppers in the United States. The program allowed students to provide tips about crimes on campus to the school administration. Students could remain anonymous to prevent retaliation. To overcome apathy, students were offered monetary rewards if their tip proved instrumental in solving a crime.

The successful Scholastic CrimeStopper program depends on the commitment of the school administration and students. The program is student-operated. A board of directors composed of students is appointed to market and advertise the program, raise funds, review information about crimes and determine reward amounts. The members of the board never know the identity of the victims, witnesses, or suspects. These

identities are protected by an administrative liaison or law enforcement officer who is affiliated with the program. Scholastic CrimeStoppers can also be tailored to fit the individual needs of a school. Some schools do not offer extra-curricular activities, therefore it is impossible for the students to meet or raise funds. In such cases, the Community CrimeStopper program can offer their assistance.

Scholastic CrimeStoppers creates a good relationship between school, law enforcement, and the community. It promotes a positive image of the school and encourages pride and responsibility. It reduces the rate of crime on campus which can make the students and teachers feel safe and secure on campus. For more information about Scholastic CrimeStoppers you can contact Montgomery Area CrimeStoppers at 334-262-1871 or visit our web site at <http://215stop.com>. You can get more information about Crime Stoppers International at www.c-s-i.org.

For recent information on CrimeStoppers, see [CrimeStoppers Press Release](#)

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