

# **Police Trading Cards**

## **Child Safety and Bridging to Youth**

### **Summary**

As a way to reach out to kids, the Corvallis Police Department is launching a program in which Corvallis police officers will hand out trading cards to Corvallis youth. The front sides of the cards feature pictures, such as of the Corvallis K-9s, and the back sides have safety and drug education messages based around the theme, “Be Known for *Smart Choices*,”. The program is sponsored by Friends of Corvallis Police, Inc.

### **Purpose**

This project has two goals: 1) deliver to Corvallis youth, emphasizing ages 6 - 15, youth-oriented messages on personal safety, crime prevention, and drug use prevention; and 2) help build a strong, positive relationship between Corvallis’ young people and Corvallis police officers.

### **Background**

Through service reductions occurring in 2002, the Corvallis Police Department no longer has School Resource Officers or paid Crime Prevention staff delivering prevention programs. So Friends of Corvallis Police was founded in March of 2006 to provide a way for citizens and community organizations to donate to crime prevention education and other Corvallis Police Department programs. Additionally, the Corvallis Police Auxiliary, a corps of volunteer citizens, was established to assist in delivering some crime prevention efforts on behalf of CPD.

Seeing the need to create opportunities for Corvallis Police to spread educational messages to youth on personal safety and the dangers of drugs, Friends of Corvallis Police continue to look for and find ways to fill service gaps. The trading card program “Be Known for *Smart Choices*” is one of these efforts.

### **Trading Card Program**

The Corvallis Police will launch the program on August 5, coincident with National Night Out. Keeping with tradition, Corvallis Police Officers will visit all Neighborhood Watch groups that are holding parties to celebrate America’s Night Out Against Crime. Officers will hand out cards to the kids at these parties and will talk with them and their parents about the safety messages on the cards.

After National Night Out, kids are encouraged to contact officers and ask for trading cards. And for their part, officers will hand out cards as they come in contact with the City’s youth. Officers will urge kids to share information on the cards with their parents with the idea of educating parents and of initiating family discussions.

The program is starting with six cards, one each on the topics of street safety, internet safety, alcohol, marijuana, methamphetamine, and teen driving. Cards were created and designed through a team effort by Friends of Corvallis Police and the Corvallis Police. Using words that kids connect with, messages are factual, direct, and pithy.

Project funding is through a grant from the Benton County Foundation to Friends of Corvallis Police.