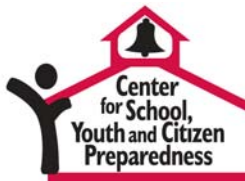


## Center for School, Youth and Citizen Preparedness, Incorporated



### “Uniting Schools and Communities To Strengthen Future Generations for Emergencies and Disasters”

The Center for School, Youth and Citizen Preparedness (the “Center”) aims to help youth, schools, and their communities be prepared for emergencies and disasters. The Center brings together a number of initiatives that have been underway since 1999. After operating as projects of different organizations for the past few years, the Center has now been recognized as an independent section 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Its current activities fall into two primary categories: 1) Youth Preparedness and 2) School Preparedness. The current Youth Preparedness initiatives include Responding to Emergencies And Disasters with Youth (READY) and the Ribbon of Promise Program. The School Preparedness initiatives include School Crisis Preparedness Workshops, Safe Schools – Best Practice Monthly Webcasts, School Crisis Preparedness Administrator’s Conferences, Safe Schools Week promotion, and providing resources, grant information and technical assistance to public, private, Native American and home school programs throughout the State of Wisconsin. All of these initiatives are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

#### **History from 1999 - Present:**

School Emergency Preparedness and Safety initiatives began to be a priority of focus for the Department of Health and Family Services’ (DHFS) Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Program in April of 1999 after the school shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Mary Jean Erschen, the Executive Director of the Center, was the administrator of the EMSC program and employee of DHFS at that time. A multi-disciplinary team was convened including the two Children’s Hospitals, Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Wisconsin Division of American Academy of Pediatrics, Wisconsin State Medical Society, University of Wisconsin La Crosse Department of Health Education and Health Promotion, Wisconsin Technical College System, K-12 School representatives, and injury prevention specialists. The function of this team was to research the needs of our schools related to emergency and crisis planning, plan resources to assist schools, provide education and programming services. Wisconsin Emergency Preparedness Guidelines for Schools were developed and approved by all involved in July, 2002 and distributed statewide in electronic format. These guidelines are still being used by our schools today and are located on the Center’s website as a tool for school’s to use in developing their crisis preparedness plan.

At the same time, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) along with 25 various national and federal emergency health and safety agencies developed a document named “Basic Emergency Lifesaving Skills (BELS) Template” which provided a template for developmental and cognitive recommendations for teaching emergency health and safety skills to children. Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin provided a grant to DHFS, University of Wisconsin La Crosse, American Heart Association, and American Red Cross to support evaluation of existing safety education. The results of this study was the development of a pilot 2-day Train-the-Trainer course for K-12 schools. The pilot BELSS (Basic Emergency Lifesaving Skills in Schools) course was held at UW Madison in July 2001. In 2001, HRSA released a grant request proposal for a state to develop a multi-state model of implementation of the BELS template. The Wisconsin EMSC program was successful in applying for and receiving this \$600,000 grant award to work with the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota to implement and study our BELSS model.

On September 11, 2001, our nation was affected by our largest act of terrorism. Wisconsin Emergency Management requested that our BELSS Advisory Team to attend training at the National Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, MD to bring back the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Multihazard Emergency Preparedness for Schools Program. We were also awarded the National Fire Protection Association’s Champion Management Award for their Risk Watch K-8 Injury Prevention program. Risk Watch curriculum was implemented within over 250 elementary classrooms. There were 228 persons trained in the Multihazard Emergency Preparedness for Schools courses that were held from 2004 - 2005. Both programs were implemented successfully throughout the State of Wisconsin.

In 2003, because of state budget constraints within state agencies, out-of-state travel limits, and the growth of the school emergency preparedness and safety initiatives, it was agreed by all involved that the initiatives may be better served at a university rather than by a state office at DHFS. The two worked together to have the funding transferred to the University of Wisconsin La Crosse (UW-L).

The Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) Homeland Security and Citizen Corps programs received a directive from Governor Doyle’s office in 2004 to further prepare citizens, staff, and students of Wisconsin schools. Development and implementation of the READY (Responding to Emergencies And Disasters with Youth) initiative and School Preparedness Conferences in collaboration with all the previous partners as well as the Department of Military Affairs, Air and Army National Guard occurred. Funding was provided to La Crosse County Health Department and UW-L since our initiatives were now administered as Mary Jean Erschen was hired by UW-L. It became evident that there were many challenges with the financial aspects between the agencies since UW-L was also a state agency. They worked with the UW-L Foundation, but there were constraints between funding at the foundation level and funding within the grants office; and, thus the Center began to move toward becoming an independent organization.

In September of 2005, OJA requested the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation (WTCSF), a 501(c) (3) organization, to receive the funding as a contract between Lakeshore Technical College and WTCSF, after the La Crosse County Public Health Department denied acceptance of the grant due to the constraints of administering the grant and other local political issues.

In 2006, it was requested that we develop a name for the organization that would encompass the school and youth preparedness initiatives along with citizen preparedness, which has been a priority within the federal priorities for homeland security and the Wisconsin Homeland Security program. Thus the Center for School, Youth, and Citizen Preparedness was chosen to reflect our mission and initiatives. The current website of [www.citizenpreparedness.org](http://www.citizenpreparedness.org) was also developed. Marketing and informational materials were changed to reflect the new name. The process of development of a non-profit organization was started with incorporation by the State of Wisconsin, Department of Financial Institutions, Division of Corporate and Consumer Services on October 17, 2006.

WTCSF has been the fiscal and administrating organization for the Center, receiving grant funding from OJA to support the READY Initiatives along with statewide School Crisis Preparedness conferences to train and provide resources to school administration, teachers and crisis preparedness teams across the State of Wisconsin. Grants have been awarded to Lakeshore Technical College with contracted services provided by WTCS to support school and youth initiatives for public, private, Native American, home schools and youth organizations. Annual audits have been completed by WTCSF.

### **Current Organization of Activities**

As of July 20, 2008, the Center was approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit, tax exempt, 501 (c) (3) charitable organization with an effective date of October 17, 2006. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue granted the same status as of August 4, 2008. The Center Board of Directors currently consists of five dedicated persons who have relevant expertise in emergency and disaster preparedness and a passion for the Center's efforts. The Board consists of physicians, nurses, business partners, and school board leadership. The Center will be recruiting additional directors as the organization grows.

All school and youth preparedness activities have continued to be administered by the Executive Director of the Center, Mary Jean Erschen. Fiscal, audit, and tax services are by contract basis. Instructors are contracted to provide services as needed for educational programs. The Center activities have most recently been funded by a combination of Homeland Security and Citizen Corps grants, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Safety grants, corporate and private donations, as well as various in-kind support from corporations and individuals. The annual amount of state grant support is currently \$165,000 for an annual budget of \$276,000 to support 5 School Crisis Preparedness Conferences, technical assistance to schools statewide, public speaking, Ribbon of Promise Program, READY Classes and 2 Summer READY Camps.

A team of dedicated individuals representing the Office of Justice Assistance, Homeland Security Program, Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Department of Health Services, and members of organizations including the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association, Wisconsin School Public Relations Association, Wisconsin Association of School Boards, National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officers, School Principals, Safety Directors, Pupil Services, School Resource Officers, and interested persons meet on the third Thursday of every month to plan educational events, address current issues that face our schools, develop resources to assist schools in their preparedness efforts, provide technical assistance to schools, and evaluate services of the Center. Members of the Wisconsin School Crisis Preparedness Team have been formally appointed to their positions by David Steingraber, Executive Director of the Office of Justice Assistance.

The READY Planning team also meets monthly to plan, develop, implement and evaluate youth and citizen preparedness programs. The members include representatives from state agencies and public service professions of firefighters, law enforcement, emergency medical services, hospital trauma services, emergency management, crime prevention, injury prevention, education, community youth programs, youth participants from the READY program, and research experts.

#### **School Crisis Preparedness Current and Planned Activities:**

##### ***Goals:***

- Assessment of emergency preparedness and safety initiatives in schools
- Address the mitigation, preparation, response and recovery aspects of school crisis preparedness as recommended by the United States Department of Education guidelines through annual state conference offerings or upon request from Wisconsin schools
- Develop school resources, initiatives, and educational programs to meet the emergency preparedness and safety needs identified
- Increase communication between parents, schools, students, and community emergency responders including Emergency Medical Services (EMS), fire, law enforcement, emergency management, and health care
- Link schools with local, state, regional, and national emergency management and safety networks, funding, and resources
- Evaluate knowledge and skills that increase emergency preparedness and safety competencies
- Conduct research related to cultural, economic, educational, and geographical barriers

Services provided by the Center include:

***School Crisis Preparedness Workshops:***

Conferences are being held in various regional locations across the State of Wisconsin to educate school administrators, staff, crisis preparedness teams, and community emergency response networks about preparing our schools for emergencies and disasters. The one or two-day workshops have included conducting table top exercises; tactical site surveys; current school crisis issues; mitigating and preventing situations including threat assessment, access, bullying, cyber-bullying, and creating a positive school culture; developing a school plan using the National Incident Management and Incident Command System; response to a crisis situation; and best practice recovery efforts. Participants include school administrators, school crisis management team (teachers, buildings and grounds, maintenance, administrative assistants, mental health team, school nurses, etc.), local emergency responders including law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency management, public health and school safety consultants. Participants have also included technical colleges and university representatives. Evaluation summaries have been extremely positive and have been used to improve each year’s conference program.

***School Crisis Preparedness Administrator’s Conferences:***

Two 1-day conferences were held for school administrators in the summer of 2006. One was held in Madison and the other in the Wausau area. Both were well attended and evaluation summaries were extremely positive. These conferences provided administrators with information to promote them to take action in their schools related to emergency preparedness. Educational sessions included the National Incident Management System and its relationship to schools; communication and public information during a crisis situation; scenario-based table top exercises; and threat assessment to prevent incidents.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Conferences Held</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Number of Schools (public and private)</b>
2005 (no charge)	5 General	716	111
2006 (no charge)	2 Administrator	160	28
2006 (no charge)	7 General	984	119
2007 (\$50/each for team of 5 + or \$70/person)	6 (one held in Spring and 5 held in October)	572	113
2008 (\$50/each for team of 5 + or \$70/person)	5 (all held in October)	434	94

**Conference Expenses for 100 persons attending (without management and fiscal costs)**

Hotel - Room fees (2 conference rooms to hold at least 125 persons)	\$400
Hotel – AV fees (microphones, AV connection to hotel sound system, screen, etc)	\$600
Hotel - Lunch fees (\$9 x 100)	\$900
Hotel – Break fees (\$5.00 x 100 x 2)	\$1000
Hotel - Lodging for speakers (\$70.00 x 6)	\$420
Instructor fees (\$250 x 3)	\$750
Instructor mileage (\$.465/mile x average 1500 miles x 4)	\$2093
Instructor meals (\$17 x 6)	\$102
Handout materials (\$10 x 100)	\$1000
Brochure development and marketing materials (brochure design and printing)	\$370
Supplies (name badges, flip charts, markers, printer, etc.)	\$100
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>\$7735</b>

***Safe Schools – Best Practice Monthly Webcasts:***

We have collaborated with the Department of Public Instruction, Office of Justice Assistance, Wisconsin Emergency Management, and Department of Health Services, and the Wisconsin School Crisis Preparedness Team to provide “Safe Schools - Best Practice Series” to schools and participants across the nation related to School Crisis Preparedness. These are 45 minute presentations broadcast on the internet and archived for a one year period. They have been very successful in providing valuable and timely information to schools and community emergency response agencies. This initiative was developed in response to the panic felt by schools across the state after the fatal shooting incident of Principal John Klang at Weston School District on September 29, 2006. Topics have included: Uniting to Create Safe Schools, Bullying and Cyber-bullying, Creating a Positive School Culture, The National Incident Management System, Crime Prevention, Responding to Emergencies And Disasters with Youth, Violence Prevention, Campus Safety for Technical Colleges and Universities, Best Practices for a Safe Environment, Ribbon of Promise Program, Table Top Exercises and Testing Your School Crisis Plan, Restorative Practices, Crisis Communications, Peer Mediation, Bullying Prevention, Hope After Tragedy – the Weston Story, Missing and Exploited Children and Amber Alert, Youth Suicide Prevention, and School Lockdowns.

***Safe Schools Week Proclamation, Activities, and Resources:***

The Center has taken the lead to work with Governor Jim Doyle’s office, the Office of Justice Assistance, Department of Public Instruction and the members of the School Crisis Preparedness Team to proclaim the third week of October as Safe Schools Week throughout Wisconsin communities. Governor Doyle has issued a proclamation in both 2007 and 2008. Schools were provided with a packet of information which included sample activities they could implement to create a safe school environment, a poster to display throughout their buildings declaring school safety as a priority, a listing of websites where grants and funding could be obtained to support their safe school initiatives, and a listing of statewide and federal resources available to help in their safe school planning and implementation. A listing of these resources can be found on the Center website at [www.citizenpreparedness.org](http://www.citizenpreparedness.org). State agencies and other partnering organizations have created links to the resources also.

***Collaborating with Safe School Resource Centers across the nation:***

We have collaborated with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools since beginning our BELSS Initiative in 1999. They have included us on the list serve to collaborate with other Safe School Resource Centers that have been developed across the nation to bring information and resources to Wisconsin schools.

***Crisis Preparedness Conferences for Technical and Community Colleges and Universities:***

We have been asked to develop crisis preparedness conferences to address the needs of Technical and Community Colleges and the University campus. Currently, they have been attending our K-12 conferences and state that they learn from them but their situation is entirely different in dealing with adult students vs. youth. Prevention, preparedness, response and recovery needs are different for their situations. Conferences are planned to begin in the winter or spring of 2009.

***Center for School Youth and Citizen Preparedness Website:***

The Center website has been designed to be a clearinghouse for resources that are available to assist schools in developing, augmenting, and evaluating their crisis plan. Links are provided to connect them to state agencies, partnering organizations, federal resources and national organizations that provide tools and products at no cost or for a minimal cost. The website also includes information related to all of the initiatives, programs and services of the Center.

***School Crisis Preparedness Grants:***

Technical assistance and resources are provided to schools who are interested in applying for federal, state and local grants to update and improve their crisis response system. A listing has been created with websites of funding organizations that provide education and safety related grants to schools. Education about successful grant writing has been included in our conferences throughout the years.

***Public Speaking:***

Our team has been involved in various presentations about school and youth preparedness at the local, regional, state and national level. This is completed by request from various public and private organizations.

***Technical Assistance:***

The Center will connect school districts with experts in the field of school safety to complete vulnerability assessments, provide technical assistance in planning and safety analysis, and answer questions that school districts face on a regular basis. The Office of Justice Assistance, the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation, and the Center entered into a licensing agreement with Safe Havens International to provide school crisis preparedness planning electronic templates, flip chart templates, instructor resources and various other tools for all of Wisconsin schools. Assistance has been provided to schools to utilize these resources and others that are available to develop an efficient school crisis management plan. Many schools continue to be without an efficient plan that includes the National Incident Management System.

## **Youth Preparedness Current and Planned Activities:**

### ***Goals:***

- ◆ Prepare youth for emergencies according to their cognitive, social, and moral development as resource persons in emergency situations
- ◆ Increase volunteer efforts of students
- ◆ Encourage students to take leadership in community efforts of prevention
- ◆ Promote students to take an active role in creating a positive school and community environment and speak out against bullying and violence
- ◆ Educate students to respond to emergency and disaster situations at their home and school
- ◆ Increase interest in health and public safety careers
- ◆ Empower youth with personal responsibility
- ◆ Encourage team building skills of youth to reduce risk taking behaviors
- ◆ Develop leadership skills to affect change through higher education after graduation from high school
- ◆ Assess the relationship between acquiring and completing emergency preparedness skills and Wisconsin youth health risk behaviors.

### ***Responding to Emergencies And Disasters with Youth (READY) Initiatives:***

The Responding to Emergencies And Disasters with Youth (READY) initiatives prepare youth with skills that will assist in preventing injuries; developing skills in planning and leading the identification of vulnerable situations within their school, home and community; building skills that will aid in initial response to emergencies and disasters until additional help arrives and assist with recovery efforts. READY initiatives also offer activity based learning and challenges utilizing the incident command system through the National Guard's leadership development and outdoor ropes courses. This learning approach provides youth with positive experiences that allow them to make better choices when faced with high risk behaviors. The education is guided by state and federal mandates and meets the requirements of the federal "No Child Left Behind Act". Instructional modules include emergency preparedness, emergency response organization, fire safety, certification in American Red Cross (ARC) first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automatic external defibrillation (AED), search and rescue techniques, the emotional responses related to trauma, terrorism, bullying and crime prevention. Youth are involved in additional learning experiences that include: 1) completion of a school hazard assessment which creates an awareness of vulnerabilities within their school, home, and community; 2) orientation to public service careers, which are highlighted by tours of a trauma center and demonstrations by air medical personnel, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services (EMS), military operations and emergency management; and 3) presentation of community resources are conducted to assist youth in accomplishing emergency preparedness service learning projects. These educational programs can be implemented through various approaches including: a 5-day READY camp experience, 3-day READY class experience for middle school students, or a 2-day READY class experience for high school students.



Governor Jim Doyle and Jessica Doyle have endorsed the READY initiatives along with the Office of Justice Assistance, Wisconsin Citizen Corps program, and Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Safety. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recognized the READY Initiatives as a best practice model by publishing a “Good Story” article in the Lessons Learned in Information Sharing newsletter and website. The National Citizen Corps initiative has also highlighted the READY Initiatives on their website.

From the summer of 2005 beginning with a small pilot camp to the summer of 2008, we have trained 767 youth from 95 different communities across the State of Wisconsin in the 5-day summer READY Camp program. Beginning in June of 2006 through September of 2008, 1,765 youth have been trained in communities across most Wisconsin counties. They have been active in serving their communities in various ways since their training including response to the 2007 and 2008 flooding disaster situations in Wisconsin. Many of their schools have developed Student Emergency Response Teams (SERT) where youth take an active role on the school crisis planning team and respond to emergency situations at their school. They have also been active in educating the elementary students in prevention and emergency skills. Some have been active in county-wide emergency preparedness planning and one student became active in educating her local SWAT team about how to communicate with hearing impaired children during a crisis situation. One team in the Milwaukee area responded appropriately and helped adults to a place of safety during the Falk Propane Company Explosion in 2006. Youth have reported increased confidence in helping others during emergency situations and have utilized their skills to provide basic care to injured friends and relatives.

The READY planning team is also in the process of developing an Advanced READY Camp for youth to expand their knowledge and skills within the READY Camp experience. A READY Class for elementary school students is also in the planning stages at the request of teachers who have experienced the middle school classes.

### ***Ribbon of Promise Campaign***

Through the Ribbon of Promise Campaign, the Center has been working with schools and communities to empower youth to speak out to promote a safe school environment and prevent bullying and school violence. In October 2007, the Center sponsored a statewide Ribbon of Promise t-shirt design contest. The winner and her school classmates all received free t-shirts. The Center is also working with students to prepare public service announcements in partnership with Charter Communications. Schools are holding Ribbon of Promise assemblies to promote a positive culture, BREAK THE CODE OF SILENCE regarding the reporting of threats and rumors, be kind to others, helping each other, and preventing bullying behavior. These aspects mirror national goal setting recommendations.

We are currently in the process of developing a strategic plan for initiatives that will be implemented in 2009.