



Police Department

Nannette H. Hegerty
Chief of Police

June 30, 2005

To The Honorable Common Council
Public Improvement Committee
200 East West Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Re: Status Report on the Water Safety Initiatives Completed by the Milwaukee Police Department and the Water Safety Taskforce Coalition:

Dear Aldermen:

The Common Council adopted File #040514 on September 21, 2004 directing the Milwaukee Safety Commission to prepare a report on measures to be taken to improve Safety along Milwaukee's Rivers, Creeks and other Waterways. In compliance with the directives of this File, the Milwaukee Police Department submits this report.

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children, 1 to 14 years of age throughout the State of Wisconsin. Drownings usually occur quick and silently, within a matter of seconds. The Milwaukee community was saddened during the 2004 Summer, with the tragic drowning deaths of two young sisters in the Milwaukee River. As a result of these drownings, the Safety Division in collaboration with several community based organizations created a Water Safety Task Force Coalition to address measures that would reduce the number of unintentional childhood drownings through **media efforts, education and collaborative partnerships.**

The Water Safety Task Force Coalition commenced in late Fall of 2004. The Coalition's Membership is comprised of many community-based agencies that are working diligently to create awareness about Water Safety throughout the City of Milwaukee.

The Water Safety Task Force Coalition:

- Milwaukee Police Department – Safety Division
- Milwaukee Fire Department
- American Red Cross
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee
- Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Milwaukee

- Milwaukee County Park System
- Milwaukee Public Schools- Division of Recreation and Community Services
- Safe Kids of Wisconsin
- YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee
- Urban Ecology Center

2005 Accomplishments and Future Goals of the Water Safety Task Force Coalition

2005 Accomplishments:

- Water Safety Press Conference (March 2005) initiated by Alderman Robert G. Donovan and the Water Safety Task Force Coalition
- Water Safety Public Service Announcement (PSA) were created by the Milwaukee Police Department and aired on the City of Milwaukee Channel 25.
- The Water Safety Task Force Coalition developed and disseminated Water Safety materials for parents and children.
- A “Milwaukee Water Safety Message for Shoppers Program” was completed and involved local grocers and children of local elementary school as well as the Boys & Girls Club who put Water Safety messages and drawings on shopping bags.

2005 Future Goals:

- Provide a Water Safety letter to leaders of Faith Based Organizations to encourage the importance of Water Safety.
- The Milwaukee Police Department will develop a Water Safety brochure specifically designed for adults, involving children when in or near water, to accompany the PSA.
- Water Watcher Program – this program will encourage residents to have an active role in a Block Watch Safety Initiative Program.
- Provide Water Safety Classroom Activities for the Milwaukee Public School System, Charter Schools, and Parochial and Lutheran Schools.

Highlights: 2005 Water Task Force Coalition Accomplishments:

Water Safety Press Conference: (Attachment A- press release)

A press conference was held on Thursday, March 24, 2005, at the Kilbourn Landing along the Milwaukee River in the 1900 block of N. Commerce St., to announce water safety initiatives that have been created to promote water safety awareness in the three zip codes in the City of Milwaukee, 53215, 53212, and 53208. These specific areas of the city are where nearly all recent drownings or near-drownings have occurred in the Milwaukee, Menomonee and Kinnickinnic Rivers.

Attendance at the Press Conference included: Mayor Tom Barrett, Fire Chief William Wentlandt, Alderman Robert G. Donovan (53215), Alderman Michael McGee, Jr. (53212),

Alderman Michael J. Murphy (53208), Florence Dukes, Safety Director, Bridget Clementi, Coordinator, Safe Kids of Wisconsin, and the Water Safety Task Force Coalition Representatives

Water Safety Educational Material:

One of the goals of the Water Safety Taskforce was to create and provide educational water safety information to parents as well as children. This was done by creating a water safety leaflet which encourages 4 steps to water safety, and on the back where parents can seek out swimming lessons for children and where to get specific water safety questions answered: (Attachment B)

1. Supervision. Parents should be responsible to always supervise children in or near water.
2. Learn to Swim. Learn how to swim and have kids learn also.
3. Play safe. Always have lifeguards and adults present.
4. Get Help. If someone is in trouble in water, **CALL 911** and get an adult.

The American Red Cross distributed Water Educational Materials for children earmarked for K5- 5th grade. (Attachment B)

Water Safety Shopper's Program:

Three local grocery stores agreed to provide bags for children to decorate with water safety messages and be passed out with water safety literature provided by the Water Safety Taskforce on Saturday, June 18, 2005, from 12:00 PM -2:00 PM.

Local Grocery Stores:

- Lena's Food Market 3334 N. Holton St - L'laina Rash and Sharon Warren
- Jewel Osco 2355 N. 35th, - Lishunda Patterson
- El Rey 1023 S. 16th St. - Ginger Duiven, Geri Olson

Water Safety messages of **Supervision, Prevention, Get Help, and Safe Water Play** were **disbursed** to students as a Water Educational Drawings Activity.

School Participants in the Water Safety Message Drawing:

- Longfellow Elementary School (Police District 6)
- Gaenslen Elementary School (Police District 5)
- Local YMCA's
- Boys & Girls Club (Police District 7)

There was Media coverage the day of the event provided by Channel 18 and Channel 4. L'laina Rash, Coordinator of Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Milwaukee and Sharon Warren, the mother of the two girls who were drowned in the Milwaukee River were interviewed regarding the "Water Safety Message For Shoppers Program" at Lena's Food Market, 3334 N Holton Street.

The Milwaukee Police Department continues to make strides in providing water safety information and working with the collaborative partnerships to reduce unintentional injury and water related deaths.

Sincerely,

Nanette H. Hegerty
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Florence Duker". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Florence Duker
Safety Director

Enclosures