

## RMS Internet Safety Night

*Roosevelt Middle School  
Blaine, Minnesota*

Students and parents at Roosevelt Middle School took a bite out of Internet anxiety by attending an Internet Safety Night.

Administrators and parents at Roosevelt developed the event in response to an increase in cyber-bullying that concerned students and families. The Roosevelt Parent Partnership Team sponsored the evening as a way to publicize its work and invite other parents to join. Taking the lead from a similar program at another school in its district, Roosevelt's staff developed a presentation that was technologically savvy and community-oriented.

The school's volunteer services coordinator contacted Peggy Kendall, a communications professor at a nearby college. She had written a book about the challenges of raising children safely in the computerized age of MySpace and instant messaging. She agreed to give the talk for free.

About 75 parents and students attended the presentation. Volunteers from the local high school provided child care for younger children. Everyone received pamphlets from Mediawise, a national institute on media and family. The PowerPoint presentation for the parents and middle-schoolers was followed by an interactive tutorial, during which parents used the school's computers to search the Internet with child-safety filters turned off. Parents witnessed first-hand the potential dangers of not having Internet filters on their home computers. The speaker suggested how parents could set priorities and expectations for children's Internet use at home.

The local public access cable channel taped the event for rebroadcast. Roosevelt students helped the cable crew during the taping, giving students an opportunity to do "real work" with media technology. The school posted Kendall's PowerPoint presentation on the school's web site for parents who were not able to attend. It also included a link for order-

ing tapes from the cable channel. More than two dozen people did so.

Evaluation forms reflected the success of the night. Almost all respondents agreed that the presentation would be helpful in monitoring their child's Internet use in the future, and in trying to steer students clear of cyber-trouble.

"Great event—good for kids to hear as well, because it provided positive, as well as negative, information!" said one parent.

For others, the talk gave them confidence that some good could come out of making their child more technologically savvy.

"Very eye-opening! I have always been one to err on the side of 'NO' when it comes to the computer, but this evening made me realize that I can't avoid Internet usage."

Administrators at Roosevelt say that they are likely to sponsor a similar event next year. They would like to increase parents' exposure to the Internet, possibly by broadening the range of social networking sites discussed.

*Greg Blodgett  
Principal*

(763) 506-5800

*Greg.Blodgett@anoka.k12.mn.us*