

# 2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: County of Louisa

Program Title: Learn and Win (LAW) Program

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Corporal Robert R. Sarnoski

Title: School Resource Officer

Department: Louisa County Sheriff's Office

Complete Mailing Address: Post Office Box 504, Louisa, Virginia 23093

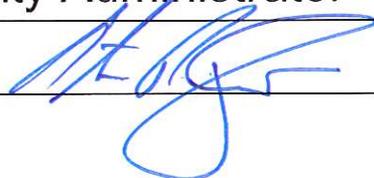
Telephone # 540-967-1234 Fax # 540-967-1604

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christian Goodwin

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

**LOUISA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
LEARN AND WIN**

The Learn and Win (LAW) program is a crucial component of the many innovative community policing initiatives implemented by the Louisa County Sheriff's Office. Faced with a myriad of less than positive influences in our children's lives (e.g. peer pressure, internet, television, movies, video games, and music), the Sheriff's Office undertook the challenge to find a flexible, collaborative, and cost effective means to encourage Louisa County tweens/teens to make good choices on key issues affecting their future. LAW not only provides the facts on important issues, but helps build self-esteem and decision-making skills to ensure tweens/teens have a positive school experience and the opportunity to become well-informed, contributing citizens wherever they reside. In addition to the student piece, LAW also provides critical education to school faculty and staff.

Partnering with Louisa County Public Schools, agencies, and businesses, the Sheriff's Office provides a small annual budget of approximately \$2,000 and assigns three full-time deputies to School Resource Officer (SRO) positions. The school division contributes classrooms and instructional time at six county schools (Trevilians Elementary, Moss-Nuckols Elementary, Jouett Elementary, Thomas Jefferson Elementary, Louisa County Middle School, and Louisa County High School). Forty-three Louisa County businesses generously donate an average of \$4,000 annually to the National Child Safety Council to purchase approximately 2,700 age-appropriate LAW publications for students and parents. Each academic year, over 1,500 public school primary and secondary students receive LAW instruction during approximately 175 classroom sessions.

Dedicated, professional SROs are the foundation of the LAW program. In addition to providing LAW instruction, SROs work daily to build relationships with primary and secondary students, both as informal counselors and role models. SROs work tirelessly to earn student trust and cultivate open communication. When possible, SROs deal with student mistakes and poor choices as teachable moments to reinforce important life lessons.

The Sheriff's Office implemented the LAW program in three phases beginning in Academic Year (AY) 2009-2010. Phase I, or the elementary school program, is the cornerstone of the LAW initiative. While SROs interact with all grade levels in elementary school, LAW instruction is specifically focused on 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students receive ten 45-60 minute lessons in the following areas:

- Lesson 1 Intro to LAW
- Lesson 2 Making Smart Choices
- Lesson 3 Tobacco
- Lesson 4 Alcohol
- Lesson 5 Marijuana
- Lesson 6 Other Drugs
- Lesson 7 Internet Safety
- Lesson 8 Gangs
- Lesson 9 Vehicle Safety
- Lesson 10 Review (LAW Jeopardy)

Each lesson, with the exception of Internet Safety, is produced and updated by SROs to achieve the goal of the LAW program. The Internet Safety lesson utilizes the nationally renowned Netsmartz Tweens internet safety presentation. On the first lesson, each student receives a LAW folder produced by the Sheriff's Office. The folder contains SRO-created class worksheets, homework activities, and instructions for the capstone end of course LAW essay. All elements are designed to reinforce lesson objectives. The capstone exercise is a one or two-page handwritten/typed essay on something the student learned in the LAW program and why it is important to make good choices for their future.

All LAW folders and essays are reviewed by an SRO. One student from each classroom is awarded a best essay certificate and a \$20 Barnes and Nobles gift card from the Sheriff's Office. In addition, every student successfully completing the rigorous LAW curriculum receives a green and gold LAW t-shirt and a completion certificate signed by the Sheriff. Presentations are typically made by Sheriff Ashland D. Fortune at a school awards assembly attended by administrators, faculty, parents, and students. At the end of the LAW program, students are given the opportunity to provide feedback. Students have repeatedly given the SROs and LAW program high marks. Each year, more than 95% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students successfully complete the LAW curriculum.

The Sheriff's Office implemented Phase II, or the middle school program, in AY 2010-2011. SROs instruct two lessons at each grade level with one lesson taught each semester. Lessons provide additional age-specific information in key areas. These lessons are again 45-60 minutes in length and include:

- Grade 6
  - Lesson 1 Student Responsibilities
  - Lesson 2 Introduction to Juvenile Justice
- Grade 7
  - Lesson 1 Internet Safety/Sexting
  - Lesson 2 Vehicle Safety
- Grade 8
  - Lesson 1 Gang Awareness
  - Lesson 2 Other Drugs

Again, each lesson, with the exception of Internet Safety, is produced and updated by SROs to achieve the goal of the LAW program. The Internet Safety lesson utilizes the nationally renowned Netsmartz Teens internet safety presentation. In-class worksheets are utilized, as necessary, to reinforce lesson objectives. Given the increased maturity of students, LAW certificates and t-shirts are not utilized as incentives.

Phase III, or the high school program, is in on-going development. Instruction is focused on multiple grade levels and currently includes three 45-60 minute lessons. These lessons include:

- Grade 9 (Health class) Substance Abuse
- Grade 10 (Driver Education class) Motor Vehicle Responsibilities
- Grade 12 (Government class) Search and Seizure/Student Rights

This year, the Substance Abuse lesson expanded to include guest speakers -- a recovered drug abuser and a registered nurse from the University of Virginia Medical Center. The life lessons highlighted by the recovered drug abuser had a significant impact on students. Following the substance abuse lesson, students

wrote numerous letters of appreciation to the speaker. Next year, we hope to include a Central Virginia Regional Jail officer in the discussion for an additional perspective on the consequences of substance abuse.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office sponsors special events for students such as Operation SAFE PASSAGE. Operation SAFE PASSAGE, implemented in AY 2009-2010, is a multifaceted campaign executed in conjunction with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Louisa County Transportation Safety Commission, and two area tow truck companies. The focus of the campaign is to reduce teens under the influence and distracted driving mishaps during the high risk period, prom through graduation (April-May). This dynamic campaign is two-pronged: (1) Phase I encourages smart choices through education; and (2) Phase II monitors and corrects inappropriate teen behaviors through vigorous law enforcement. Phase I was modified in AY 2011-2012 due to school grounds limitations following a catastrophic magnitude 5.8 earthquake centered in Louisa County. The program, as described in the following paragraphs, was reinstated in its entirety in AY 2014-2015.

Phase I includes a wrecked vehicle static display and a live outdoor demonstration of an alcohol-involved traffic mishap. The static display, which remains on school grounds for the week leading up to prom, serves as a daily reminder to all students of the consequences of poor choices while driving or riding as a passenger. During the kickoff event, which was attended by the Superintendent of the Schools, Dr Deborah Pettit, other notable individuals, and a representative group of students, Louisa Town Police Chief Ronald Roberts provided important advice on making good choices and appropriate driving behavior.

A realistic demonstration is provided for more than 600 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students that includes student actors as victims, and begins in the moments just after a two-car motor vehicle collision. Fire, Emergency Services, and Sheriff's Office personnel respond to the mishap scene with lights and sirens. As the demonstration unfolds, the students are exposed to the graphic images and startling sounds of a fatal vehicle accident. The "it can't happen to me" mindset is immediately shattered as the high school students see their classmates seriously hurt or fatally injured within the vehicle wreckage. Students depart the demonstration understanding the very real, and sometimes permanent, consequences of poor choices while

driving or riding as passengers on Virginia highways. School administrators are on hand to encourage students to stop, think, and make smart choices for a happy and healthy future.

During Phase II, the Sheriff's Office, with support from the community, collects information on the location of gatherings where underage teens might be consuming alcohol. Social media sites are leveraged, when possible, and school administrators are consulted. Deputies deliver Operation SAFE PASSAGE news releases throughout the county to retail stores selling alcohol. Deputies encourage store managers to carefully scrutinize customer identifications for underage buyers in addition to being vigilant for adults purchasing alcohol for minors. SROs are present at high school prom and graduation events. Patrols are increased and random checkpoints are used when approved by law enforcement leadership. The goal is to make the period from prom to graduation a positive and memorable experience not only for the students, but also for the more than 34,000 citizens who utilize county roads and support the students of each graduating class.

Finally, LAW is not solely focused on students. SROs and other Sheriff's Office deputies provide instruction to LCPS administrators, faculty, and staff in critical incident response and gang awareness. Currently, new school personnel, including substitute teachers, receive initial critical incident response training. While the probability of a critical incident (i.e. active shooter) occurring is low, the consequences are unimaginably high. Therefore, SROs provide instruction at the beginning of the AY and selected times during the school year. Similarly, the Sheriff's Office and Louisa County Public School administrators feel it is important to be proactive in dealing with gangs and gang-like issues. Early recognition of gang-like behavior can lead to meaningful interventions before the juvenile justice system becomes involved. While gang awareness is currently provided on an as needed basis, the Sheriff's Office plans to add the information to the initial training regimen of all new full-time middle and high school faculty and staff.

Since its inception in AY 2009-2010, the LAW program has touched the lives of thousands of Louisa County students, faculty, staff, and citizens of Louisa County. In addition to positive student and faculty feedback, Louisa County High School Principal Lee Downey recently commented "The Learn and Win program is an excellent program at the Louisa County High School, exposing students to things they have

questions about but may not have been comfortable asking in any other forum. The topics covered with people who have lived through the experiences themselves provide valuable information to the students so they can make their own responsible decisions.” Louisa County Public Schools Assistant Superintendent of Administration, Doug Straley, captured the essence of LAW’s contribution when he said “The joint effort between the Louisa County Sheriff’s Office and Louisa County Public Schools to offer the LAW program is a win-win for our entire community. The information provided to our students K-12 along with the workshops presented to school staff provides critical education to help keep our entire community educated and safe. We are truly blessed to be part of such a great program.”

With tremendous support from the schools, agencies, businesses, and citizens, the LAW program is vibrant and evolving. Flexible, collaborative, and effective, the LAW program makes a positive difference in the lives of students, faculty/staff, and citizens every day.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Learn and Win (LAW) program is a crucial component of the many innovative community policing initiatives implemented by the Louisa County Sheriff's Office. Faced with a myriad of less than positive influences in our children's lives (e.g. peer pressure, internet, television, movies, video games, and music), the Sheriff's Office undertook the challenge to find a flexible, collaborative, and cost effective means to encourage Louisa County tweens/teens to make good choices on key issues affecting their future. Each year, over 1,500 public school students receive LAW instruction from three dedicated and highly professional full-time School Resource Officers.

Partnering with Louisa County Public Schools, agencies, and businesses, the Sheriff's Office implemented the LAW program in three phases beginning in Academic Year (AY) 2009-2010. Implemented first, the elementary school program is the cornerstone of the LAW initiative. Students receive ten 45-60 minute lessons in key areas to include making smart choices, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, other drugs, internet safety, gang awareness, and vehicle safety. The middle school program provides two lessons at each of three grade levels and includes such topics as student responsibilities, juvenile justice, internet safety/sexting, and vehicle safety. The high school program provides lessons in other drugs, motor vehicle responsibilities, and search and seizure.

In addition, the LAW program includes special events for students such as Operation SAFE PASSAGE and training for school faculty and staff. Implemented with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the focus of Operation SAFE PASSAGE is to reduce teens under the influence and distracted driving mishaps. Using a realistic motor vehicle accident reenactment with student actors, teens quickly learn the "it can't happen to me" adage is untrue. To keep Louisa County schools safe and orderly, SROs and other Sheriff's Office personnel provide critical incident response and gang awareness training to school faculty and staff.

Since its inception in AY 2009-2010, the LAW program has touched the lives of thousands of students, faculty/staff, and citizens. With continuing support from partnering schools, agencies, and businesses, the LAW program is vibrant and constantly evolving to meet new challenges.

## **SUMMARY FOR BROCHURES AND PRESS RELEASES**

The Learn and Win (LAW) program is a crucial component of the many innovative community policing initiatives implemented by the Louisa County Sheriff's Office. Faced with a myriad of less than positive influences in our children's lives (e.g. peer pressure, internet, television, movies, video games, and music), the Sheriff's Office undertook the challenge to find a flexible, collaborative, and cost effective means to encourage Louisa County tweens/teens to make good choices on key issues affecting their future.

Partnered with Louisa County Public Schools, agencies, and businesses, the Sheriff's Office began a phased implementation of the LAW program in all public schools. The cornerstone of the LAW initiative is the elementary school program. Students receive ten 45-60 minute lessons in key areas such as making smart choices, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, other drugs, internet safety, gang awareness, and vehicle safety. The middle school program provides two lessons at each of three grade levels and includes such topics as student responsibilities, juvenile justice, internet safety/sexting, and vehicle safety. The high school program provides lessons in other drugs, motor vehicle responsibilities, and search and seizure.

In addition, the LAW program includes special events for students such as Operation SAFE PASSAGE and training for school faculty and staff. Implemented in cooperation with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the focus of Operation SAFE PASSAGE is to reduce teens under the influence and distracted driving mishaps. Using a realistic motor vehicle collision reenactment with student actors, teens quickly learn the "it can't happen to me" adage is just not true. To keep our Louisa County schools safe and orderly, School Resource Officers and other Sheriff's Office personnel provide critical incident response and gang awareness training to school faculty and staff.

Since its inception in Academic Year 2009-2010, the LAW program has touched the lives of thousands of students, faculty/staff, and citizens. With continuing support from partnering schools, agencies, and businesses, the LAW program is vibrant and constantly evolving to meet new challenges.