

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

June 2006

Hardening the Target

Protect your children from on-line predators

With the arrival of summer vacation, children now have more free time to play and socialize. They also have more time to spend on-line. The Internet has had a serious impact on the exploitation of children, specifically the distribution of sexually exploitive images of children.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, today's computer technologies have revolutionized the distribution of these images by increasing the ease of and decreasing the cost of production and distribution. A greater number of child molesters are using computer technology not only to organize and maintain their collection of images, but also to add to and share them.

In addition, the Internet has made finding potential victims much easier. While some offenders primarily collect and trade images, others seek face-to-face interaction with children by first establishing contact on-line. Once contact is made, child molesters may use pornography to seduce their prey, to lower the victim's inhibitions or to serve as a kind of instruction manual and convince a child that such activities are "normal."

Whether children encounter pornography accidentally while on-line or are deliberately exposed to it, viewing these images could result in devastating psychological effects.

Under federal law, it is illegal to possess, distribute or manufacture pornographic images of children. To

combat this crime, undercover "sting operations" are being conducted nationally that combine the resources of both local and federal law enforcement agencies.

While these operations are effective, there is an additional component necessary to protect children from the influence of such predators. Parents should monitor the computer activities of their children at all times. Place the computer in an area where on-line activities can be easily viewed. Make a point to occasionally look over your child's shoulder to monitor what he or she is viewing. Research

and purchase software that can reveal various web sites visited and retrieve information from on-line exchanges with others.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center reminds parents that they are on the front line in protecting their children from on-line predators. It is essential to discuss the seriousness of these crimes with your children and the importance of having them notify you in the event that they are contacted inappropriately. If such an instance occurs, report it immediately to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station by calling (562) 860-0044.

Swimming pool safety saves lives

Every year, children drown or become physically incapacitated due to injuries received in swimming pool accidents. With the return of warm weather and the swimming season, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to offer the following safety tips to protect swimmers:

- Install a 6-foot-tall fence surrounding the pool that is equipped with self-latching, spring-activated gates.
- Never leave a child, no matter how proficient a swimmer he or she is, unattended in the water or near a pool.
- Do not rely on inflatable toys or flotation devices to protect children in the water.
- Post rules by the pool that pro-

hibit running, pushing or dunking, and enforce them.

- Do not allow anyone to dive head first into the shallow end of the pool. Doing so can result in paralyzing injuries or drowning.
- Store pool chemicals in a secure, ventilated area, away from the reach of children.
- Install a phone or keep a cordless or cell phone poolside.
- Mount basic lifesaving equipment such as a pole, rope and personal flotation devices by the pool and know how to use them.
- If your pool cleaning and/or maintenance is done by a contracted pool cleaner, make sure that the gate/fence perimeter is secure after they leave.

Monthly Crime Summary: May 2006

Cerritos deputies investigated 103 Part I felony crimes in May. There was an adjusted figure of 117 of these crimes reported in April. Robberies and residential burglaries increased in May compared to April, but there was a decline in vehicle thefts and burglaries. At the end of May, deputies were handling a weekly average of 321 calls for service.

Robberies

There were 15 robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in May, compared to nine cases investigated in April.

On Thursday, May 4 at 8:30 a.m., two teenagers were walking in the 12300 block of Artesia Boulevard when they were confronted by another teenager. The suspect demanded money and left with two dollars.

The next incident occurred on Friday, May 5 at 8:10 p.m. when a teenaged male was walking on Shoemaker Avenue at Beach Street. Two teens demanded his money and fled with a small amount of cash.

A teenaged male and female were accosted by two suspects at 9:50 p.m. that same night in the 16700 block of Studebaker Road. A cell phone and jewelry were relinquished by the victims.

On Saturday, May 6 at 5:28 p.m., a woman was exiting her vehicle in the 13400 block of Village Drive when a lone suspect demanded her purse.

On Sunday, May 7 at 5:35 p.m., another robbery was reported at Yearling Street and Jacob Street. Four teenagers struck a male victim and took his watch and cell phone. One of the suspects was later arrested.

The next case occurred later that evening at 6:09 p.m. Four suspects displayed handguns at a computer business in the 16700 block of Parkside Avenue and took computers and related equipment.

On Wednesday, May 10 at 2 p.m., a vehicle owner witnessed a male suspect attempting to enter the victim's vehicle in the 17200 block of Studebaker Avenue. When the suspect was confronted, he fired numerous shots from a paintball gun and struck the victim. The suspect then fled in the car.

On Saturday, May 13 at 3:55 a.m., a dispute between a boyfriend and girlfriend evolved into an assault by the male suspect in the 17700 block of Parkville Place. He took items from the victim and left in a vehicle.

The next incident, an attempted robbery, occurred at 9:30 p.m. that same evening when a male suspect approached a male victim as the latter was getting into a vehicle in the 17700 block of Palo Verde Avenue. The suspect demanded the victim's wallet, but fled when the victim began hitting him.

At 9:30 a.m. on Monday, May 15, two female suspects forced a female victim into their car in the 11500 block of South Street and drove her to a nearby bank where the victim made a withdrawal. The suspects then fled with the cash.

On Wednesday, May 17 at 6:30 p.m., a male victim was walking toward his parked car in the 10900 block of Alondra Boulevard and noticed a male suspect exiting the vehicle and entering another. After a brief struggle, the suspect drove away with the victim's car stereo.

A shoplifting incident in the 13300 block of South Street on Thursday, May 18 at 7 p.m. was elevated to a robbery when the suspect fought with store personnel in an attempt to escape. He was arrested.

On Sunday, May 21 at 11:30 p.m., a male teenaged suspect entered an occupied parked car in the 15900 block of Studebaker Road. After ordering the passenger out, he drove the car away.

On Monday, May 22 at 8:25 p.m., a male suspect entered a liquor

store in the 12600 block of South Street and simulated a handgun. The clerk relinquished the contents of the cash register and the suspect fled in an unknown direction.

On Friday, May 26 at 7:31 p.m., two female shoplifting suspects were being detained in the Cerritos Towne Center when they began to fight with store personnel. Both were subsequently arrested.

Residential Burglaries

Thirteen residential burglaries were reported in May. This is an increase from nine cases in April. The weekly average in this category is currently 2.6. Four of the incidents in May were made possible by open/unlocked doors or windows. The majority of the homes had sliding glass windows or doors pried open. Computers, bicycles, cameras, tools, jewelry, cash and keys were reported stolen.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-four vehicle burglaries were investigated in May. There was an adjusted figure of 44 vehicle burglaries in March. The 2006 weekly average of vehicle burglaries was slightly more than eight at the end of May. So far in 2006, vehicle burglaries are down more than 12 percent compared to the first five months of 2005.

Parking lots were the venue in 27 of these crimes. Fifteen incidents involved an SUV or pick-up truck. Stereo items were targeted in 10 cases. Cell phones, clothing, tools, identification, purses, gym bags and briefcases were among the items reported as stolen.

Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-seven vehicle theft cases were investigated in May, compared to 39 the month before. Parking lots were the crime scenes in 23 of the incidents. Seven of the stolen vehicles were Hondas and six were Toyotas. The 2006 weekly average of vehicle thefts was 7.0 at the end of the reporting period.