



Newport News Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: **Immediate**

DATE: **July 20, 2007**

NNSO: Stopping Youth Violence Early

Gangs are recruiting younger and younger. To counter their propaganda, the Newport News Sheriff's Office is teaching gang resistance to young children.

During the week of July 23rd, deputies will be teaching children at the Boys & Girls Club on Hampton Avenue in Newport News.

Class Action: Reducing Gangs in Virginia is a program developed by the Office of Attorney General. In an age appropriate way, it teaches Virginia law as it relates to gang-related crime. Deputies talk with children about the crucial role of choosing the right friends. Kids will learn how choices they make now play into their lives later.

The Newport News Sheriff's Office began teaching Class Action to 4th and 5th graders as a pilot program during the 2006/2007 school year. Not wanting the vital message to take summer recess, they are going into the Boys & Girls Club of the Virginia Peninsula.

By educating young people about good citizenship and the short and long term consequences of unlawful behaviors, we can reduce crime, violence and substance abuse in Virginia.

WHO: Deputies, Newport News Sheriff's Office
WHAT: *Class Action: Reducing Gangs in Virginia* curriculum
WHEN: Week of July 23, 2007; Monday – Friday, 11:00am
WHERE: Boys & Girls Club - Hampton Roads Unit; 629 Hampton Avenue; Newport News, VA

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For more information, contact Lt. Kathleen Carey at 757-926-8747.

BACKGROUND:

Attorney General Bob McDonnell approached NNSO late last year. He was in Newport News on December 7, 2006 co-teaching "Class Action: Reducing Gangs in Virginia" at Palmer Elementary School to publicize the program.

The Newport News Sheriff's Office launched Class Action as a pilot program in March of 2007. The pilot included six elementary schools: Newsome Park, Epes, B.C. Charles, Hidenwood, and South Morrison. The total number of children reached in March, April and May was 1,148.

The goal is to take "Class Action: Reducing Gangs in Virginia" into ALL 26 Newport News elementary schools in the 2007/2008 school year.

CLASS ACTION STATS FOR JULY, 2007 – Boys & Girls Club

<u>School/Center</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Deputy/Staff</u>
Boys & Girls Club (Hampton Ave. @ Jeff.)	18	11-13	7/23/07	Sgt. C. Wilberg
Boys & Girls Club (Hampton Ave. @ Jeff.)	25	8-10	7/24/07	Lt. R. Coleman
Boys & Girls Club (Hampton Ave. @ Jeff.)	20	6-12	7/25/07	Vickie Gaffney, CRO
Boys & Girls Club (Hampton Ave. @ Jeff.)	20	6-8	7/26/07	Lt. K. Carey
Boys & Girls Club (Hampton Ave. @ Jeff.)	19	6-8	7/27/07	Lt. K. Carey