



News from the
Catholic Diocese of Palm Beach

Contact: Alexis Walkenstein, Director of Communications

Voice: 561-775-9529 – **Cellular:** 561-445-5409

E-mail: awalkenstein@diocesepb.org

9995 N. Military Trail, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

NEWS RELEASE

(Palm Beach Gardens, FL) May 19, 2009

ST. LUKE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SURFS AND SCORES!

STUDENTS COMPETE AND TAKE TOP STATE AWARD IN FBI INTERNET SAFETY CHALLENGE, 2ND IN THE NATION

St. Luke Catholic School Students surfed to safety in the national FBI-SOS Internet Challenge, an Internet Safety program designed to help students recognize potential dangers associated with the Internet, email, chat rooms and social networking sites. The St. Luke's grammar school students, 6th, 7th and 8th grade, scored first place in the state of Florida and second place nationally competing against thousands of kids their own age. St. Luke's School will be recognized with a special award as top winners for April 2009 on **Thursday May 22, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Luke's School, 2982 S. Congress Ave, Lake Worth**. The winning trophy will be presented to the students by the Diocese of Palm Beach Office of Serving Children in conjunction with the FBI.

Kit Johansen, coordinator for the Diocesan Office of Serving Children, said *"This program is an exciting way to attract young children to awareness of online safety and empowers them to cultivate critical tactics to avert dangerous situations on the Internet. I was so excited to find a way to bring these issues not only to parents, but in a unique manner, directly to our young people in collaboration with the FBI in their specially designed Internet Challenge. The internet is exploding so fast and we need to help our young people learn internet safety, just as they are learning to wear a helmet when they ride a bike."*

The FBI-SOS Internet Challenge is a program that addresses and defines topics serious in nature such as seduction, child pornography, solicitation, exploitation, obscenity and online predators. Students take web-based quizzes and review specific web sites aimed at promoting online safety.

Earl Webb, Retired FBI Agent and parishioner of St. Peter's Church in Jupiter, has been working in conjunction with the Office of Serving Children to promote internet safety using a series of educational programs in Diocesan schools that began in March. Webb elaborated on this unique program by saying, *"This program is important primarily as a reinforcement of parental and school guidance in terms of overall safety programs...the internet, while it's a wonderful technology, has some potential dangerous pitfalls, and this is one vehicle that was created to try to familiarize, not only parents but, children themselves about how to use this technology in a safe manner."*

Developed in cooperation with the FBI Crimes Against Children Unit at the Miami FBI Office, the program is administered by the Common Knowledge Scholarship Foundation, part of the Fischler School of Education and Human Services at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Because of the tremendous success locally in the state of Florida, this program was adopted nationally by the FBI. Currently, over 30-thousand schools nationwide have participated in this program. For more information on the program visit <http://www.fbi-sos.org/>

MEDIA: reporters and photographers are welcome to cover this event. Please RSVP in advance so the school staff can be prepared for visitors. There will be various opportunities to speak with students, staff and FBI program administrator Daryl Hulce as well as retired FBI special agent Earl Webb. Contact: Alexis Walkenstein, Director of Communications at 561-775-9529 or via email at awalkenstein@diocesepb.org for more information.

###

