

BY JANET DEWEY-KOLLEN

Keep Kids Alive Drive 25



Neighborhood speeding is one of the most frequent complaints received by police departments. In cities large and small, it is a year-round concern that takes on special emphasis when kids return to school. A seemingly endless cycle— citizen complaints, police response with radar trailers and enforcement, return to higher speeds, repeated citizen complaints— can leave all involved frustrated and dissatisfied.

Keep Kids Alive Drive 25® (KKAD25) is a low cost, neighborhood-based, grassroots campaign that enlists local residents, police departments, schools, neighborhood groups, local government agencies and others to work together to reduce residential speeding. KKAD25 campaign materials, available in English and Spanish, are currently in use by more than 250 communities in 38 states. Police and city service departments sponsor about half of the programs; neighborhood associations, PTO organizations and other

community-based groups sponsor the other half.

Most drivers speeding on neighborhood streets usually live in that neighborhood. In 1998, Tom Everson of Omaha, NE, the developer of KKAD25, wanted to influence drivers in his neighborhood to slow down for the safety of his and other neighborhood children. A long time educator, author and trainer on youth, family and risk issues, and a former director at Father Flanagan's Boys' and Girls' Town, Everson realized that a critical component of long term speed reduction would be to get the people who were speeding to take ownership of their driving behavior.

"It takes concentration and effort to drive 25 mph," Everson said. "Neighborhood speeders aren't usually intent on breaking the law, they are just hurrying to school, work, children's activities, shopping or church."

Everson asked his neighbors to help by putting a small sign in their

yards reminding drivers to slow down and protect neighborhood kids. The positive results and cooperation he experienced led to the development of KKAD25.

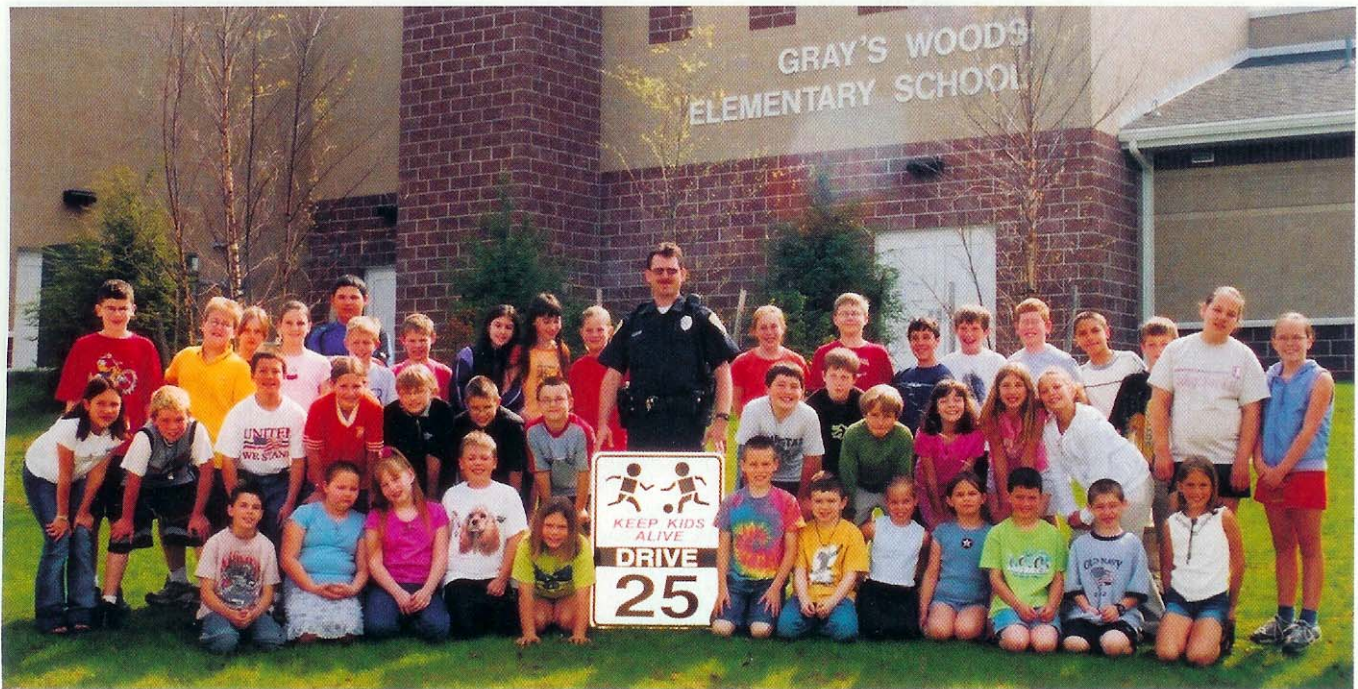
According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a pedestrian is injured in a traffic crash every seven minutes and pedestrian/vehicle crashes result in a fatality every other hour. Children learning to ride their bicycles or walking to school, and elderly citizens crossing a street to get to their mailboxes are often the victims in pedestrian incidents.

In 2001, 22% of all U.S. children ages five through nine killed in crashes were pedestrians. Older pedestrians accounted for 18% of all pedestrian fatalities in 2001. Although pedestrian fatalities have decreased nationally over the past 10 years, fatalities for children ages eight through 14 increased from 2000 to 2001.

Officer Joe Zaffuto of the State College Police Department in State College, PA, began to look for new ideas to reduce neighborhood speeding after he became frustrated with continuous complaints by moms and others asking his department to address speeding in their area. "I was sure that the community had to be part of the solution, so I began to encourage residents to work with us and with each other through the KKAD25 program," Zaffuto said.

As complaints came in, Zaffuto directed callers to the KKAD25 Web site and encouraged callers to work with their neighbors to put KKAD25 yard signs out as a reminder for drivers to slow down. Local businesses helped distribute signs as more residents and neighborhood groups

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joined in the effort, which ultimately grew to encompass the State College Borough, College Township and the Harris, Patton and Ferguson Townships. Officer Zaffuto now serves as a liaison between the police department and a citizen-led council, KKAD25 of the Centre Region.

State College officers noticed that as residents became more organized and active, the rate of citations given during periodic speed details decreased, as did the number of complaints by an estimated 50%. Another result of the cooperative effort was the opportunity to speak at driver's education classes where officers emphasized the need for drivers to slow down on neighborhood streets as well as on highways.

State College Police Chief Thomas King said, "I have been approached by community members in the grocery store, at ball games, in church, and in other places praising Officer Zaffuto and our entire department on the implementation and success of the KEEP KIDS ALIVE Drive 25 program in their neighborhood." The local newspaper even gave the department and Officer Zaffuto an "A" for their safety efforts.

Zaffuto said that the KKAD25 effort has reduced residential speeding, reduced citizen complaints about speeding, made streets safer for pedes-

trians, provided an opportunity for the police department and community to work together, and encouraged neighborhoods to take an active role in reducing speeding.

An e-mail forward to the Bolingbrook, IL, Police from the village mayor's office sparked Sgt. Dave Schurr's interest in the KKAD25 program. Sgt. Schurr was looking for a new tool consistent with its community oriented policing efforts to address residential speeding concerns.

With the help of community groups and homeowners organizations, the police department decided to sponsor the Bolingbrook KKAD25 program. After promoting the availability of the program through newspaper articles, citizen calls and at Bolingbrook community safety days, the police department distributed 300 signs to 25 different neighborhood groups in the initial year.

A small grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation helped offset expenses of the program, now in its fourth year. "The KKAD25 program gives people the feeling that they have contributed to the effort to reduce speeding in their neighborhood," Schurr said. "There is no doubt that our police-resident relations improved as a result of this program."

In New Berlin, WI, even though radar trailers and enforcement did not

detect a significant speeding problem, many citizens were genuinely and passionately concerned about the issue, particularly in neighborhoods where lack of sidewalks force children, bicyclists and joggers onto streets.

To respond to these concerns, the New Berlin Police implemented a KKAD25 program. Pre-post surveys showed that the police department's willingness to address the citizens' complaints was important to and valued by the community. The department determined that the KKAD25 program was an important tool and overall positive for New Berlin and the police department.

Cooperative KKAD25 programs have been effective in breaking the cycle of speeding complaints and police responses in cities across the United States. With back-to-school time rapidly approaching, teaming up with schools, PTO groups and neighborhood associations can be an effective way for police agencies to work in partnership with communities to reduce pedestrian incidents and improve safety for children.

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