

# HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

*Free fun and lessons highlight Safety Days event in Waukesha*

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WAUKESHA — Bubbles floated through the air, children laughed as they completed crafts, stickers decorated clothes and families lined up to explore emergency vehicles during Safety Days at Frame Park on Thursday.

The free community event brought together local families, first responders and community organizations for a morning focused on safety education, hands-on activities and family fun. Children had the opportunity to climb inside a Waukesha Police Department squad car, check out a Waukesha Fire Department fire engine and meet local police officers and firefighters.

Waukesha Police Department Lt. David Daily said, "Safety Days in the Park bring together first responders and community groups for a fun, relaxed way to connect with the community. Families can meet the people who help keep them safe and supported, ask questions, and pick up useful tips on things like emergency preparedness, prevention, and everyday safety. It's all about building relationships, sharing knowledge, and helping everyone feel more comfortable and confident. In the end, it's a reminder that keeping our community safe and strong is something we all work on together."

Nearby, April Claar attended with her sons, 5-year-old Elias and nearly 2-year-old Enzo. The family enjoyed blowing bubbles and exploring the emergency vehicles.

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## Waukesha Safety Days

**When:** 10 a.m. to noon, July 22, and Aug. 11

**Where:** July 22 — Grandview Park, 1001 N Grandview Blvd.; and Aug. 11 — Bethesda Park, 560 Dunbar Ave.



Photos by Karen Pilarski/Freeman Staff

Haze Johnson eagerly climbed into a Waukesha Police squad car and grabbed the steering wheel. The little one and his mom attended Waukesha's Safety Days at Frame Park on Thursday.



Michelle Hackett, right, a registered nurse and trauma program manager at ProHealth Care, said children were especially interested in learning how to respond during emergencies. On Thursday, Hackett showed kids how to put on a tourniquet during Waukesha's Safety Days in Frame Park.



Four-year-old Audrina Springer visited Waukesha's Safety Days for the first time on Thursday. Audrina worked on one of the event's hands-on activities while listening to the Waukesha Public Library's story time.



Photos by Karen Pilarski/Freeman Staff

Fire Inspector Tom Koerner, left, of the Waukesha Fire Department said events like Safety Days help build trust between first responders and the community. Madison Judson, 3, proudly rings the bell on a fire truck on Thursday during Waukesha's Safety Days in Frame Park.

## Safety

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"They love getting to see the vehicles up close and get to go inside of them," Claar said. "Anytime we drive by a fire truck, ambulance or police car, they get super excited, so it's fun that they get to see the inside and learn a little more about them. It's also nice to have something fun and free to do outside."

Ashley Hoover brought her daughter, 4-year-old Audrina Springer, to Safety Days for the first time.

"She loves crafts," Hoover said as Audrina worked on one of the event's hands-on activities.

Cyle Crangle attended with his three children, Eli, Lilli and Kai. His kids immediately gravitated toward the 4-H craft station after the family learned about the event on Facebook.

"We thought we'd come check it out," Crangle said. "We walked up to this area, and they right away ran to the crafts and look like they're having a lot of fun. They're excited to see some of the police officers and the fire department and the fire truck. It looks like a really good event."

One of the highlights of the event was a donation presentation from Waukesha County 4-H members, who donated 50 handmade "Love Bugs" to the Waukesha Police and Fire departments.

The stuffed creations were part of a countywide community service project involving youth from 4-H clubs across Waukesha County. The Love Bugs are designed to provide comfort to children who may be displaced by a fire, experiencing a traumatic event or facing difficult circumstances during emergency response calls.

"We did a countywide donation project where kids in our clubs sewed Love Bugs," said Sara Wells-Tomjanovich, associate 4-H youth educator. "Today we're donating 50 to the City of Waukesha police and fire departments so they can give them to children when they go out on calls."

Each Love Bug includes a handwritten note created by a 4-H member.

The idea for the project came from Payton Karls of the 4-H Club, who helped present the donation.

"I would like to thank everyone for being here today," Payton said during the presentation. "It is my honor to help present these Love Bugs to the Waukesha Police and Fire Department. This is part of a countywide 4-H community service project, and we are so glad that they will be given to youth that you work with."

Payton said she was inspired to create the project to help children who have lost belongings during emergencies.

"Basically, just giving it to the kids that lost something in the fire," she said.

The project also gave youth an opportunity to learn new skills. More than 215 Love Bugs were created, surpassing the group's original goal of 100.

Jayne Hansen, a 4-H member



Almost-2-year-old Enzo Claar (his brother Elias Claar, 5, is behind him) blows bubbles and uses a bubble wand on Thursday during Waukesha's Safety Days in Frame Park.



The Waukesha Public Library held a story time during Waukesha's Safety Days at Frame Park on Thursday. The mobile Book Bike that travels to local neighborhood parks and community events during the summer was also on hand.

who participated in the effort, said volunteers learned sewing techniques while discovering how their work could make a difference.

"We got to learn how to sew, and then when we sewed, we learned that we could help people out if we did the craft," Hansen said.

Youth volunteers spent weeks cutting fabric, reading patterns, sewing pieces together, stuffing the Love Bugs and packaging them for distribution. A final assembly event at the Waukesha Public Library brought volunteers together to finish the project.

Wells-Tomjanovich said the effort reflects the core mission of 4-H, which emphasizes hands-on learning and community involvement.

"In 4-H, we do all hands-on learning, so that engagement piece is so important for kids," she said. "It's about having experiences and learning how to connect dots between their learning to apply it elsewhere in the world."

Safety education was another key focus of the event. Representatives from ProHealth Care shared information about bicycle and e-bike safety, helmet use and emergency bleeding control.

Michelle Hackett, a registered nurse and trauma program manager at ProHealth Care, said children were especially interested in learning how to respond during emergencies.

"We've had lots of kids practice putting on a tourniquet," Hackett said. "They really want to know what to do if someone is bleeding a lot."

Fire Inspector Tom Koerner of the Waukesha Fire Department said events like Safety Days help build trust between first responders and the community.



Kai Crangle, left, Lilli Crangle, center, and Eli Crangle work on a 4-H craft project on Thursday during Waukesha's Safety Days.

"We really pride ourselves on going out to educate the public and making sure people are safe," Koerner said. "Getting involved with the community and showing kids that firefighters and police officers aren't scary people, that they can come to us if they need help, is really important."

Nearby, Madison Judson, 3, proudly rang the bell on a fire truck.

"What did you like about it?" she was asked.

"The bell," Madison replied with a smile.

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## Church and Chapel

Funeral Homes