



SALUTE TO
Unsung
HEROES

School Resource Officers

If you visit your child's school, you have likely noticed one or a group of police officers dedicated to keeping children safe. According to the National Association of School Resource Officers, this special type of first responder is federally defined as a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority who works with one or more schools.

The next time you see these specially trained unsung heroes, be sure to offer your gratitude and thank them for a job well done.

SPECIAL TRAINING

In addition to receiving their certification as a member of law enforcement, the NASRO recommends school resource officers complete an additional 40-hour block of instruction. This special training discusses tools officers can use to build beneficial relationships with students and staff.

Here are the three main topics emphasized during their additional education.

Function of law enforcement: Educates on the difference between law enforcement protocols inside a school environment and understanding the teen brain and de-escalation techniques.

Mentoring students: Encourages the behaviors of becoming a positive role model for youth by employing counseling methods.

Guest speaking: Designed to showcase instructional techniques and classroom-management resources to educate students on law-related material.

The lessons school resource officers learn during this specialized training ensures they create a positive influence on



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students that will leave an impression for life.

A WELCOME PRESENCE

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, during the 2015-

2016 school year, 43 percent of public schools had an armed officer present at least once a week. This statistic is up 10 percent from the previous decade.

School resource officers are

tasked with upholding the law in their schools and building relationships with the students they protect. As a parent, you should encourage your child to be open and honest with the resource offi-

cer in their halls. Relaying information regarding a potential violent situation or other cases of wrongdoing helps create a safe space where everyone feels secure learning.

Wildfire Heroes

Sometimes the unsung heroes in our world face great danger and risk in their valiant efforts. The firefighters dealing with the 2018 Camp Fire are an example. Other heroes take to the Internet to help from afar.

The historic wildfire began its havoc on Nov. 8, 2018, in Northern California. The catastrophe was responsible for at least 88 deaths and the destruction of over 14,000 residential structures.

Through charitable contributions and volunteering, America has pulled together to help, where they can, those who have been displaced by the deadliest wildfire in California history. Here are some inspiring statistics from the American Red Cross, regarding how they put your dollars to work and make a difference:

- The organization has served over 84,600 meals and snacks to displaced citizens and the crews working to contain the fires.

- Over 27,600 mental health and spiritual care volunteers have been connected to families in need of support and comfort.

- More than 21,600 people were offered refuge with overnight stays in over 40 Red Cross community shelters.

These eye-popping statistics underscore the importance of communities rallying around their unsung heroes who put their lives on the line when unthinkable disasters strike.

Research shows that fire-fighting organizations are fighting funding issues within their own municipalities, making it more critical than ever



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for them to receive support from citizens and donors in their hometowns.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

When disasters like wildfires occur, you can now be involved on the frontlines

thanks to technological advancements in the giving sector.

Technology has made it easier than ever to support your local unsung heroes. Look at crowdfunding. In the last decade, crowdfunding has

become a popular method people use to get the help they need.

If you're in the giving mood, check out sites like JustGiving.com or GoFundMe. They are filled with citizens who are in desperate need for funds to

pay for expensive surgeries, sponsor charity events and support necessary community upgrades.

Technology has made it simple to connect and help important causes that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Food Bank Operators

According to the organization Feeding America, 40 million Americans still struggle with hunger. Thanks to the efforts from food banks across the nation, people in poverty can enjoy healthy meals. Support a pantry in your community and thank a volunteer donating their time.

Learn more about what it takes to help a food pantry keep their doors open and how you can help.

FINDING FOOD

Food banks come in different sizes depending on the community they are supporting. From smaller facilities in rural areas to sizable warehouses in larger cities, each depends on a network of giving citizens and relationships with grocers.

These organizations store large inventories of food and distribute it through soup kitchens, faith-based organizations and other outlets. While you can make a difference donating food directly to a good cause, your financial assistance can make a bigger impact. Most food-assistance organizations can buy food at cheaper prices that are typically offered at grocery stores.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Through organizations like Feeding America, donations are secured at a national level and distributed to their network of pantries in need. This doesn't mean that you can't make a difference to the pantry in your area. Take the time to visit a facility and inquire about their needs. Some may ask for simple contributions or even the task of becoming a volunteer.



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Many food assistance programs in your community will accept donations. Most grocery stores around the nation feature giving barrels for canned

foods and other non-perishable items.

Have you cleaned your cupboards lately? It's likely you have numerous goods that may

have been forgotten or never made it into a recipe. After ensuring expiration dates are up to date and the packaging is intact, consider donating them

to a family in need.

Become part of the solution by thanking and supporting those who working to solve hunger in your community.

School Counselors

School counselors build relationships with students to ensure they are headed in the right direction both in and out of their school environment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects school counselor jobs to grow at least 13 percent from 2016 to 2026.

With your encouragement, a school board can be swayed to employ more positive role models in campuses around the country.

HISTORY OF COUNSELORS IN SCHOOLS

To understand the importance of school counselors in America, you should know a bit about their history in education. Take a look at this timeline provided by the therapy location service GoodTherapy.

1917: The first legislation was drafted to provide funding for guidance programs.

1920s: New York was the first state to develop requirements before someone could be a certified counselor.

1970s: Schools began increasing their expectations to create wider goals of helping students develop socially, personally and academically.

1990s: Legislation like the No Child Left Behind Act required counselors to enhance the ways they serve students.

FOCUS ON MORE THAN EDUCATION

While a school counselor will help students navigate their educational journey, like analyzing classes, grades and performance, they are also in their lives to provide emo-



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tional support. When working one-on-one with students, a counselor can determine issues with mental and emotional health. If they suspect a problem, they typically contact parents with a referral for

a trusted specialist in the community.

HELPING THROUGH CRISIS

In a world where dangerous situations are broadcast or

shared across social media, students may be exposed to frightening images unintentionally.

Thoughtful counselors understand how to address and explain crisis manage-

ment in ways that children can understand. As a parent, if you need advice on discussing sensitive topics with your kids, a counselor is there for you, too. Don't be afraid to ask for direction.

Pet Foster Parents

American shelters are filled with animals without loving homes. The Humane Society reports six to eight million dogs and cats enter the 3,500 shelters in the United States each year. Nearly 2.7 million of those animals are euthanized annually.

While shelters do their best to find forever homes, there simply isn't enough time or space to fulfill each one. Some animal lovers take offer to be a pet-foster parent until a match is made for adoption.

EASIER FOR ANIMALS

Being placed in a shelter is disastrous to the emotional state of animals. While volunteers do a great job in accommodating a pet's basic needs, they simply can't provide the time and attention our four-legged friends require to be at their best.

Lack of exercise, contact with unfamiliar people and the stress of being around other animals can significantly impact an animal's way to cope and cause permanent damage to their mental health.

When a foster parent welcomes a shelter pet into their home, they can provide them with the love and one-on-one time they need to be healthy and happy. They will also have their own space which can lessen the effects of anxiety on timid cats and dogs.

BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT

If you are interested in becoming an animal foster, the process is relatively simple. First, you will need to contact a local rescue organi-



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zation searching for applicants. You should be honest about your limitations regarding the size, age and special needs you are qualified for as you don't want to find yourself with too much to handle.

Next, a shelter will ask you

to fill out an application explaining the requirements for becoming a foster parent. Make sure to ask questions regarding who is financially responsible for vet visits, microchipping and the adoption process. Knowing the

in-depth details will help you prepare for your temporary pet.

A BITTERSWEET EXPERIENCE

Pet foster parents are tasked with the difficult expe-

rience of saying goodbye to a friend once the adoption is complete.

Many report it as a sad event to see them exit their lives but a relief to know that they will be happy in their forever home.

School Bus Drivers

If you are a parent tasked with rushing your children to finish breakfast and get dressed in time to catch the school bus, it's easy to forget about the hero behind the steering wheel. They are responsible for delivering and returning children to and from school while sticking to strict time requirements. It's a thankless job that rarely gains the respect it deserves.

Imagine difficult situations you have experienced driving a passenger vehicle with one or more kids in the back seat throwing a fit.

Now consider transporting someone else's children in a 45-foot long bus — doesn't sound easy, does it?

RESPONSIBILITIES

For many children, their bus driver is the first school official they encounter in the morning.

However, once the first bell rings, most drivers pick up other responsibilities until class dismisses. Here are a few of the tasks these unsung heroes face in their daily routines.

Transportation: First and foremost, a bus driver is responsible for transporting children to school or their bus stops, safely. There are many variables which makes this difficult, such as inclement weather, unruly children or distracted drivers.

Vehicle safety: Most regular drivers are tasked with doing routine safety checks on the crucial components of their vehicles, including, brakes, tires and working lights. They must also keep their buses clean.

Daily records: Most schools require drivers to keep records of attendants on their bus, log miles driven and



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keep track of fuel usage.

The job of keeping children safe on the road is much more than driving carefully. Drivers are required to pass CDL certification and ensure their vehicles are in good working order.

SCHOOL BUS ETIQUETTE

It's crucial to teach your children the importance of respecting and abiding by the bus driver's rules. Being disrespectful or disobedient can put everyone on the bus at risk. While behavior expectations

may differ between vehicles, here are a few recommendations from the National Safety Council to teach young passengers.

- Always remain seated and wear safety belts when available.

- Don't make loud noises that may distract the driver. Never put your hands, head or arms outside the window.

The NSC reports the school bus is the safest way for students to travel, but they must do their part to obey the rules.



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Physical Therapists

When life happens and we face chronic conditions or a life-changing injury, a physical therapist is key to helping us return to our regular lives. If you or a loved one is facing a situation requiring therapy, it is crucial to follow an expert's instructions and take their advice.

Physical therapists are highly trained medical professionals who specialize in utilizing the best practices to ensure healing occurs efficiently.

Their rules and recommendations may not be easy to follow, especially as you first start sessions. However, sticking to the plan and asking the right questions will get you on the road to recovery sooner, rather than later.

SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MEDICAL FIELD

The American Physical Therapy Association urges us to remember that therapists provide valuable contributions to the health care system through prevention, treatment and management of impairments. Here are a few ways the APTA says therapists help:

- Are leaders in providing services for patients with injuries, diseases,

chronic health conditions, impairments and activity limitations;

- Provide cost-effective alternatives for patients who undergo surgery, take expensive prescription drugs or require medical devices to treat development issues;

- Can lead evidence-based prevention and wellness programs at the community level; and

- Develops plans to reduce excess body mass, improve health status

and reduce risks of chronic disease.

CHOOSING A THERAPIST

Your best option is to ask for a referral from a family doctor. They likely have a large network of professionals they are familiar with and can set you up with the perfect professional for your situation. Also consider if the therapist is properly certified, accepts your insurance and is easy for you to get to.