



OCEANSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE



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KIDS AND COPS "COPE" IN CHALLENGING OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

April 14, 2009.....Oceanside, California..... Still going strong and about to enter it's twelfth year, the Oceanside Police Department and Oceanside Fire Department along with the Oceanside School District will hold another ropes challenge course.

The program started in June 1997 by then Oceanside Police Lt. Steve Scarano. It teams selected middle school students with law enforcement professionals for a ropes course designed to encourage emotional growth. The COPE program, which stands for Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience challenges the participants physically, mentally and emotionally. Students are paired with public safety employees on obstacles that demand high levels of cooperation.

Students are selected from the four middle schools in the Oceanside area by either their school principals or counselors. The public safety employees utilize their own vacation time to participate in the program. Year after year, several of the same employees contribute their time because of the positive impact it makes on the students.

This year Stephen King, often referred to as "Uneven Stephen" will be recognized for his unwavering support of the program. King built the ropes course at Guajome Park Academy as well as several other courses around the world. His construction abilities and the personal interest he put forth benefitted all involved in the project. King is fighting a greater battle at this time; he has been diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. Our best wishes go out to him and his family. King's strength and courage symbolizes the intent of the program.

Often referred to as the "Legacy Course" by King and several others, it has taught students a non-adversarial way to deal with problems. Past participants in ropes courses that are now parents, are seeing their children participate in the programs.

The event will take place on **Tuesday May 12, 2009** at the Guajome Park Academy, which is located at 2000 North Sante Fe Avenue in Vista, on the entry road to the Antique Steam Engine and Tractor Museum.

Print and broadcast media are invited to attend the event. There will be excellent opportunities for interviews with the students, public safety officials and the ropes course staff and for TV media to obtain action footage. Ground-level photographs of team-solving games can be obtained in the morning hours before 11:30am with "high course" photo opportunities beginning around 1:00pm.

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