



News Release

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Community partnership brings Project Lifesaver to Columbus

For Immediate Release

(COLUMBUS, Neb.) – When you are taking care of someone with special needs, any additional help can make a huge difference — especially for those with cognitive disabilities who can wander off. That’s why Columbus Community Hospital, the Columbus Police Department, the Platte County Sheriff’s Office and Columbus Public Schools are pleased to announce a new public safety program designed to protect at-risk community members.

“We have a responsibility to do what we can to help protect wandering individuals,” said Doug Molczyk, captain of the Columbus Police Department. “After working with our local schools and community partners, we decided Project Lifesaver’s technology would benefit our community.”

Project Lifesaver is a non-profit organization that provides law enforcement, rescue personnel and caregivers with a way to protect and quickly locate individuals prone to roam away. This could include someone with autism or Alzheimer’s disease.

People enrolled in the program wear a personalized wristband that sends a tracking signal to an assigned radio frequency each second, 24 hours a day. If an enrolled person goes missing, the caregiver notifies their local Project Lifesaver agency, and a trained emergency team responds to the wanderer’s area. The signal helps reduce the time, cost and support needed for a search and rescue mission.

Local law enforcement representatives from the Columbus Police Department and the Platte County Sheriff’s Office recently attended a three-day training class to learn more about the program’s technology and rescue tactics.

Molczyk said the Columbus Police Department and the Platte County Sherriff’s Department are working with Columbus Public Schools to institute a soft program launch. They will begin offering the program to school-aged children and hope to expand it as additional funding becomes available.



To learn more about Project Lifesaver or to enroll a loved one in the program, please contact the Columbus Police Department at 402-564-3201 or the Platte County Sherriff's Office at 402-564-3329.

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Back row (left to right): Josh Loontjer, Gary Reynolds, assistant chief – UAV Operations with Project Lifesaver, and Roger Wemhoff.

Front row (left to right): Troy Higgins, Jeff Uhl and Jodi Hefti.