Good News for Kids

radKIDS Teaches:
- Realistic Defenses Against Abduction
- Home and Vehicle Safety
  - Fire Safety
  - Dialing 911
- School Safety
  - Dealing with Bullies
- Being Wise around Strangers
- Appropriate Touches
  - Differences among Good, Bad, and Uncomfortable Touches
- Self-Realization
- Personal Power

was founded on the belief that children have the right to not only learn safety skills and information, but also to have a sense of

(Continued on page 20 as, ‘radKIDS’)

UFPD, ACSO Inspire and Empower
Responsible Self-Defense, Awareness
By Arlette C. Suarez, Assistant Editor

When it comes to protecting kids, there’s no shortage of interest from local police.

Officer James Thomas of the University of Florida Police Department (UFPD) has been the coordinator and instructor for the department’s radKIDS program for the past year, and he can still recall his initial enthusiasm to get involved.

“I had the opportunity to volunteer at one of the radKIDS camps, and after watching the course in action I said to myself, I have to get certified to do this.”

RAD, which stands for Resisting Aggression Defensively, represents just a small part of what the radKIDS curriculum focuses on. The three- to four-day camp sessions are tailored to kids ages five to 12, in which they are taught realistic defenses against abduction. They are additionally taught lessons on home and vehicle safety, school safety, being smart around strangers, the differences among good, bad, and uncomfortable touches, and most importantly self-realization and personal power.

The program was started in 2006 by former officer and now Executive Director Stephen M. Daley after his experiences with child abuse and molestation cases on the field. radKIDS
Welcome Readers

With this, our eighth issue of ON PAR magazine, we celebrate the many individuals and organizations whose daily focus is helping children. In her final issue as Assistant Editor, Arlette Suarez brings us the story of the radKIDS program, which teaches children how to protect and defend themselves in all types of situations. She also reports on the Lethality Assessment Program, which helps Alachua County police officers counsel women on how to keep themselves and their children safe.

New writer Kendall Williamson writes about Brianna Schiavoni, a UF social worker whose Internet endeavors are helping children with craniofacial needs network with others and support one another. Also featured in this issue is an article on Ann Groves, a long-time employee who recently retired and leaves a legacy of trust and leadership.

The October issue of ON PAR will mark our two-year anniversary, and the issue will be packed with numerous features for those with research-related and community interests. Most importantly, we will have several announcements regarding the future of the publication. Your feedback, contributions, and involvement are invited as we learn, grow, and work towards our goals of education and empowerment.

For the benefit of children,
Heidi Saliba
Research News and Announcements

Research Website Offers One-Stop Shopping for Information on Publication and Funding Opportunities
From conference and funding information to calls for papers for publications, the Research Raven™ website (http://www.researchraven.com/) offers a bounty of information for those whose interests are in the medical field. The site is owned by Samaritan Health Services, whose objectives are to, “…facilitate[s] health research, programs and scholarship by enabling users to efficiently find information about funding opportunities, professional conferences, calls for papers and more.”

Calls for Papers
The Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine journal has called for original research, review articles, and commentaries for its May 2011 issue, which will focus on quality of care. Submit by September 15, 2010. Visit http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/ for the full call (shown on the bottom right of the home page). An additional call from the journal, along with a call for submissions to Archives of Facial Plastic Surgery are found there as well.

PAS Reminder
Workshop submissions for the 2011 PAS in Denver are due August 13. Online abstract submissions will be accepted September 1 through November 17. The conference’s website is http://www.pas-meeting.org/2011Denver/default.asp.

Invitation to Submit Listings for “Celebrations of Research” in October ON PAR
UF and Shands pediatrics researchers (of all specialties and sub-specialties) are invited to submit up to 10 announcements of newly-accepted publications and/or grant awards (January 2010 forward) for listing in the October issue. Submissions should include authorship, title, and publication/presentation venue information. Please do not send full CVs. Submit to hsaliba@peds.ufl.edu by September 15.
Speaking of Statistics
By Erik Black, Ph.D.

Regardless of the research question, the only way to be perfectly accurate is to observe, survey, or interview everyone in a population of interest. Unfortunately, to try to extract information from an entire population is quite often infeasible due to time and/or monetary constraints. Thus we must collect data from a subset of the population and hope that this data is generalizable to the entire population. Sampling allows us to do just this, but rather than depend on hope, we have empirical methods for determining how exact our generalizations are: we select a subgroup from a larger group and use data collected from this subgroup to make inferences about the larger group.

To be useful a sample must be representative of the population about which we are trying to generalize. There are many different strategies available to researchers who are trying to create both generalizable and non-generalizable samples. I’ll begin with discussion of simple strategies this issue and proceed to more complex issues next. We’ll first start with non-probabilistic methods.

Non-probabilistic methods do not attempt to assign a probability of inclusion to each member of a population, whereas probabilistic methods do.

Types of Non-Probabilistic Sampling

Convenience Sampling: When we engage in convenience sampling, we are not employing a random technique. When sampling in this manner, we make no attempt to ensure that our sample is an accurate representation of the larger population. For

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Erik Black, Ph.D. is Director of Research for Ped-i-Care at the University of Florida. He also has teaching and research duties in the Education Department at UF. This article is the fourth in a series from Dr. Black.
example, we are often approached by marketing researchers at the mall, asking us to fill out a survey. There is nothing random about this process, but the data garnered is still valuable and important. Researchers should keep in mind that convenience sampling constitutes a methodological limitation and is a threat to the validity and reliability of the data.

**Snowball Sampling**: This method, like convenience sampling, is non-probabilistic. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from subjects to generate additional subjects. When sampling in this manner, we make no attempt to ensure that our sample is an accurate representation of the larger population. Again, this sample strategy constitutes a limitation and is a threat to the validity and reliability of the data.

**Case Study**: Case studies emphasize detailed analysis of a group with a like characteristic (or characteristics) often enabling researchers to gain understanding about a complex issue. For example, we may wish to describe a patient or group of patients who presented a unique or particularly complex disease or disorder.

**The Simplest Form of Probabilistic Sampling**

**Random Sampling (Without Replacement)**: With random sampling, every member of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample, with chance being the determining factor. Let’s say, for example, that we are interested in understanding an opinion held by faculty in the UF Department of Pediatrics. Our goal is to interview 15 faculty (which provides for a very large margin of error (23.57%), but we’ll worry about that later). First, we obtain an alphabetical listing of all 107 UF faculty members. Then, using Microsoft Excel, we assign a random number between 1 and 1000 to each name on the list (randbetween function). We then sort the faculty by the random number and select, in a truly random fashion, the number of faculty we would like to interview. Each faculty member has an n/N chance of being included in the sample. In this case a 15/107 or 14.01% chance of inclusion, is the number referred to as the sampling fraction. Table 1 (opposite page) details our faculty and the random number assigned to them. Table 2 shows this same list, sorted by the random number.

Many sampling methodologies, particularly those that are more complex (e.g. cluster, stratified, and multi-stage) were developed in the twentieth century, and are thus relatively new. In fact, the US Census has been credited for advancing aspects of probability sampling. In the next issue we’ll briefly discuss several other types of probabilistic sampling, including a novel method for countering socially desirable responses using a randomization technique.


Quality Goods, Services
Surpassed Only by Lifetime of Generosity:
Profile of Gainesville’s Own Ward’s Supermarket

By Arlette C. Suarez, Assistant Editor

Many factors play into Ward’s supermarket’s position as an unmistakable part of Gainesville’s history and essence. The store, which has been in the community for more than 50 years, has always maintained its initial goal of supporting local growers and vendors. But there is something else about this beloved establishment that even Ward’s regulars may not be aware of: its generosity and altruism within the community.

Next time you happen to be in the market for blueberry granola or seasonal organic produce, stop by and you might catch a glimpse of third-generation owners Billy and Trish Ward, who personally oversee every component of the store. Trish, for instance, makes all the decisions regarding community donations. “We get about five or six phone calls a day,” she said. “We try not to say no to anybody, so instead we spread it out and donate a little bit to a lot of people.” They recently donated reusable grocery bags to Stephen Foster Elementary for their Earth Day event, along with three cases of Tropicana juice to Girls Place, Inc. Ten plants went to Archer Elementary for their teacher appreciation day, and a 10-pound bag of peanuts was donated for a fundraising event at Williams Elementary.

The store additionally supports particular organizations and events every year, such as the March of Dimes. In April, Ward’s was contacted by Dr. Lindsay Thompson (of UF’s General Pediatrics division) and donated 80 pounds of bananas for all the walkers at this event.

(Continued on page 15 as, ‘High-Five Roster’)

The High-Five Roster
ON PAR’s salute to Advocacy All-Stars
Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) Assists Alachua County Officers in Identifying Families in Danger
By Arlette C. Suarez, Assistant Editor

How do you help someone when you cannot gauge what kind of danger they are in? How do you help someone when even they do not understand what kind of danger they and their children may face? In cases dealing with domestic violence or more specifically intimate partner violence (IPV), the main goal for law enforcement involved is to first and foremost ensure the safety of the victims and then provide any possible and appropriate aid. But help for the victims of these sensitive cases is not possible without the proper initial assessment of the severity and probability of further violence or domestic homicide.

It is this critical step that Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell of The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing spent 25 years researching. Her research, along with her work with The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, led to the development of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). The LAP serves as a questionnaire screening tool, and comes with an accompanying referral protocol. In September 2009 it was integrated into the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office; at least one other local organization has used an adapted version of the tool in their work with victims of IPV.

The eleven-question screen asks victims questions in which the answers indicate the degree of risk for possible homicide, which then allows officers to initiate the appropriate protocol. According to the results of the screen, officers may be prompted to encourage victims, who are otherwise unlikely to seek help for themselves and their children, to connect with a hotline or advocacy program. In June 2009 more than 50 sworn officers of the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office training bureau attended sessions conducted by The Maryland Network, then developing a lesson plan by which all sworn officers were trained. It has since established a partnership with the local certified domestic violence center, Peaceful Paths, who also conducted in-service training for their staff, particularly hotline workers.

Bureau Chief of Trauma Intervention and Special Services Laura Knudson reports that in the first five months of the LAP, Alachua Sheriff’s Office deputies completed 162 screens. Ninety-four of the screens were identified as high-danger cases, and of those 94, patrol deputies were successful in encouraging 55 victims to speak to representatives from Peaceful Paths.

Chief Knudson notes that the LAP screen is a glimpse into understanding the terror in the lives of victims and the children among them. “With LAP, deputies on the scene are making a difference in ways that they may never see, in ways that bring safety to some of the most vulnerable among us.”
Good Ways to Use the Internet for Health Information

It’s easy to find health facts online. It’s hard to know what to trust. Just because a website has facts, it doesn’t mean they’re correct. It also doesn’t mean that the facts apply to your child (even if the facts are correct).

How do you know which sites to trust?
In general, you can count on sites by hospitals and universities. American government sites are also good. These sites usually have articles that are written by doctors or nurses.

How do you know which sites to question?
Some sites may or may not be reliable all the time. Wikipedia, for instance, allows almost anyone to publish articles. The information could be correct, but you can’t be sure. It’s best to ask your child’s doctor about what you find.

How do you know which sites to avoid?
With some websites, you should either avoid them or proceed with caution. These include sites that promise miracle cures that no one else knows about. These also include sites that encourage you to mislead your child’s doctor. You should always avoid sites that allow you to buy prescription drugs without a prescription.

What are some good rules for using the Internet to find health information?
Talk to your child’s doctor and ask if the information you’ve found is correct. Don’t change how you care for your child just because of what you find on a website. Websites can give facts but they cannot make a diagnosis. They cannot tell which drugs or treatments are best for your child. Ask the doctor if there are sites they think are good.

Above and right: Excerpts from a member newsletter to be sent to Ped-I-Care families.
The Ped-I-Care organization, a managed care program that provides medical benefits for Florida’s children with special health care needs (whose families qualify by income), is sending its newest member newsletter in the coming months. The easy-to-read, one-page bulletin lists at-a-glance information designed to assist parents and caregivers in making good decisions for their children’s healthcare. One feature of the latest newsletter is an article listing guidelines for filtering the various types of information available to anyone on the web.

Paragraph sections cover commonly-asked questions, relating to which sites are trustworthy, which sites should be questioned, and which sites should be avoided. The article additionally provides examples of each type of site and pointers for deciding whether to use the information that’s found.

### Green Light Sites: Good Sources of Information on the Internet

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Every once in awhile, organizations are fortunate to find stellar employees who also turn out to be loyal friends. To speak with those who know her, Ann Groves is the quintessence of both.

“Ann Groves, from my point of view, is the epitome of the exemplary staff person,” said Dr. Gerold Schiebler, lifelong child advocate and retired Chair of Pediatrics. “People like her are difficult, if not impossible to replace. It’s hard to find someone who works so efficiently, so adroitly. In all situations, she is eminently fair in her decisions. Over time, she’s accumulated a great deal of influence and power, which she’s never misused.”

Dr. Doug Barrett, Professor of Immunology and Infectious Disease and past Chair of Pediatrics, would agree. “Ann has been a cornerstone of the pediatric enterprise for as long as I can remember,” he said. “Throughout the years she’s been a constant; she has kept us on track with her institutional memory. Her dedication is just phenomenal; she’s a great lady.”

Groves’ story began in November 1970 when she first worked as a clerk typist for Dr. Billy Dunavant, the Director of Nuclear Engineering Science. As a student assistant through her high school’s cooperative business education program, she stayed on for
four years navigating several promotions and positions. Then, when the time was right she left to start her family and thought her days at UF were behind her.

“I thought I was going to be a stay-at-home mom,” Groves said. “After being at home about six months I came back.” She was rehired in July of 1975 by Business Manager Mary Lou Carson to work as her secretary in the Department of Pediatrics.

It was after the birth of her third child that she had the opportunity to work for Dr. Schiebler as his assistant.

“He never expected me to do any more than he was willing to do. We had a very strong working relationship. He’s very supportive of me in everything I’ve done. When he left as Chairman

“(continued on page 16 as, “Ann Groves”)

“I don’t want her to leave! I’ll miss her terribly; she’s a good resource and a wealth of information. You can ask her anything and she knows the answer. I’ve enjoyed working with her very much.”

– Cathy Hoover

“Ann Groves, from my point of view, is the epitome of the exemplary staff person. People like her are difficult, if not impossible to replace. It’s hard to find someone who works so efficiently, so adroitly. In all situations, she is eminently fair in her decisions. Over time, she’s accumulated a great deal of influence and power, which she’s never misused.”

– Dr. Gerold Schiebler

Left: Ann Groves celebrates her retirement with colleagues from past and present at a reception held in her honor on June 29.
The dollies without borders organization meets the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the south tower of Shands (sponsored by Shands Arts in Medicine) to create dolls to send around the world. Each group of dolls is lovingly crafted to reflect the ethnicity of the children in the region in which the dolls are distributed. UF, Shands, and other organizations are welcome to contact Artist in Residence Madeline Austin to arrange for pick-up of a shipment of dolls to take on trips to other parts of the world. Call or come by and be part of the network of love and compassion that has reached nearly every corner of the globe!

Website: http://www.dollieswithoutborders.com
Email: dollieswithoutborders@yahoo.com
Phone: 352.336.4863

Are you going on a missions trip this summer?
Do you have an hour or two each month for volunteer work?

This photo was taken by Tracy Clevenger (of The One Doll Project) from a hill overlooking the Treasury in Petra, Jordan. The doll was gifted to a young Bedouin girl just after the photo was taken. Photo used with permission.
UF Social Worker Opens Doors of Support, Networking for Families of Children with Craniofacial Health Care Needs

By Kendall Williamson

Although Brianna Schiavoni is relatively new to the University of Florida Craniofacial Clinic, she’s already found a way to impact many people’s lives. Ms. Schiavoni began in November 2009 to assist with Thursday clinics and to support families in dealing with the craniofacial needs of their children. With a Master’s degree in clinical social work, she is able to help these families socially and emotionally.

The idea to begin working with the clinic was ingrained from her previous experience when she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of 14. She attended many camps and realized the power that came with having a shared experience. This led Ms. Schiavoni to ask herself, “How do I hook people up?” She wanted to find a way for families and adolescents dealing with craniofacial challenges to network and share their own personal experiences.

She found the answer to this question through a website, www.ning.com, which allows users to create their own custom social network. In the beginning of January she created an account for caregivers of children with craniofacial health care needs. She named the online network “Caregiver Support: Truth and Beauty.” Account users are able to communicate with one another and offer advice and encouragement for the many events going on in their lives. Ms. Schiavoni acts mainly as a moderator and helps prompt conversation when necessary. Her first question, “When your child was born, what was your initial emotional response and how’d you work through it?,” ignited conversations between caregivers and helped create relationships.

“I have personal experience with a disease I can hide from the world, but these guys have stuff going on that everyone knows about or can judge based on what they see,” she said. With this feeling and the power of the first website, Ms. Schiavoni decided to create, “Autobiography of a Face: For Teens and Young Adults,” specifically for adolescents dealing with facial differences. Being a teenager with a craniofacial issue can be very difficult, and this network creates opportunities for them to support one another and talk about their life with an illness.

“When you can break them out of the box and expose them to someone else who is also experiencing these things, it’s validating, it’s empowering, it’s motivating, it’s really a beautiful thing,” Schiavoni said.

(Continued on page 15 as, ‘Craniofacial Support’)
Faculty, friends, patients, and families gathered Thursday, July 1 to celebrate the opening of the newly-renovated Pediatric Immunocompromised Unit at Shands Children’s Hospital. Grants were used to improve the unit, which features 18 single-patient rooms with bathrooms, a high-tech play room, dedicated nursing, and an outpatient facility and infusion center immediately adjacent. Patient rooms are larger and better equipped for families to stay when their child is in the hospital.

“The unit is set up to optimize the experience of the patient and their family,” said Dr. William Slayton, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Interim Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. “We plan to train a cadre of nurses focused and dedicated to oncology who have skills in administering chemotherapy. Within this unit we plan to provide state-of-the-art care to our patients, including therapy given in the context of clinical trials. We see clinical trials as the major focus of our division moving forward.”

New Day for Shands Children’s Hospital at UF

July Reception Marks Opening of the Newly-Renovated Pediatric Immunocompromised Unit

Left: As with other areas of the Children’s Hospital, ceiling tiles painted by patients, families, and others adorn the hallways of the newly-renovated unit. Above: A banner of thanks hangs near the elevators for those whose donations helped fund the renovations. Bottom left and right: A new gaming area and family center allow patients and visitors to play games individually or with patients in other rooms of the unit.
**Craniofacial Support, continued from page 13**

Not only does Ms. Schiavoni prompt conversation and help families network with one another, she also informs them of events, job opportunities, retreats, and many more resources that she believes will give them strength throughout their lives. She hopes that these sites continue to evolve and she believes that the stories shared will create support that families need.

“When you can break them out of the box and expose them to someone else who is also experiencing these things, it’s validating, it’s empowering, it’s motivating, it’s really a beautiful thing,” she said.

If you are living with or are a caregiver for a child with craniofacial health care needs, contact Ms. Schiavoni at bschiavoni@peds.ufl.edu.

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**High-Five Roster, continued from page 6**

Year’s Gainesville march. “Trish Ward sets the tone,” explained Dr. Thompson, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics. “She is approachable and always ready to help.”

It is this willingness to help that has led to Ward’s legacy of community involvement and giving.

One story involves a customer who approached the Ward family about donating food to raise funds for a local boy. The boy had lost his mother and had been critically injured in a car accident. In response, Ward’s not only contributed the food, but also put out donation buckets at every cash register. For weeks, customers put their change in the buckets and helped with the boy’s medical bills.

Because of their ongoing commitment to causes which benefit children and their exemplary involvement in the Gainesville community, we are proud to add Ward’s to The High-Five Roster.

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From Internet to newsstand, a new generation of women has been subjected like never before to the spray-tanned and airbrushed depiction of the ‘perfect woman.’ The new non-profit organization Girls on the Run® is ready to change those messages by empowering young girls to literally run away from these unhealthy stereotypes.

Girls on the Run is a life-changing, experiential learning program for girls ages 8 to 13. The program combines training for a 3.1-mile running event with self-esteem-enhancing, uplifting workouts. The goals of the programs are to encourage positive emotional, social, mental, spiritual, and physical development.

Help our girls celebrate their bodies, honor their voices, recognize their gifts, and activate their personal power!

Find out more at: [www.alachuagotr.org](http://www.alachuagotr.org).
and became the Associate VP, he asked me to come with him and I did. He treated you well. He gave us opportunities that most employees never get. We went to Tallahassee, got to visit staff in the legislative districts from Inverness to Monticello to Palatka. We made friends with the staff and when we would go to Tallahassee we made our own rounds visiting the legislative staff. We kept up relationships with the staff and still stay in touch with them.”

It is perhaps these qualities, initiative and sincerity, which are the hallmarks of Groves’ interpersonal and professional success. According to Dr. Schiebler, “she has phenomenal judgment and tremendous confidentiality, and there’s no question about her impeccable integrity. She has the ability to tell you in a very nice way what you need to know, even though you don’t want to know it. She has always been an integral member of our family and has been for a long time.”

Groves said she is most proud of the time she spent in the legislative arena helping people, and fondly remembers the days of Sid Martin and George Kirkpatrick, who worked alongside Dr. Schiebler in revolutionizing children’s healthcare policy in Florida.

What will she miss most? “I won’t know until I’m gone,” she said. What will she do in retirement? “I don’t know what I’m going to do first!”

“Ann is a real example for all of us,” said Dr. Richard Bucciarelli, Chair of Pediatrics and long-time faculty member. “She’s dedicated, caring, and always willing to do whatever it takes. Her decision to retire was not motivated by wanting to slow down, but rather to speed up and give more to her family and her adopted families in the remote villages of Chiquimula, Guatemala.”

From local volunteering and continuing her missions work to spending time with her children, grandchildren, and mother-in-law, it seems that Groves’ legacies of leadership, loyalty, and love are continuing.

And so it is that every once in a while, the world counts itself lucky to have been graced by someone whose personal and professional stories are woven together by the consistent threads of consideration for and commitment to other people.
When international pediatric researchers converged in Vancouver, British Columbia, May 1-4, they exchanged a wealth of information and ideas relevant to the various fields of pediatrics. Just as diverse and plentiful as the conference’s ideas were the flowering gardens, rolling waterfalls, and public art displays which typify this northwestern metropolis. Vancouver’s gracious citizens, inviting infrastructure, and inspirational ambience proved to be the perfect venue for the scholarly exchange of ideas and collegial networking which marks the annual conference.
Top left: The PAS 2010 banner hung inside the Vancouver Convention Centre proclaimed the convergence of various pediatrics societies for this inclusive conference. Left middle: In keeping with the city’s international appeal and commitment to public art, a large, revolving replica of Earth graced the upper arches of the Centre’s main floor, bridging the lower, middle, and upper stairwells. Bottom left: Colorful, inviting landscaping adorns the entrance to the Vancouver Sheraton. Top right: The Convention Centre’s indoor décor is reflective of the larger environment within which it’s situated. Bottom right: Adjacent to the Convention Centre are various sites reflective of Canadian culture and its recent hosting of the Olympics.

Backdrop: Located along the city’s harbor front, the Vancouver Convention Centre faces mountains of wildlife and natural beauty.
Top and middle left photos: The city of Vancouver flourishes with lovingly-tended-to flower gardens, modern amenities, and waterfalls, it seems, on every corner. **Bottom left:** Dr. Maria Kelly presented research on breastfeeding rates. **Bottom right:** A ubiquitous marker of northwestern Canadian art, found in front of this downtown business, is also an emblem on nearly every type of souvenir sold in the area. **Backdrop:** Ships dock near the Convention Centre, carrying cruise aficionados on tours of the Pacific.
radKIDS, continued from page 1

self-empowerment with which they can face any possibly dangerous situation. It is exactly this self-empowerment which Officer Thomas works to build during the UFPD camps.

“The most valuable thing we teach these kids is, no one has the right to hurt me, I do not have the right to hurt anyone else including myself, and if I do get hurt in the past, present, or future it is not my fault and I can tell somebody.”

The program continues to thrive thanks to the support of Chief Linda Stump, donations from the community, and the volunteering efforts of trained police officers. Just last year The Alachua County Sheriff’s Office launched its own radKIDS program, giving Gainesville’s children even more opportunities to learn to protect themselves. Both the UFPD and ACSO programs are free of charge. The limited spots fill up fast for the UFPD summer camps, which are held in June and July. Officer Thomas encourages parents to get their kids involved in these types of programs, pointing out that, “even if they come away from the experience with just one skill, they learned something that could possibly save their lives.”

For more information on the UFPD’s radKIDS summer camps call (352) 392-1409.

For information on upcoming Sheriff’s Office events call (352) 494-7355.

For more information on the national program, visit www.radKIDS.org to find course locations across the country.

Above and right: Volunteer police officers teach children to defend themselves from abduction and other attacks in real-life role playing scenarios as part of the radKIDS curriculum. Photos courtesy of UFPD; used with permission.