

DeSales Catholic School Volunteers as Site for “Active Shooter Drill”

While students were off on their Easter holiday, the leadership of DeSales Catholic School in Lockport allowed the Niagara County Sheriff’s department to conduct emergency drills at their school. Though no one wants to imagine they will ever need to employ them, the large school provided an ideal site for the sheriff’s department and local police, fire and emergency medical services to sharpen the skills required when responding to the call of an active shooter.

In an article posted by the online newspaper the East Niagara Post, Ellen Roth, Director of Marketing and Admissions for DeSales Catholic said, “We were enthusiastic about the opportunity to participate because our school is a unique building and it’s become such a priority in education now for the safety of everybody in there. Everybody is horrified by what’s been going on, but we’re glad to know we can play a part in helping our law enforcement and first responders in preparedness.”

At DeSales the emergency response teams scheduled three drills, two involved armed assailants inside the school building and a third in which the hypothetical assailant’s scent was laid and a bloodhound was used to track him through the neighborhood as members of the SWAT team cleared potential threats.

This topic is deadly serious, according to Roth, “Members of the various agencies we had spoken to in order to prepare for the drill in the weeks leading up to the event were completely in SWAT mode when they arrived that day.” Actors, parents, teachers and staff members, including Ellen Roth, were used to play the roles of victims and innocent bystanders. In a conversation after the drill Roth said, “It was pretty terrifying to witness; I can’t even imagine what it would be like with the building full of screaming kids. It made me realize how emotionally unprepared I am for something like this.”

In all three scenarios the assailants were located, law enforcement teams cleared the scene, attended to the “wounded” and took the “perpetrators” into custody.

According to Niagara County Director of Emergency Services and Fire Coordinator Jonathan Schulz, this was the first time the sheriff’s department, fire, police and EMS worked together under a unified command.

Additional photos taken by Heather Grimmer of the East Niagara Post are available at:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/+EastNiagaraPost/albums/6003099446163058561?banner=pwa>