

Preparedness is key in preventing the unthinkable

By Katie White

May 24, 2023, was the one year anniversary of the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde, Texas, where two teachers and 19 children were killed by a Uvalde High School student. There were signs that the 18-year-old teen was a troubled youth. He seemingly walked in effortlessly, and then did the unthinkable once inside the school. But this is not the first time this has taken place in America's schools and other public places, as we are all too familiar.

There is an alarm among parents and educational professionals about the possibility of the unthinkable happening at their school or their child's school. Parents have likely thought, are my children safe at school? And for a parent, it's difficult to know that your child may worry about their safety. But on the other side of that, it's good to know that something is being done to protect our children.

There is also much debate about how this type of crime keeps happening, and what can be done to stop it. Some may believe the root of the problem lies within the psychology of the assailant(s). Some may feel that the problem is in the legality of guns. No one really seems to have a concrete answer on how

to prevent it from happening in the first place, but a school can be prepared in the event that it does.

In speaking with school administrators and security staff at Rankin County School District (RCSD), it is clear that they are very active in securing the safety of their staff and children. They work and plan with law enforcement and emergency systems in the local area. Law enforcement can communicate with the school through a special radio channel. The Rankin County - Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is tasked with being in control of fire and Emergency Management Services (EMS) response. EOC and EMS work together on drilling and running exercises to implement strategies.

They mentioned that the schools meet once a year with local responders to cover topics such as updates to the emergency plan and new construction. If there is any new construction on the building, plans may need to be tweaked. They also conduct walk-throughs of the building to get the overall layout of the building.

In addition to their full time jobs as teachers, coaches and custodians, some



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary.

staff also work within a Campus Emergency Response Team. These teams have special training in medical care as well as other emergency procedures, and they have access to the necessary medical supplies to render immediate care until EMS can arrive.

At RCSD, they utilize modern methods such as the See Something Say Something App, which directly communicates

with a staff member to quickly address problems and threats. They also encourage students to communicate with trusted adults such as teachers and coaches.

All RCSD schools have an emergency plan. Their plans are tested and updated often. Pelahatchie Schools will not divulge secrets about certain technology or strategies - rightfully and understandably - that have been put in place to protect staff and students. The school does not take threats lightly.

Reports of potential threats are taken very seriously at RCSD. Anytime a word-of-mouth tip comes in, they immediately act on the threat and investigate its validity. If needed, law enforcement is contacted, and the subject is turned over to them.

The RCSD website has resources on their website such as, *What Can You Do as a Parent, Coping with Tragedy, Talking to Children About Violence, Tips for Talking With and Helping Children and Youth Cope After a Disaster or Traumatic Event*. The school district also provides a link to "Say Something" at sandyhookpromise.org/say-something-tips/, provided by the Sandy Hook Promise. Visit RCSD online at rcsd.ms/resources/school-safety to learn more about what you can do as a caregiver.

Griffin Family Medical Clinic

Let us help you
with all of your
summertime needs

&

Don't forget to schedule
your routine checkup
or wellness visit.

Call us today to schedule
your appointment.



Mary Ann Griffin, CFNP • Kim Risher • Keli Robertson

507 Hwy 80 West, Pelahatchie, MS 39145

601-854-8002



RIVERS
Greenhouse & Garden
Homegrown

OPEN
MON.-FRI.
8 - 5

SAT.
8 - 4

4664 Hwy 18
BRANDON, MS
601-825-9816

Facebook icon

Find your Spring at
Rivers