

Survey Finds Teens More Willing To Break “Code Of Silence” When There Is A Threat To School Safety

Students Gather to Discuss School Safety at National School Violence Summit

Raleigh, NC (April 11, 2002) – The National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.) has released results from the S.A.V.E./Chevrolet School Violence Survey* that finds that 81 percent of teens surveyed are more willing since Columbine to break the code of silence and report a potential school threat. In addition, 85 percent of teen respondents are most likely to report threats to a teacher or principal before they would tell a parent or another student.

“These findings show us that students are feeling more empowered to have a voice in their schools and stand up against violence,” said Dr. Pamela Riley, Executive Director of S.A.V.E, a national, school-based nonprofit organization committed to engaging students to take the lead in school safety efforts. Dr. Riley will speak to more than twelve-hundred students, teachers and school administrators at S.A.V.E.’s annual school violence Summit this Saturday, April 13 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Dr. Riley says that the survey shows schools are moving in the right direction since Columbine and other incidents with a balance of physical and non-physical violence prevention methods. 92 percent of the teens surveyed say their schools have changed since Columbine and have implemented a variety of measures to curb youth violence. Teens say the top changes are:

- ?? **More school assemblies** on school violence and anti-bullying (50 percent)
- ?? **Addition of on-campus police or security officers** (49 percent)
- ?? **Conflict management** taught in classes (49 percent)
- ?? **Increased physical security** (47 percent)
- ?? **More violence prevention programs** (31 percent)

“It is crucial that schools do not have a knee-jerk reaction to youth violence. It is apparent from the survey results that schools have responded appropriately with a balance between security measures and educational programs. What we need to do now is focus our attention on positive relationships between peers, ” said Riley.

Craig Scott, a senior at Columbine who survived that day in the library, but lost his sister Rachel, agrees that students need to change how they treat each other to improve the climate in schools. “If I had to leave behind one message as I prepare to leave Columbine as a member of the last class to

-MORE-

witness the tragedy, my message would be to reach out to the unreached. Treat other students with compassion and start a chain reaction. That's something my sister Rachel lived by and I now live by in her memory."

S.A.V.E. invited Scott to this year's National S.A.V.E. Summit to share his story and offer words of advice to students about violence, peer pressure and the need for students to have a louder voice and more active role in their schools.

The 7th Annual National S.A.V.E. Summit will draw in students and advisors from around the country, some as far away as San Diego, California. "I've learned from my participation in S.A.V.E. that I have the power to make a difference in my school and community. After attending the Summit, many students leave here feeling the same way," said S.A.V.E. National Youth Advisory Board member Wes Blalock. Students will attend workshops on a range of topics, including how to manage conflict and conduct peer mediation; how to execute effective community service learning projects; how to connect with local middle and elementary schools; and, ultimately how to reduce the chance of a tragedy.

S.A.V.E. is an organization of more than 900 school-based chapters and more than 88,000 student members in elementary, middle and high schools nationwide. It continues to grow as a result of support from its national sponsor, Chevrolet, who became involved in the issue three years ago after the Columbine tragedy. Chevrolet is supporting S.A.V.E. as part of its community service initiative, **Chevy R.O.C.K.** (Reaching Out to Communities and Kids.) R.O.C.K. is Chevrolet's response to the nation's top priority of providing children with safe schools and communities to ensure they develop the skills to grow to their full potential. "Chevrolet truly believes in S.A.V.E.'s work. We're committed to helping the organization grow nationwide. We're proud to say that Chevy R.O.C.K. has helped S.A.V.E. ignite more than 375 new chapters in the last two years, resulting in a 50 percent increase in student membership," says Kurt Ritter, Chevrolet General Manager. With Chevrolet's support, S.A.V.E. will continue to develop and enhance its educational materials; educate and conduct outreach to teachers and students on how to start chapters; and develop a team of trainers who will conduct local S.A.V.E. workshops and provide technical assistance to new and existing chapters.

About S.A.V.E.

As of April 2002, S.A.V.E. had 936 chapters in 35 states, with more than 88,000 members. For further information on the Summit or other S.A.V.E. activities, please visit www.nationalsave.org. Anyone interested in starting a S.A.V.E. chapter at their school can contact S.A.V.E. at 1-866-343-SAVE to receive free start-up materials and guidance.

About Chevrolet

***Chevy R.O.C.K.** is a community service initiative of Chevrolet Motor Division. Chevrolet Motor Division is the largest vehicle division of General Motors Corporation, and offers a full lineup of cars and trucks. With more than 36 million current owners of its products, Chevrolet has more vehicles on the road than any other manufacturer.*

###