



Office of
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

For Immediate Release

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Grants Awarded to Shrewsbury and Westborough Fire Safety Programs

BOSTON- Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) is pleased to announce that grants for Fiscal Year 2017 have been awarded to both Shrewsbury and Westborough's fire departments for the Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) and Senior SAFE programs. The SAFE program was originally created twenty-two years ago as a means to provide fire prevention training and fire preparedness education to children. Since then, the annual rate of children's deaths due to fire has decreased by 70%. The program's substantial impact, as well as state and local support, allowed the Senior SAFE program to launch in the years following.

"The SAFE and Senior SAFE programs provide an invaluable opportunity for our municipalities' fire departments to form a partnership with our public schools, senior centers, and other community groups in order to provide comprehensive, lifesaving fire prevention training and fire response education" stated Representative Kane. "The effectiveness of the program is evident, as the Shrewsbury community recently honored Little Colonials preschooler Bryce Babigian with the Young Hero Award for executing the fire safety skills Shrewsbury Firefighter Michael Guarino taught his class. Young Bryce alerted his mother of their home's fire and helped evacuate his little sister, based on what he had learned", the Representative noted.

Shrewsbury's \$5,641 SAFE grant and \$2,996 Senior SAFE grant for Fiscal Year 2017 will greatly aid the program. According to Shrewsbury Fire Chief Jim Vuona, "the S.A.F.E. Program makes up a large part of our risk management effort in the Town of Shrewsbury. By educating school aged kids, senior citizens and their families about the devastating effects of fire, we are managing risk in the most effective and cost efficient way possible. Our department has been built on a foundation of proactive Fire Prevention and Public Education programs and I greatly appreciate the hard work and support of Representative Hannah Kane and the Governor's office to keep this vitally important program funded."

Westborough Fire Chief Patrick Purcell echoed the importance of these grants, "by receiving these funds Westborough Firefighters are able to better support our mission statement by becoming an educational resource to our vulnerable populations. Being able to provide

educational opportunities to children and older adults promotes an environment where we see a reduction of fire related injuries and an increase in home safety. Without the support of the Commonwealth with these programs we would likely not see the high return on the investment like we currently do.” For Fiscal Year 2017, the town of Westborough was awarded \$4,540 for the SAFE program, and \$2,796 for the Senior SAFE program.

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security is responsible for funding these programs. The Department of Fire Services administers the SAFE programs. For more information, please visit www.mass.gov/dfs .

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