

As Seen In...

Our City Pembroke Pines

■ SCHOOL NEWS

Community Risk Reduction Team Participates in KAPOW at FSU Charter Elementary

BY DEBBY TEICH

Throughout the school year, the Community Risk Reduction team from the Pembroke Pines Fire Rescue Department has been working with students at FSU Charter Elementary. Once a month, Rick Scopa and Martha Leiva visit with students in Lauren Hindmarsh's fifth grade class to teach them about the importance of community involvement, leadership, communication and teamwork. It is all part of KAPOW (Kids and the Power of Work).

KAPOW is a national network of business and elementary school partnerships that introduce students to career awareness through seven one-hour professionally designed lessons taught by business volunteers in the classroom. The lessons help students discover different jobs, what it takes to do them, and how to be successful in work and life.

"The KAPOW program is really amazing and the volunteers are incredible," said Hindmarsh. "The students discover how everything they are learning in school helps them prepare for their futures in the workplace and life. The kids love when the volunteers come. They really look forward to it."

During the lessons, the volunteers use hands-on



Photo: City of Pembroke Pines

fun activities to involve the children and keep them interested. They have discussed stereotypes and the importance of treating all people equally. They showed the students a Halligan bar, an important tool used by the fire department for prying doors and windows open. They played the game "telephone" to reinforce the importance of communicating clearly with the people they work with, as well as those they are helping. And much more.

"We inspire the kids to be successful in school and in their future careers," said Scopa. "We draw from our experience in the fire service to set an example of how those topics are used in our careers. We believe that the students enjoy our visits as much as

we enjoy taking time to teach them and letting them get an idea of what a future career in the fire service would be like."

For the last lesson, the students will attend the fire training facility to get a better understanding of where Scopa and Leiva work, as well as their daily responsibilities.

KAPOW is always looking for businesses or individual volunteers interested in participating in the program. It is an opportunity to change a young person's life forever in only seven hours.

■ For information send an email to taniakapow@gmail.com or call 305-338-5548.