

# **Malibu/Lost Hills Sheriff's Station**

LEROY D. BACA, Sheriff

## **Community Crime Prevention Tips**

### **IS MEDIA VIOLENCE INVADING YOUR HOME?**

#### **TURN IT OFF!**

For too many people, violence is an ordinary way to be entertained, settle arguments or blow off emotional steam. Violence is the result of an array of forces coming together. Recently, we have come to recognize that exposure to violence in the media can be one of those forces. American children spend more time each week watching TV than engaging in any other activity except sleeping. But violence is not limited to TV; it can be found in music, video games, newspapers, comic books, magazines, and movies. Exposure to violence can result in children being less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, more fearful of the world around them, and more willing to behave aggressively. Children imitate what they see. Take a look at what your children are seeing. Remember, most media violence can be turned off.

#### **Look at what you're watching**

Take a hard look at what you, your family, and friends watch on television -- "action" movies, talk shows, soaps, sitcoms, cop shows, and even news programs. Ask the same questions about movies, videotapes, comics, and computer and video games.

What values are they teaching? Are the characters racist, sexist, or stereotypes? Do they make violence appear exciting or humorous or macho? Do they solve real-life problems without violence? Do the programs show how the victims of violence, their families, and friends suffer? Do the programs teach skills or convey unique, interesting information?

#### **Look at what you're doing**

What words or actions trigger your anger? Maybe it's the way someone looks at you, a tone of voice, or an action, such as pointing a finger. Once you know your triggers, you can better control your reactions. When you are angry, do you use words that shame, humiliate, or intimidate? Remember that words can hurt; they can provoke violent actions.

How do children you know take out their anger? Do they imitate words and body language? Are you proud of the way they handle conflict?

Look at your anger. Talk it out, exercise it out, write it out, sing it out -- but don't take it out on anyone else. Learn how to settle disagreements without using violence.

### **Action ideas**

- Ë Turn off television, radio, and movies that make violence look exciting, humorous, or macho. Call or write to radio and television stations and movie theaters to advise them of your decision. And thank them when they show programming that portrays positive, nonviolent ways of solving problems. Encourage the media to address more family issues and show positive actions by people to improve the community.
- Ë Contact your local school to see if it has a mediation or conflict resolution program. If not, help start one. You can get help from colleges, community or neighborhood dispute resolution centers, or national organizations that focus on dispute resolution.
- Ë When you buy gifts for friends and family, make sure that games, music, videos, and books don't promote violence.
- Ë Make one night a month a Family Fun Night. Why not go out to dinner, take in a nonviolent movie, play board or card games? Play volleyball, ping pong, or a game of catch, go to the library, read aloud, or go through old family photos and slides? Ask your family for suggestions.
- Ë Make sure your child's school has a policy requiring parental permission to show R-rated, PG-13, or PG movies in any class and enforces it. Make sure your neighborhood video store has and enforces the same policy.
- Ë Don't buy products whose advertisements glorify physical or verbal violence. Write the manufacturer to express your concern. Check product packages for addresses.

If you have any questions, please contact Deputy Shawn Brownell at (818) 878-5506.