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Newsroom: Teaching Internet Safety to 'Tweens

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Newsroom

Teaching Internet Safety to 'Tweens

RWU Law students are teaching a group of Providence seventh graders about internet safety as part of a new, national privacy education program.



March 6, 2014: A group of Providence seventh graders are learning about internet safety this month with the help of RWU Law students participating in a new, national privacy education program.

The first program of its kind in Rhode Island, the initiative involves a small group of law students leading interactive sessions on internet safety with local youth at Community Preparatory School in Providence. Topics range from online privacy protection to managing a positive digital reputation.

"Middle school students are at a critical stage in their adolescence, where identity development and a clear sense of individualism and 'self' begin to form," explained Yajaida Dejesus, a seventh grade teacher at the Community Preparatory School. "Adding the social pressures and complications of social media on top of that can be a lot for young students to understand and manage."

The experience is valuable for law students as well. "The privacy education program presents a unique and interesting learning experience that allows our students to get hands-on experience, while having a lasting impact in our local communities," said **Suzanne Harrington-Steppen, associate director of pro bono programs at RWU Law's Feinstein Center for Pro Bono and Experiential Education.**

Dejesus said the two groups really connected. "Our students look up to the law students as mentors, and I think they make a real connection while teaching them about important issues that can impact their adult lives," she said. "We are thrilled to partner with RWU Law to bring a program of this kind to our students."

The five-week program consists of one-hour sessions, covering topics such as privacy basics; passwords and behavioral ads; navigating social media in tricky situations; understanding mobile, WiFi and facial recognition; and managing a digital reputation.

RWU Law hopes to expand the program and engage additional Rhode Island schools next year. The need is clear: the Pew Research Center recently reported that 93 percent of teens ages 12-17 go online, 53 percent of teens post their email address online, 20 percent post their cell phone number and 33 percent are connected online to people they have never met.

To learn more about the National Privacy Education Program created by Fordham Law School's Center for Law and Information Policy, please visit: <http://law.fordham.edu/31049.htm>. For additional information on RWU Law's Feinstein Center for Pro Bono and Experiential Education, please visit: <http://law.rwu.edu/feinsteincenter>.