

NEWS



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HBA, HYL A JOIN FORCES TO MAKE CYBERSPACE SAFETY PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

(Houston, Texas – October 26, 2010) The Houston Bar Association (HBA) and the Houston Young Lawyers Association (HYLA) have teamed up to provide students and their parents with information on cyberspace safety through the distribution of a new DVD, “R U Safe? Protecting Yourself in Cyberspace.” The award-winning DVD was developed by the Texas Young Lawyers Association through a grant from the Texas Bar Foundation. “R U Safe?” includes components for elementary, middle and high school students, as well as parents, that cover topics including cyber bullying, social networking, chat rooms, “sexting,” and online predators.

The HBA contacted 26 school districts in the greater Houston area to offer copies of the DVD to each school, as well as private schools. The HYLA has developed a speakers program that will send an attorney to schools and parent-teacher organizations to present a 30-45 minute supplemental presentation that addresses how colleges/universities/recruiters use social media and offers practical advice to all age groups on how to protect themselves. To date, 18 school districts and 32 private schools have requested DVDs or are providing a link to the DVD, and speakers are scheduled at some schools beginning in November.

“The Houston Bar Association is enthusiastic about partnering with the Houston Young Lawyers Association to provide this outstanding program in local schools,” said Mark Kelly, president of the Houston Bar Association. “The initial response tells us this is an issue that presents challenges for schools, parents and students as they try to balance the positive aspects of the Internet and social media with some of the dangers of irresponsible or uninformed use.”

In addition to educating children and teens on how to protect themselves and how to report suspicious activity, the videos address some of the legal issues involved in online activities that can get them in trouble with the law.

“The R U Safe? video is an excellent resource for schools and parents on what they need to know about cyberspace and the legal ramifications of certain online behavior,” said Courtney E. Palm, president of the Houston Young Lawyers Association. “I would encourage schools and families to get informed through the R U Safe? program.”

“R U Safe?” is available for viewing and downloading on the HBA site, www.hba.org, and at www.tyla.org or may be requested by calling 800-204-2222, ext. 1529.

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The Houston Bar Association, with nearly 12,000 members, is the nation’s fifth-largest metropolitan bar association. The Houston Young Lawyers Association is a nationally-recognized, award-winning bar association for lawyers 36 years of age and under or lawyers who have been licensed five years or less.