



## **Life-Saving Programs Shared With Children and Seniors in 1999; Service Corporation International's Community Service Programs Continue To Make a Difference**

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HOUSTON, Dec. 28 /PRNewswire/ -- More than a million children have learned how to distinguish a good stranger from a bad one, and thousands of senior citizens have discovered ways to avoid phone fraud and other scams. In 1999, Service Corporation International (NYSE: SRV) (SCI) and national safety expert Bob Stuber have touched many lives, bringing the SCI Escape School and SCI Smart & Safe Seniors programs to more than 300 communities across the country.

Throughout the year, SCI and its affiliated funeral homes in the U.S. and Canada have sponsored these insightful safety programs in nearly 500 venues, including schools, community centers, churches and synagogues, senior centers and YMCAs. From the Hawaiian Islands to New York, children and senior citizens have benefited from the useful information, practical advice and real-life techniques offered during these unique programs.

SCI Escape School provided children and their families with critical abduction prevention and evasion techniques, while SCI Smart & Safe Seniors focused on helping senior citizens protect themselves against violations commonly experienced by the elderly, including home invasions, investment scams and phone fraud.

SCI Escape School has been credited with saving the lives of at least three children: one in Houston (TX), one in Birmingham (AL), and one in Chattanooga (TN). All three children attended an SCI Escape School program in their community and used the techniques they learned to either escape from an abductor or avoid an abduction situation altogether.

SCI Smart & Safe Seniors is well on its way to having an equal impact for the elderly.

"Our goal has been to address issues that are of concern to the communities we serve," says SCI's Chief Operating Officer Jerry Pullins. "Children and senior citizens are often victims of crime because of their vulnerability, and the aftermath of these crimes can be heartbreaking. Our programs are designed to help children and their parents, as well as senior citizens, feel safe in their own environment -- whether at the park, the bus stop, at home or in the mall."

Bob Stuber has been an instrumental part in making the SCI Escape School and SCI Smart & Safe Seniors programs the success they are today. A former police officer, Stuber has travelled the country presenting SCI Escape School to parents and children for the past four years. This year, SCI Smart & Safe Seniors was developed and added to Stuber's schedule to address the growing number of scams and violations against the elderly.

"These programs are about becoming empowered," said Stuber. "When we're afraid, we're incapable of protecting ourselves. When we're informed and are given the tools and techniques to guard ourselves, we become proactive and much more capable of acting in our own best interest. That's what these programs teach and that's why these programs work."

Late in 1999, the SCI Escape School program began expanding its message to include such critical issues as violence in the schools and safety on the Internet.

"School violence has become a serious threat to the safety of students everywhere," continued Stuber. "We can't ignore the issue and make it go away, so SCI plans to make it a key focus for the Escape School program in 2000."

This year, the SCI Escape School Web site was developed ([www.escapeschool.com](http://www.escapeschool.com)), and it has become a valuable tool for parents and children. The site, which is updated monthly, receives an increasing 250,000 hits per month. The site provides useful information for parents and children by addressing such issues as school violence, safe Internet use, child abduction prevention, games that teach smart safety, links to helpful sites and more.

In addition to the programs Stuber personally presented, he also spent this past year training nearly 75 SCI funeral directors around the country to present the SCI Escape School program in their local communities on a year-round basis. Thus far, those 75 funeral directors have conducted presentations in more than 200 venues. They have shared the SCI safety information with more than 10,000 parents and approximately 750,000 students. In October of this year, Stuber began training these same directors on the SCI Smart & Safe Seniors program, and he will continue to train directors throughout 2000. The local effort for presenting the seniors program is expected to begin early next year.

The message and tactics that Stuber teaches has garnered the attention of national print and broadcast media. In 1999 alone, Stuber and the SCI Escape School program have been featured in The New York Times, on "Good Morning America," "America's Most Wanted," "Extra," and "Leeza," in addition to an array of national radio programs. Plans are currently forming to produce segments for several national television programs early next year.

"It is a tremendous feeling to know that these programs are saving and enhancing lives," says Pullins. "We're looking forward to expanding these programs and having an even greater impact in the year 2000."

As of September 30, 1999, SCI affiliates operated 3,823 funeral service locations, 524 cemeteries and 198 crematoria. SCI provides funeral and cemetery services in 20 countries on five continents.

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Web site: <http://www.escapeschool.com> <http://www.sci-corp.com>

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