



Safety Program of Service Corporation International Aids Newscaster in Ironic Twist of Fate

March 13, 2000

HOUSTON, March 13 /PRNewswire/ -- Service Corporation International's (NYSE: SRV) Escape School, a program that teaches children techniques for escaping stranger abductions, recently helped a Texas newscaster safely respond to armed robbery. A story about SCI Escape School by the woman reporter aired Feb. 18 in a major Texas market. One hour later, two men confronted the reporter in her driveway. One of the men was armed with a gun. Using a response tactic she observed while covering SCI Escape School, the reporter immediately screamed and the men ran away with her purse and workbag, leaving her unharmed.

In her conservative, yet proactive response to the menacing duo, the reporter was following the advice of SCI Escape School instructor Frank Seddio. Throughout the taping of the news report, Seddio had repeatedly urged: "If you don't do anything else, scream."

The reporter responded to the confrontation with Seddio's advice fresh in her mind. "I'm fully convinced I reacted as I did because of the (Escape School) lessons," she said. "I wanted our story to help parents and their children in the event they were ever in danger. As it turned out, I was the one in danger who was helped by Escape School."

The Texas reporter has joined the growing list of individuals who have directly benefited from SCI Escape School. The program teaches children how to react to potentially dangerous situations: ways to differentiate between "good" and "bad" strangers, tricks that abductors use, ways to escape, and how to find help when its needed.

SCI Escape School has educated more than three million people with its presentations, and has been credited with saving the lives of at least three children: one in Houston, Texas, one in Birmingham, Ala., and one in Chattanooga, Tenn. All three children attended an SCI Escape School program in their communities and used the techniques to escape or avoid would-be abductors.

Program instructor Seddio admits to being "taken aback" when he learned that the reporter who carried his message to others had to apply Escape School tactics in her own driveway. "I was very concerned, but the fact that she, out of doing all this, was able to benefit, shows that Escape School is the right thing to give to the public to use if they have to," Seddio said.

The manager of an SCI funeral home in Texas, Seddio took Escape School instructor training in 1999 through program founder Bob Stuber, a nationally recognized personal safety expert. "Although you hope that our program attendees would never have to use what they learn, it's exciting to know when it helps someone," said Seddio.

Throughout last year, SCI and its affiliated funeral homes in the United States and Canada sponsored these insightful safety programs in nearly 500 venues, including schools, community centers, churches and synagogues, senior centers and YMCAs.

"Our goal has been to address issues that are of concern to the communities we serve," said Jerry Pullins, SCI's Chief Operating Officer. "It's a tremendous feeling to know that these programs are saving and enhancing lives," added Pullins. "We're looking forward to expanding these programs and having an even greater impact this year."

As of December 31, 1999, SCI affiliates operated 3,823 funeral service locations, 525 cemeteries and 198 crematoria. SCI provides funeral services in 20 countries on five continents.

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CONTACT: Greg Bolton of Service Corporation International, 713-525-5235