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**First Lady Patti Blagojevich and Miss Illinois team up to
prevent child abduction and exploitation**

***Nationally recognized Child Lures prevention program will be in use
in Illinois' 3,200 elementary and middle schools starting this month***

DES PLAINES – First Lady Patti Blagojevich today teamed up with Miss Illinois 2005 Lauren Allen to teach important safety lessons from the *Child Lures* prevention program to 6th grade students at Algonquin Middle School in Des Plaines. Earlier this week, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich announced that Illinois' 3,200 elementary and middle schools are now receiving *Child Lures* prevention program materials to be used starting this month. The Governor launched the *Child Lures* prevention program -- a nationally recognized initiative that teaches children, parents and school officials to recognize potential danger signs and make smart decisions to avoid child predators – last fall during a child safety Town Hall Meeting sponsored by NBC 5 Chicago. Illinois is the first state to implement the program in schools on a statewide level.

"As a mother, I know how important it is to know that our children are safe, even when we can't be with them all the time," said First Lady Patti Blagojevich. "The Child Lures program helps kids recognize potentially harmful situations and teaches them the skills they need to stay safe. We are very pleased to bring this program to schools in Illinois."

"School District 62 parents, students, and officials are very concerned with helping give our families the tools to protect them from those who might prey upon them," said Dr. Jane L. Westerhold, Superintendent of School District 62. "We are very happy that the First Lady is here today to help teach these important skills. The more we can help our children stay safe, the better they will perform in school, and the more successful they will be."

The Child Lures prevention program will be available in each of Illinois' 3,220 elementary and middle schools. Each school will receive a package with two videos, one to prepare teachers to present the program, and one to present to children, along with a presenter's handbook and a parent's guide.

Lauren Allen, Miss Illinois 2005, has made child safety the focus of her platform. "Partnering with the Child Lures program allows me to use the title of Miss Illinois to truly make an impact during my year of service. We need to ensure the safety of our youth – the future leaders of tomorrow. Teaching children and teenagers the lessons of Child Lures will empower them with the information they need to avoid potentially dangerous situations."

In September, the Governor partnered with NBC 5 in Chicago for a one-hour special, "Smart Choices, Safe Kids: A Child Lures Prevention Town Hall Meeting," to introduce the *Child Lures* program to parents and children across Illinois.

"The response to the Child Lures Prevention town hall and vignette series on-air and on nbc5.com has been remarkable," said Larry Wert, President and General Manager

of NBC5. "We are proud that Illinois has been the first state to implement this program in schools statewide. It takes all of us working together to protect our children."

In November, Child Lures prevention program creator and child personal safety expert Ken Wooden visited numerous Illinois schools, meeting with students, teachers and parents to help usher in the new program.

The Child Lures Prevention school program teaches children life skills to keep them safe from sexual abuse, date rape, abduction, Internet crime, drugs and school violence. The program, which can be taught within the health curriculum annually, consists of a straightforward training video and Presenter's Instruction Guide with easy-to-follow scripted lesson plans, practice scenarios, follow-up activities, comprehension assessment, and tools for parental involvement. A student video with four realistic dramatizations allows students to clearly visualize just how easily they may be lured into dangerous situations

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