

# Fire prevention: Life-saving lessons

**BY KEVIN MERTZ**  
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WATSONTOWN —

One-hundred-fifty students in Watontown are learning potential life-saving lessons this week as part of the activities surrounding the national Fire Prevention Week.

Dressed in his turnout gear, Washingtonville Volunteer Fire Company Assistant Chief Jim Roberts sat in a classroom at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit's (CSIU) Watontown Children's Center Monday morning, and shared with the students the importance of not being alarmed if they encounter a firefighter in an emergency situation.

Roberts' wife, Jessica Roberts, is a teacher at the center. Throughout the day, she said her husband would



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Jim Roberts, an assistant chief with the Washingtonville Fire Company, displayed a smoke alarm during a presentation Monday at CSIU's Watontown Children's Center. Students and staff looking on included, from left, Kaia Cole, Amanda Egemonu, Blaine Rupert and Dale Keister.



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**Students at the Watsonstown Children's Center received a fire-safety lessons from Washingtonville Fire Company Assistant Chief Jim Roberts, right.**

## Prevention

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be speaking to 150 students enrolled in the center's Pre-K Counts, Head Start, Early Intervention and 5-Star programs.

"This is so kids know not to be afraid of firefighters," she said. "They should go to them and not run away from them."

In conjunction with Fire Prevention Week, Jessica said students at the center will be learning various safety lessons throughout the week.

Those lessons will include learning how to escape dangerous situation and lessons on which electric items are safe to touch.

"We will work with them on who the safe helpers in our community are," Jessica added.

Both she and Jim noted that the students generally enjoy the fire prevention lessons.

"The kids really get excited about it," Jessica said.

"We have a couple that are unsure, scared. "Those are the kids we want to target."

"I'm coming in, giving a verbal presentation, letting (the kids) see some of the equipment," Jim said. "Although there's a lot of scary equipment, don't be

scared. We are just a normal person on the inside."

In addition to showing the equipment worn by firefighters, he talked to the children about the many things volunteer firefighters do.

"Just the other day, I had to help carry a guy out of a creek," Jim said, to the children.

He explained that the man was involved in an automobile crash, which firefighters also respond to.

"We come in the big shiny trucks with the flashing lights," Jim said, to the children. "That's just to carry all the equipment... Don't run from (firefighters). They're there to help you."

In addition to the lessons being taught this week, Jessica said fire prevention activities will continue throughout the month.

On Oct. 25, volunteers with the Warrior Run Area Fire Department will bring their trucks to the center for the children to check out.

In addition to the fire department, Jessica said other organizations which work in the community will be invited to bring their vehicles for the children to get an up-close look at.

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