



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

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## **Crime Stoppers of Houston to Launch Virtual Social Discussions & Critical Safety Classes while Social Distancing in Response to COVID-19**

**Anonymous Tip Line Remains Open 24/7 During this Uncertain Time**

**HOUSTON** (March 19, 2020) – Given the growing concerns regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus), Crime Stoppers of Houston, is updating its practices to include the launch of **virtual safety presentations** to ensure parents who must homeschool, teachers looking for continuing educations, students who will spend more time online, community members and more receive critical safety information. Over the next weeks, Crime Stoppers will respect all calls for **social distancing** while aggressively investing in the communities across our city, state and country that we serve.

“This is an absolutely critical time. As parents, we are faced with working from home while potentially homeschooling. Children across the country are finding their lives and scheduled completely changed. The elderly are frightened. Markets are crashing. Businesses are closing.” says CEO Rania Mankarious. “All these things create ripe opportunities for victimization. For months, Crime Stoppers has had waiting lists for much of its safe school and safe community programming. Now we are bringing it straight to homes and offering resources for all. We are excited to face these dark times with information that is powerful and timely.”

### **Families and Schools**

Since 1997, Crime Stoppers of Houston has been working with students, teachers and parents addressing all things related to the safety of children. Our Safe School Institute will continue to offer the following presentations, as well as many others, through video conference and zoom meetings all free of charge:

#### **- For Parents**

- **Parent’s Guide to Cyber Safety:** Discusses potential online dangers, cyber-crime trends, popular social media and gaming platforms, as well as tricks youth use to hide social media interactions from parents.
- **be nice. (Mental Health) - Parents/Educators:** Emphasizes the significance of mental health in adolescent and how parents and educators can identify signs and symptoms, when and where to seek professional help, and protocol for handling dangerous situations such as potential suicide.
- **Keeping Students Busy During Social Distancing:** Gives valuable tips and tricks on how to keep students busy and SAFE during social distancing. Resources for the entire family will be given.
- **Human Trafficking - Adults:** Discusses current human trafficking trends, signs of trafficking, and how to report. *This presentation will also be offered in Spanish.*
- **How to Talk to your Teen About Human Trafficking:** Discusses how to talk to your teen about human trafficking including how to approach the conversation, what questions to ask, what information to share (based on age), real cases and what resources are available.



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### - For Students

- **Cyber Safety – Tween/Teen:** Teaches tween and teenage students how to respond appropriately when exposed to inappropriate content. Presenter addresses dangers of posting terroristic threats, digital footprint, consequences of revealing personal information, grooming techniques used by predators and cyberbullying.
- **be nice. (Mental Health) - Elementary:** Teaches elementary students how to be inclusive, accept their peers and themselves while practicing and reinforcing anti-bullying best practices. Through a four-part action plan, students are taught to notice those around them, invite change, challenge themselves and others to be kind and be empowered to take action.
- **be nice. (Mental Health) - Teen:** Presentation will teach middle and High School students how to recognize signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety while destigmatizing mental illness. Through a four-part action plan, students are taught to notice those around them, invite change, challenge themselves and others to be kind and be empowered to take action.
- **Human Trafficking - Teen:** Defines human trafficking and provides statistics and information on traffickers. A video depicting a high school student being lured is used to show the signs and tools given on how to notice and report suspicious and concerning behaviors.

### - For Teachers and School Administrators

- **Parent and Educator's Guide to Cyber Safety:** Discusses potential online dangers, cyber-crime trends, popular social media and gaming platforms, and online monitoring tools to assist in keeping our youth safe while using the internet.
- **be nice. (Mental Health) - Parents/Educators:** Emphasizes the significance of mental health in adolescence and how parents and educators can identify signs and symptoms, when and where to seek professional help, and protocol for handling dangerous situations such as potential suicide.

### - For the Community

- **COVID-19 Tips and Scams:** Addressing COVID-19 safety tips and scams to look out for. *This presentation will also be offered in Spanish.*
- **Social Isolation and Situational Awareness:** Discusses the importance of staying aware of your surroundings while in social isolation. A look at increased crime risks during this unique time.
- **Crime Victim's Rights and Murderabilia:** Presentation will discuss Victim's Rights and "Murderabilia" with national expert Andy Kahan. Real life artifacts from known serial killers will be shared. True Crime on a whole new level.
- **Human Trafficking - Adults:** Presentation will discuss current human trafficking trends, signs of trafficking, and how to report. Some content is graphic. *This presentation will also be offered in Spanish.*
- **Animal Safety:** Presentation will discuss animal abuse and neglect, the prevalence of the issue, ways to report, and the link between animal abuse and criminal violence, as well as how COVID-19 is affecting the animal community and cover ways you can help during this time.



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These important social conversations will begin on Monday, March 23rd. An online calendar and registration can be found at [www.crime-stoppers.org](http://www.crime-stoppers.org). To schedule a separate presentation specifically for your community, group or school, please contact Safe School Institute Manager Jenna Fondren at [jfondren@crime-stoppers.org](mailto:jfondren@crime-stoppers.org). All classes offered free.

Additionally, the **Crime Stoppers of Houston anonymous Tip Line will remain open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. Call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 713-222-TIPS(8477), submit information via our website [www.crime-stoppers.org](http://www.crime-stoppers.org) or by using our mobile app called Crime Stoppers of Houston, which is available in over 20 languages.

If you are a victim of crime needing assistance during this time, please contact Crime Stoppers Director of Victim Services Andy Kahan at [akahan@crime-stoppers.org](mailto:akahan@crime-stoppers.org).

Crime Stoppers also wants to hear from you. Email your safety concerns to [info@crime-stoppers.org](mailto:info@crime-stoppers.org). A member of the Crime Stoppers team will be in touch to better assist you. You are also encouraged to follow the organization on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to keep informed on all things safety related, as well as other community activities and additional resources that might be helpful to you and your families.

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