



HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ALERT

DATE: June 4, 2010
SUBJECT: CHILD SAFETY

An email has been making the rounds recently describing a possible child abduction attempt in a Gwinnett County neighborhood near the Mall of Georgia.

NOTE: *I have been in contact with the Gwinnett County Police Department and they are not able to confirm this incident, stating that there is no report of it on file. Regardless of the legitimacy of this specific claim, with summertime here and the kids out of school, its usefulness as a safety reminder is entirely valid.*

The gist of the email is as follows: The incident reportedly occurred at the pool area of Olde Peachtree Townhomes in Lawrenceville, where several girls aged 13 and under were present, with one parent. A grey/blue Chevy Astro minivan arrived at the location, occupied by a "skinny, rough-looking," white female, a white male, and a Hispanic male, ages unknown. The Hispanic male stayed in the back of the van, while the woman and other man asked one of the kids to open the gate, stating that they forgot their key. Once inside, they immediately started asking the girls how old they were and if they were alone. They made small talk while swimming to get the kids comfortable, and then told them they had lots of inflatable rafts in their van and asked the girls to go get them. The kids said no, and the parent that was present realized something wasn't right and called her husband. When he arrived the strangers immediately left the pool area. The Hispanic male came from the back of the van and jumped in the driver's seat while the couple jumped in and they all took off quickly. The assumption is that the man was in the back of the van waiting for a kid to follow the woman's prompt to come get the rafts so he could snatch them.

- **Whether this account is true or not, scenarios like this are good ones to run by your children in a comfortable setting, just to get them thinking and to give you the opportunity to talk to them about how they should react. Help them understand that bad guys (and girls) come in all forms, and they will say anything to win their trust.**
- **Ensure that children are supervised at all times by an adult.**
- **If your neighborhood has a pool or amenities area, make sure that everyone understands the rules; most neighborhoods allow only residents and their accompanied guests on the premises. Do not give strangers access to these places.**
- **If someone is acting suspiciously, get a good description of the person(s) and vehicle, and then dial 9-1-1 so a Deputy can investigate.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Deputy Stephen Wilbanks
Crime Prevention Officer
Hall County Sheriff's Office
610 Main St. SW
Gainesville, GA 30501
770-533-7674
swilbanks@hallcounty.org