

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

**E9-1-1 Institute
9-1-1 for Kids**

Remarks by
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Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau
Federal Communications Commission

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Capitol Hill – Area 2
Small Reflecting Pool
Between D St. NE
& Constitution Avenue
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Thank you, Greg, for your kind introduction. And thank you, Tim, for your leadership and dedication as the 9-1-1forKids International Chairman. It is a pleasure to be with all of you, (especially you kids!) this morning, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to talk to you about what the Federal Communications Commission (the FCC) is doing for 9-1-1 emergency and public safety communications. The 9-1-1 Institute and their 9-1-1forKids program play a very important part in kicking-off the 2011 National 9-1-1 Education Month in April, and we always look forward to working with Greg and the team in the National 9-1-1 Coalition on this educational effort.

Most of the emergency response to 9-1-1 calls for help happens in your hometown police, fire departments, and ambulances so it's important for us to work together in an effort to make our homes, our communities and our nation, safe places to live and work.

We realize that what happens at a U.S. government agency like the FCC may seem far away from what you are learning and having fun doing everyday, but much of what we do at the FCC and in its Public Safety and Homeland

Security Bureau has a very important impact on the way you can call and talk to 9-1-1 when you need help.

As Chief of the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, it is my job to help my team make sure people can call 9-1-1 and that 9-1-1 can answer the calls made, especially the calls from kids who need help either for themselves or for friends or family members. So we work emergency responders, including the people who answer 9-1-1 calls (also called emergency operators, or dispatchers), the police, sheriff's offices, fire departments, hospitals, and ambulances.

Under the leadership of the FCC's Chairman, Julius Genachowski, we do our very best to help your states, counties, cities, and towns improve the response of your local police officers, firefighters and ambulances in responding to your calls for help. Yes – even kids like yourselves – if you find yourself in an emergency situation, you can provide important information and assistance in helping 9-1-1 in your communities tell police officers, firefighters or ambulance workers when they are coming to provide protection, medical care, and assistance to your

family members, yourselves, or friends who need help as quickly as possible. Reasons you could have to call 9-1-1 may include a fire, a break-in, or when a grand-parent, parent, or other family member falls, or gets so sick that they need to get to a hospital very quickly. We want you and your family to be safe, so we're here to make sure you know exactly what to do when you call 9-1-1!

Some of the most helpful 9-1-1 calls can come from young people like you when an older family member is unable to make the call for help. All of you – even if you are not yet five years old – can learn when to call for help in emergencies. Dialing 9-1-1 is the fastest way you can get help for someone else or yourself, and it's important to remember that 9-1-1 should be used only when you have an emergency.

Just over one month ago, a seven-year old first grader, Justin, was visiting his aunt near St. Louis, Missouri. When it looked like his aunt suddenly fell asleep, he got scared when he could not wake her up. He called his mother first but couldn't reach her. Then he called 9-1-1 and gave the operator his aunt's name, age, and address. His aunt had

had a seizure. Justin had learned from his mother how to call 9-1-1 when he was only three years old.

And last year in Indiana, Savannah, a five-year old girl, called 9-1-1 from a cell phone when she thought her father was having a heart attack. He could hardly breathe or speak. She stayed on the line ten minutes, providing her home address and responding to questions from the 9-1-1 call taker, so that a medical team could come directly to her house and help her father.

Also recently, in Indiana, a four-year old boy called 9-1-1 to help his mother who fell going up the stairs and became unconscious. He knew where to find her cell phone and called 9-1-1. The young man, named Alex, had learned to dial 9-1-1 and provide the phone number, his house address, and to stay on the line by learning a song that he and his mother practiced together only nine days before she fell. Alex had not even begun kindergarten when he had to dial 9-1-1 to save his mother.

Yes, by learning to dial 9-1-1 and what to tell 9-1-1 in emergency situations, you can help your family and friends and yourselves when there is an emergency.

Today's 9-1-1forKids program that Greg Rohde and the E9-1-1 Institute have set up for you today will help you learn more about how to call 9-1-1 and what to do when you are on the phone with 9-1-1

I would like to talk a little more about what we at the FCC do to help you and your families by making sure that your 9-1-1 calls are delivered and that police officers, firefighters and ambulances can respond quickly and to the right location to provide help when you need it.

First, the FCC has set up a web page for young people to learn about communications, and especially communications for emergencies, particularly on calling 9-1-1 for help. The web page is called KidsZone and you can click on the cartoon cat picture near the bottom of the FCC's webpage at fcc.gov to find out more about KidsZone. I suggest you and your parents sit down together and look at this web page.

Compared to the time when you could make a 9-1-1 call only from your house or a landline telephone or a payphone booth – yes, a phone booth in an airport or train station, or outside a 7-11 or McDonalds that you had to put coins in to a make a call ! – there are now many more ways to make 9-1-1 calls. The FCC and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau are working on new ways to make reaching 9-1-1 even easier with these new tools.

Today, well over one-half of 9-1-1 calls are made from mobile phones or cell phones. So the FCC makes sure that the phone company can send the location of a 9-1-1 call to the emergency call-taker when a 9-1-1 call is made from a mobile phone. This location, however, is not a home or apartment address, but what we call a “geographic location” that is within a land area that may include several houses or buildings. That is why it is so important for you to learn to provide a house or street address, especially when calling 9-1-1 from an apartment or condo building, or the name of a school or other address whenever you might have to dial 9-1-1. It is important for you and your family members to learn together what 9-1-1 in your hometown is capable of providing today. Many states, counties, and communities

have webpages that you and your families can look at to learn what 9-1-1 can and cannot do now. Please take the time to sit down with your parents and learn more about 9-1-1 in your hometown.

Another important thing I want to tell you is that it is very important to remember that as of today, you may be surprised to find out that you cannot send text messages to 9-1-1 for help. Even though many of you and your brother and sisters, may send your friends and other people text messages, you cannot send a text message to 9-1-1 if you need help, nor can you send photos or videos to 9-1-1. You can send a text message to your family or friends saying that you are in trouble, but you cannot send a text message to 9-1-1. So remember, at this time, 9-1-1 can only receive voice calls for help.

To help solve this problem, the FCC is currently working on ways to help you reach 9-1-1 in the future by sending messages and pictures in asking for emergency help. We are working with states, communities, phone companies, and public safety groups, such as the E9-1-1

Institute on how best to begin reaching 9-1-1 with these new technologies.

One really exciting thing about 9-1-1 being able to use new tools is that it will also help people with disabilities reach 9-1-1 when they need help. For example, one day a deaf or hard-of-hearing person will be able to communicate with 9-1-1 by sending text messages or real-time pictures or videos. This would be a life-saving tool for those who are unable to hear or speak.

I hope my remarks have helped you know how important 9-1-1 is and how very important it is for kids to learn how and when to call 9-1-1 for help. Thank you again for having me here today to spend a few minutes with you. It has been a pleasure to be a part of the 9-1-1forKids festivities, and I hope you have fun at this kick-off celebration with the games and mascots today.