



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. CHARLES COUNTY POLICE GET NEW TOOL TO HELP CHILDREN EXPERIENCING AUTISM EVENTS

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – St. Charles County Police say it's a common problem.

"We get calls quite frequently for kids with autism who are out of control, and their parents are afraid they'll hurt themselves or someone else," says Sergeant Dan Asher, the Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator.

According to Autism Speaks, discomfort caused by autism-related sensory difficulties can sometimes result in extreme agitation or uncontrollable outbursts if not calmed by certain types of visual, auditory, or tactile engagement.

To help solve the problem, The Synapsory, an area nonprofit that serves children who are struggling with autism-related behavioral issues, is donating 100 "calming kits" to St. Charles County Police. The kits include a collection of toys and other items – such as pop-it bubbles or soft lights that change colors – that are designed to soothe extreme behaviors sometimes caused by autism.

"Each item in the calming kit is designed to bring sensory regulation and calm to the child," says Terrie Desloge, founder of The Synapsory. "We've had feedback from other police departments we've donated to, who said this has helped them de-escalate situations."

Representatives of The Synapsory will donate the calming kits in person 9:30 a.m. Aug. 31 at the St. Charles County Police Department, 101 Sheriff Dierker Court, O'Fallon, MO 63366.

"The calming kits will be a great tool for helping these kids that we didn't have before now," Sgt. Asher says.

"Whenever we're called to a situation involving one of these kids, we want to make sure they're OK and have what they need to feel safe and calm," says Officer Joe Strehl, who helped coordinate the calming kits donation.

For more information about the St. Charles County Police Department, visit sccmo.org/Police.

For more information about The Synapsory, go to thesynapsory.org.

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About St. Charles County:

St. Charles County, Missouri, founded in 1812, is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri. With a population of 405,262, it is the state's third largest county. It is home to 21 scenic county parks of which three are in reserve, encompassing 4,509 acres.

With one of the largest economies in the state, St. Charles County is home to multinational companies including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County Government has more than 1,170 employees in more than 30 departments and offices who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.