

# 'You Must Do Something'

## *Active Shooter Training Comes To Lexington Schools*

**BY HARRISON MINES**

"As a conservative estimate, every one minute results in one injury and one fatality," Jason White, Lexington City Schools director of operations and student services, said to a full cafeteria at Lylburn Downing Middle Friday.

That morning, Lexington faculty and staff assembled to participate in divisionwide ALICE active shooter training.

White, leading the training presentation, shared many grave statistics associated with violent intruder attacks. According to research, roughly 60 percent of shooter attacks conclude before police can respond, making the minutes before law enforcement intervention critical in active shooter

*See Training, page 4*



PARTICIPANTS in ALICE active shooter training demonstrate counter tactics against violent intruders. Lexington City Schools' director of operations and student services, Jason White (standing), instructed volunteers how to weigh down the limbs of a "suspect," a member of the Lexington Police Department. (Harrison Mines photo)

# Training

*continued from page 1*

situations. White explained that history has shown staying put and hiding in such scenarios is no longer the best option.

“We have to be prepared to help ourselves and our students,” he said.

With the assistance of officers from the Lexington Police Department and Rockbridge County Sheriff’s Office, division employees participated in educational and hands-on ALICE training. ALICE response training stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate and is designed to be a proactive approach to increase odds of survival during emergencies in any setting.

Lexington joins Rockbridge County and Buena Vista as the last area school division to undergo the active shooter training. While the other two divisions’ training was led by their respective school resource officers, White was instrumental in bringing the program to Lexington in his new position of director of operations and student services. For Lexington City Schools, ALICE first begins with training for employees and is to be later introduced to students and families in different formats.

“We’re being very careful with our students,” White said during the presentation. “The biggest part we are teaching them is to listen to your teacher, so they will look to you.”

During training, participants were taught the non-sequential steps of ALICE and learned what tactics to use in the event of an active shooter situation and when it is best to use them. Because each environment in a school building is different, White explained, employees must use information they learn in the “Alert” step of an emergency to decide their action.

“[Counter] is the most controversial aspect of ALICE,” he said. White explained administration decided it was not appropriate to teach the K-8 Lexington students counteraction methods; rather they chose to impress that students follow the lead of their teacher in the evacuation step to an off-campus rally point. In the future, students will participate



ABOVE, a Lexington police officer role-plays as an active shooter in a Lylburn Downing hallway as employees practice emergency evacuation. AT LEFT, Miranda Edwards volunteers to demonstrate a counter tactic against Officer Shane Hartbarger of the Lexington Police Department. Edwards was instructed to use her bodyweight to bring Hartbarger to the ground. (Harrison Mines photos)

in evacuation and lockdown drills that emphasize traveling to the off-site meeting point when safe.

“It is not fighting,” White said of counter methods. “It’s disrupting their mental or physical process.”

Hurled objects, screaming or other visual distractions are effective counter attempts, White explained. Anything that interrupts a shooter’s cognition can take away his or her opportunity to find a target. Swarming a shooter is an absolute last resort, he added.

The hands-on portion of training proceeded with five scenarios in the lower hallway of the middle school with a “skilled shooter,” portrayed

by Lexington officers with Nerf guns. Each scenario varied in the number of ALICE steps that could be applied to the role-play, beginning only with a traditional lockdown. Staff quickly realized inaction was ineffective as the “fatalities” among participants were high when they merely hid in plain sight from the pretend shooter.

As scenarios continued, employees barricaded doors with furniture, evacuated through nearest exits and “countered” the intruder by throwing bright yellow stress balls in their direction. By participants employing more steps of ALICE in each scenario, the “hits” from the Nerf gun eventually totaled zero.

“I think it went really well,” Lexington Superintendent Rebecca Walters told *The News-Gazette*, reflecting on the morning of training. “We’re very thankful for [White] and our law enforcement officers for the work they’ve done.”

“When faced with danger, you must do something,” White said to employees at the conclusion of the training session. In closing, he left employees with a quote, borrowing from Theodore Roosevelt: “In a moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The next best thing is the wrong thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing.”

# Narcan Initiative Saving Lives In County

By **HARRISON MINES**

Rockbridge County deputies are now equipped with Narcan, an emergency treatment for narcotic drug overdose, courtesy of a grant initiative by the Virginia Department of Health. So far, the new practice has saved two lives in the span of a week, the Sheriff's Office reported.

Narcan, a brand name of the drug naloxone, is a nasal spray administered to reverse the effects of opiate and opioid drug overdose. Along with many other states in the country, Virginia has seen an uptick in the number of fatal overdoses from such substances. The Virginia Office of the Medical Examiner announced that more than 1,484 deaths resulted from overdoses in 2018.

With such grave statistics in mind, members of the Sheriff's Office sought to address the local tragedies of overdose by providing staff with the life-saving drug.

"It's highly possible that someone will call [911] for an overdose and we will already have a deputy in the area that could get there quicker," Rockbridge Chief Deputy Tony McFaddin told the News-Gazette.

Virginia lawmakers recently passed legislation that seeks to encourage individuals to report drug or alcohol overdoses to 911 without fearing that they will be prosecuted if they themselves also possess drugs or alcohol. If the party offers full cooperation with law enforcement, individuals who responsibly call emergency dispatch to report another's overdose

have a defense against prosecution under Virginia law.

"Hopefully, with the passage of these laws, more responsible individuals will also act quickly to save victims of accidental overdoses," McFaddin said.

The Sheriff's Office discussed the option to supply staff with Narcan for a while, McFaddin explained, with newly elected Sheriff Steve Funkhouser leading the initiative. The Department of Health, in their involvement with the agency and the Rockbridge Regional Jail, was found to be the appropriate agency to partner with for the Narcan grant. After completing staff training in January, an initial supply of 60 units of Narcan was provided to the Sheriff's Office, equipping all 43 members

of the agency with a dose on their person.

Since deputies received training with Narcan last month, officers responded to two incidents in a week timeframe in which they used Narcan to reverse life-threatening overdoses. One incident was in the Goshen area of the county, the other involved treating a passenger of a tractor trailer on Interstate 81, the Sheriff's Office reported.

In addition to the benefits to community members, the Sheriff's Office decided to take part in the Narcan grant in the interest of officers' safety.

"Carrying Narcan is also about more than saving the lives of the general public," Sheriff Funk-



See **Narcan**, page 4

# Narcan

---

*continued from page 1*

houser said in a statement. “It also protects our deputies that may be accidentally exposed to dangerous synthetic opioids during their public safety duties. There have been multiple incidents across the country where law enforcement was treated with the medication after being exposed to fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 100 times more potent than morphine.”

Substances like fentanyl can be disrupted into the air when officers seize controlled substances or investigate environments with powerful drugs. Merely inhaling the potent drug can result in tragedy.

“Unfortunately, it has become a two-officer process,” McFaddin said of the dangers of handling evidence, adding there are new policies in place that require extra care of seemingly benign drug evidence. The addition of Narcan is an added measure to ensure the handling of controlled substances is secure for officers. Support staff at the Sheriff’s Office received the same training as officers, with cartridges strategically placed throughout the building in the event of an emergency.

“This is an ongoing program with no signs of ending,” McFaddin told the News-Gazette. Under the terms of the grant, the Sheriff’s Office entered an agreement with the Health Department in which the supply of Narcan is replenished routinely based on monthly use of the units.

In the same way police officers can happen upon lethal drugs, friends, family or neighbors of drug users face the same danger of accidentally interacting with substances. Carrying Narcan, the Sheriff’s Office believes, is a way to address the crisis of opioids and opiates by being ready to impede the tragedy of fatal overdose.

“There’s nothing controversial about saving a life,” McFaddin said.

# Missing Teen Finally Identified

## *Chesterfield Police Now Looking For Her Killer*

BY HARRISON MINES

“I never stopped looking for her,” Kim Atkins said of her sister, Christy Lynn Floyd.

Floyd, a young woman who grew up in Lexington, was last seen at the age of 16 in June of 1986 in Richmond. After over three decades, authorities announced last Wednesday that the remains of a Jane Doe recovered at a

landfill in Chesterfield County on Aug. 7, 1986, were finally identified as Floyd through remarkable forensic science.

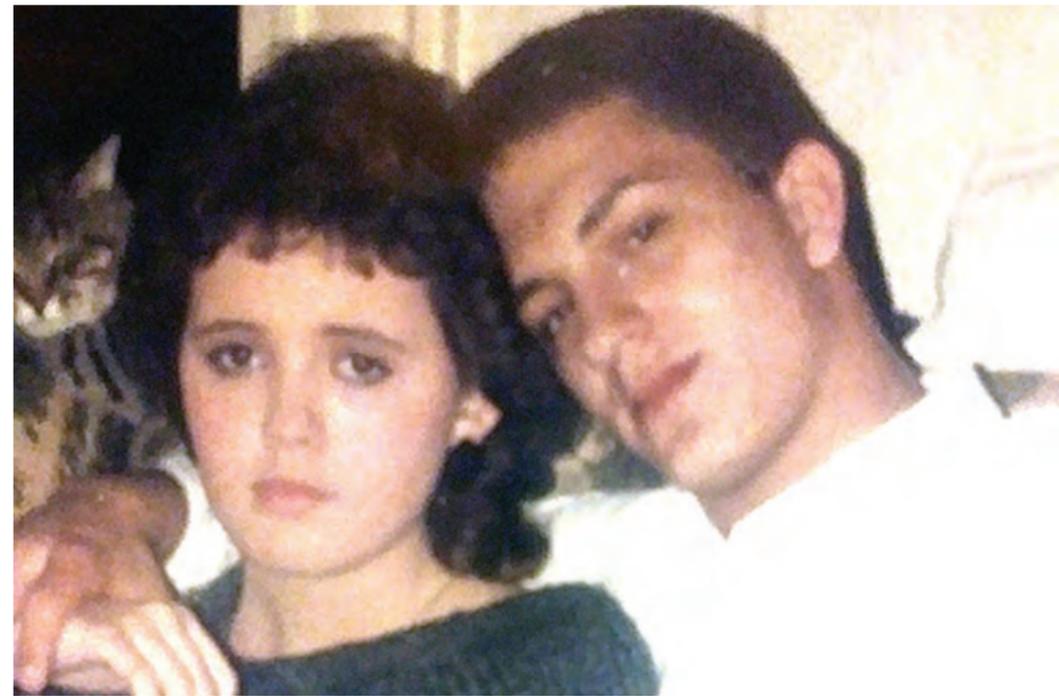
“I know it sounds crazy, but I always thought she would come home,” Floyd’s sister, Kim Atkins, told *The News-Gazette*. “I always thought no news was good news.”

Atkins, 52, who now resides in Augusta County, said Sunday she and her sister were born in Lexington. Close in age, she and Floyd relocated with their parents to Richmond for about two years, before their mother and father split up, leading the sisters back to the Rockbridge area under the care of their grandmother. Their stay with

their grandmother didn’t last long, however, and the sisters were handed over to foster care soon after.

“It was a really rough first couple of years,” Atkins said of their initial foster families, until the pair was situated with a “really wonderful” foster home in Natural Bridge for about eight years.

See **Teen**, page 8



CHRISTY LYNN FLOYD is shown with an unknown male in this photo released by the Chesterfield County Police Department last week. He was not the person who was her boyfriend at the time of her disappearance in 1986.

*continued from page 1*

“Even though we had everything we needed and then some,” Atkins said, “We always wanted to be with our own family.”

Atkins and her sister were often teased by schoolmates for receiving foster care, she added. Feeling on the fringes, the two ran away at ages 14 and 13. Social Services intervened, Atkins said, and she and Floyd were placed in the Lexington Presbyterian group home formerly located on Main Street. With little supervision at the group home, Atkins said the two took advantage of their newfound freedom. The sisters were ultimately separated and placed in juvenile detention centers in Staunton and South Boston.

At 15, Atkins took off to reconnect with her mother in Richmond. She hitchhiked to her new home and, after about a year of separation, she was able to get back in touch with her sister.

“I longed for us to be together,” Atkins said. “I had felt like her mom.”

“The city kind of swallowed us,” she said of Richmond’s difference from their hometown.

As the sisters settled into their new life in the city, Floyd, then 16, took on a boyfriend who was 18.

“I woke up one morning and she was gone,” Atkins explained. Floyd had run away to be with her boyfriend. Their mother called Floyd’s boyfriend’s family and threatened to press charges, leading a family member to return Floyd to her home that evening.

Atkins told *The News-Gazette* the situation upset their mother and embarrassed Floyd. Floyd was told to “lay down” to calm the tension in the home. Atkins said she went to check on Floyd in their bedroom at that point. After waiting up for Floyd the night prior, Atkins offered to get her sister something to

eat. Floyd agreed, she said, and Atkins walked across the street to get her sister a meal.

She returned 30 minutes later to find her mother asleep, the back and alley doors open, and no sign of her sister.

“That day was the end of my world,” Atkins recalled.

Though an initial missing persons’ report was filed for Floyd, the Richmond Police Department mishandled her case from “day one,” Atkins said. Desperate for answers, Atkins said she worked for years to bring attention to Floyd’s disappearance; putting her photo on milk cartons, submitting her missing person’s report to the television show “America’s Most Wanted,” and seeking the help of a private detective.

Unknown to Atkins and her family, severed human remains at a Chesterfield County landfill were discovered by workers only two months after Floyd’s disappearance.

Following the worker’s discovery at the time, Chesterfield police were contacted and later recovered the remains for transport to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for analysis.

A portion of the remains was sent to DNA Labs International in Florida, which developed a DNA profile of the unknown victim. Last year, detectives in the police department’s Unsolved/Major Investigations Group sought the services of a DNA technology company in Reston that specializes in DNA phenotyping, which is the process of predicting physical appearance and ancestry from unidentified DNA evidence, and genetic genealogy.

The company used the DNA information to create a “Snapshot” to predict ancestry, eye color, hair color, skin color, freckling, and face shape. By combining these attributes of appearance, a snapshot composite was produced depicting what the unknown



CHRISTY LYNN FLOYD is shown with one of her nieces, in a photo also released by Chesterfield County police last week.

woman may have looked like at 25 years old and with an average body-mass index of 22.

This snapshot was also useful in conducting traditional genealogy research, in which authorities were presented with suggested descendency and location information of the victim. Possible location connections of the victim included Buena Vista.

The snapshot was publicized by Chesterfield police March 2 and Atkins said she saw the photograph and knew instantly, “That’s her.”

The Chesterfield detectives then worked to connect with Floyd’s family, and Atkins’ son, Dustin, provided a DNA sample to police, producing a match with his aunt. For confirmation, Floyd’s father submitted a DNA sample, producing a paternal match with his daughter.

“The bad part is, she was found two miles away from my house,” Atkins said. Law enforcement stated the victim’s foot was found with rubber band bracelets around the ankle and pink toenail polish. Atkins said she knew her sister to wear that type of ankle bracelet.

“We had [painted] our toenails the night before,” she

said. “I would have known it was her.”

Case files of Floyd’s disappearance have been lost by the Richmond Police Department, Chesterfield Police Capt. Jay Thornton told *The News-Gazette* last week. Thornton reported there are no apparent leads in the investigation at this time.

Atkins said she is dedicated to now working with the Chesterfield Police Department to find out what happened to her sister. The officers involved with the investigation, Atkins added, will forever be a part of her family for their kindness and excellent police work.

“My hope is, after 34 years, that she will get some type of justice,” Atkins said. “She deserves that.”

Atkins described the loss of her sister as devastating to her whole family. Though her children didn’t know her sister, Atkins said she feels they know Floyd, having continued to celebrate her birthday through the years and putting up her photos around the holidays.

“I will be keeping her memory alive through my children, and even beyond them.”