

# Officers teach children to avoid abduction

## Union program offers advice on dealing with dangerous situations

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WHITEHALL ♦ The gym echoed with a deafening roar as the students told the members of the state correctional officers association they wouldn't be fooled by adults into being abducted.

Paul Brower, who leads the anti-abduction program, told the students on Friday how adults might try to lure them into dan-

ger by asking them if they want to see some puppies or listen to a CD or get some ice cream.

"They're trying to trick, hurt, maybe even kill kids. See what tricky people do?" he asked.

### Learning how to respond

But Brower told them that they have the power to say "no," to run away, to make noise and shout for help and to immediately go tell a trusted adult, like a parent or relative, a teacher or a police officer.

Just as importantly, they can take preventive action when playing outside their home or camping, or even going to a

bathroom: They can go with a buddy.

"These tricky people, they hate it when you use the buddy system. How are they going to steal more than one kid at a time?" he asked.

"Are you going to get tricked?"

"NOOOOOO!" came the response.

"You've got the power over the criminals?"

"YEEEEESSSSS!"

Helping get Brower's message across was David Martin, the program's other leader, who dressed up as Rudy the Fox and talked and danced with the students.

The children leaned over or hopped up to slap Rudy's paw as Rudy worked the audience, encouraging them to be clever like a fox to foil the criminals.

All the while, three correctional officers from Washington Correctional Facility in Comstock watched from the sidelines, until they were pulled onto the floor to sing along with Rudy.

### A labor of love

Officers Angelo Ross, Jonathan Stark and Tom St. Clair, who helped to photograph and fingerprint children after the

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ROB BARENDSE—THE POST-STAR

A student at Whitehall Central School is wary of Rudy the Fox, aka David Martin, as he works the crowd during an assembly Friday. Rudy is the mascot of a program that teaches kids to avoid abduction.