

\*Ukulele Music\*

Keith: Welcome to the LeeCoSchools Edcast #22 with Lee County Sheriff's Deputy, Corporal Pam Revels. I chatted with Corporal Revels because she is the premier School Resource Officer not just in Lee County, but the state of Alabama, and frankly one of the best in the country. After numerous tries, I finally was able to get her to sit down with me for a wide-ranging discussion about the SRO program, school safety, appropriate community response during an emergency, and various other topics. It was just a fantastic conversation and one that I'm so glad to have had. After listening to this, If you have any questions, comments, complaints, criticisms, compliments, colloquialisms, conundrums, or concerns, you can find us on the web at [www.lee.k12.al.us/EdCast](http://www.lee.k12.al.us/EdCast), on Twitter and Instagram @LeeCoSchools, on Facebook at [facebook.com/leecoschools](https://facebook.com/leecoschools), we have our own little icon on the Lee County App which you can find in Google Play or the Apple App Store. Finally, you can email us at [edcast@lee.k12.al.us](mailto:edcast@lee.k12.al.us) Without further ado....Allons-y!

\*Funky Transition Music\*

Keith: so just to get started just to eat us into it just tell us a little bit about yourself your personal professional journey how you got to be here as an SRO for Lee County Schools listening to you talking Mrs. Rutherford and Mrs. Ivey it sounds like you've been here for a while they may for a while many and varied experiences that we won't get into for podcast purposes but just just give us a little bit just a little bit about yourself

Corporal Revels: well fourteen years ago I went to the sheriff's office and I wanted to be a reserve deputy and I filled out an application and they took a look at that application and they said well hey would you apply for regular deputy position I said okay well they helped me be a reserve deputy quicker and so anyway I went through the process and

Keith: what were you doing at the time before you became a deputy?

Corporal Revels: I was in school and working as a athletic trainer okay so it was just something I want to do on the side because a reserve deputy you don't get paid it's a volunteer position okay okay so it was just something I would do on the side so I applied and went through the process and about two weeks after my final interview with the sheriff he called me and sheriff Jones has a very awesome personality so he called me and he says hey Pam you know we we filled those positions that we had open and I said well that's great was I one of them and he said no but how about this we'd like for you come work with us we're gonna create you a position and you're gonna be a regular deputy sheriff like everybody else except for your main duties will be in the schools and and I'll never forget that conversation because I said back to him well what am I supposed to do because I didn't have a law enforcement officer in my school yeah you know as I was growing up we didn't even have a dare officer I didn't know anything about law enforcement so I said what am I gonna do and he said well I don't know we're figured out so that was 14 years ago Wow and since then we have been on a very successful journey at the Sheriff's

Office and with this thing that we call the SRO program or school resource officer school resource officer school resource officer yeah for me school resource deputy

Keith: so so you're essentially so does that make you then essentially Lee County's first SRO

Corporal Revels: they had they had had a program before I came in but they were looking to expand it and sort of organize it

Keith: formalize it

Corporal Revels: formalize it correct

Keith: I remember we didn't have we you know we didn't have any law enforcement in school when I was in school so I graduated in 2001 so just a couple of years before you get you started now I remember the 5th grade we had the DARE program and Sergeant Woodall was even after he was promoted he was still saying you know I'm have a few years later hey sergeant what I was lieutenant now that's like Columbo you're gonna stay you know lieutenant Columbo was always lieutenant Columbo you're always been my sergeant what else um so that was that was our main exposure to law enforcement I guess when I was in school back in back in the 90s back last century are you saying so you know I heard all of the stories about other school systems like in New York City you know all those big yankee cities that have the cops and the metal detectors and all that kind of stuff and I remember after Columbine and was that 98 when that happened there was there was a discussion I remember the discussion beginning of maybe we need to get metal detectors at our schools and stuff but the way our because I wasn't I was I went to school in Smith's Station and so the way our campus was set up it just was a wasn't really unless you're gonna build some serious fencing and sort of hey make it a fortress you weren't that wasn't a viable option really right and so I remember that discussion beginning when I was still in high school and I you know it was never resolved until after I graduated obviously so so you your entire career as a with the Lee County Sheriff's Department has been working in the schools for the most part

Corporal Revels: it has it has and I was very fortunate they sent me immediately to school resource officer training and I make fun of that today because I was actually certified as a SRO before I was even before I even went to the Academy and usually it happens the other way around right is they they really like for you to have and and I believe you need to have some experience before going into the schools I'm just very lucky that kind of happened to what happened for me but yeah I got a really good foundation with training from the National Association of school resource officers and that training has helped me pursue my goals and the things that I needed to do to get us where we're at here at Lee County in between those you know 14 years I think not knowing what this job was I really dove into it and it has become I tell folks my passion anybody knows me knows I love what I do and so from the beginning of not knowing anything to today I am on the board of directors for the National Association of school resource officers so I'm also an instructor I teach other new SROs through the base up and as your basic course and advanced and I'm even an instructor for CPTED which is crime prevention through Environmental Design okay and also president of the Alabama Association of school resource officers Wow I sit on several task force state task force and coming up in the near future I'm going to be named

region D governor's school safety task force administrator and I will be helping local counties with their school safety

Keith: to the county level surrounding Lee County

Corporal Revels: that's correct okay Wow so I say all that because from going from not knowing anything to where we are today it's it's it's looking back it's a it's a lot that we have done but it's because we've had the right people who who truly love what they're doing they love educating the kids they they want to make sure that they're safe and in doing all that we've got where we are today

Keith: well and think about that you just wanted to be a reserve officer without pay and here you are one of the premier SROs and the state and even in the country

Corporal Revels: well I use that loosely but I I've been around I bet I've been around a long time and people know they know who I am because I've been around and got my foot in hand and every

Keith: I watch college football every player is the best something in the country so you're one of the best SROs in the country that's what I'm willing to stick with it if I have Kirk Herbstreit know them to get away with it I'm gonna get

Corporal Revels: I appreciate that

Keith: this is weird how life works that way and that's not you know just goes to show you that sometimes the way it even when things aren't working out the way we think they are it's for the best

Corporal Revels: I tell people all the time it was 100% divine intervention this is this is where I was supposed to be doing yeah yes

Keith: and you know I've met you on a couple of occasions and you have the just from my interactions with you you know I think I can't think like you're out of central casting for for a a law enforcement officer to be in in a school that you're you're very kind and soft-spoken but I also know that I would get my butt kicked if I did anything wrong

Corporal Revels: well and I like to go and I tell this to my new SROs when I again I go back and I have to talk about my background you know where I went where I grew up because I grew up in a phenomenal home with mom and dad they didn't cuss drink they didn't smoke they I had more they gave me more of my wants than I had needs so I grew up very well and then when I took this position and I started where I started I think it it sort of brought me into this reality because I did not know there was children going without food ah I did not know there was children sleeping with no heat and weren't and there's some worse than that yeah um Ill reference this because I'll never forget one of the homes I went to in the very beginning in my career is doing a welfare check and I walked in and they had no floor and I was like well you know what if I had no floor and a barely one restroom that worked I was barely eating how

would I act at school yeah how would I act so you know when I'm dealing with our young people that's one of the first things out I'm gonna find out why why are they behaving the way they're behaving if it's in the negative way yeah is there like an ill intent behind their behavior and then if we find out what it is how can I help them resolve it because to me I think that's what I'm supposed to be doing yeah I'm not supposed to be cuffing and stuffin folks is it you know the good old cop shows that's not what I'm supposed to be doing right I supposed to be protecting and serving hmm and I always like tell folks and educating yeah that's what I'm supposed to be doing yeah and so we're just general everyday experience and you couple that with all the SRO training such as knowing what the teen brain is our young people at a certain age when adolescent kicks in so does the teen brain yeah and it operates much different so I need to know that right I need to know that if I come up and I start talking to a teen then I might be talking to them like this but because of their dynamic right then they may think I'm yelling at them yeah so I'll go in and maybe an octave lower mm-hmm you got to know about victim victimization trauma that our young people were going through every day aces adverse childhood experience and how that can affect their brain and how they act there's so many things that go along we just our teens and our young people growing up know that it's it's important than I know mm-hmm so I so I can help them rather than just say that's bad kid yeah

Keith: you have to be a part-time psychologist as well then

Corporal Revels: you need to know when these know some psychology yes you need to know and there's so many different things I call it de-escalation conflict resolution there's so many things that that can step into those rounds I'm not gonna take away from that four-year degree psychologist but yeah you do have to use certain techniques and have certain skills to operate if you want to be effective mm-hmm that's the difference you care about it if you care about it yeah no you can walk down the hallways with a badge and a gun and and and that's just what you do or if you want to do and like in my my basic class I like to think ah I can't if you want to be the good SRO here's what you need to do mm-hmm so there's so many things that um we can learn to make it better for the kids because that's what we're supposed to be doing mentoring guiding them helping them make really good decisions and sometimes it's all about educating them about the behavior for example if I have two kids in the office and we're talking with them and there may have been a bullying issue we can talk about what that means what is bullying right right and what is that versus harassment mm-hmm and what does that mean and sometimes what I found is when we educate them about what the behavior is it'll stop because now they understand what it means so they so they know they don't want to do that anymore mm-hmm so mentoring educating there's so many things that go along with what I do besides just the law enforcement piece

Keith: right yeah that's like the law enforcement part of it as kind of the takes a back seat almost to everything else I mean in in a way what right right because when you're on campus that sometimes the the least important part of your job it seems like

Corporal Revels: well it's in almost every step that I take and in its this position is one of the most diverse positions in law enforcement you're a mentor informal counselor you're that again I'm not

taking away from a four-year degree but you are educating through being maybe a guest speaker or just talking to somebody your that law enforcement officer and now we're we're look to help with emergency operation plans so you're the emergency manager not gonna take away from anybody like that but you dive into all these here's a personal

Keith: you're the person in the in the room you're you're the boots on the ground sort of speak and so like you're saying you're not taking away from everybody else but Lee County EMA isn't right there you are

Corporal Revels: that's right well I'm their liaison yeah so um and that's a nice part about me being on campus I reach out to EMA which after the sheriff's office I reach out to Department of Human Resources DHR reach out to mental health I mean so I can be like little pinnacle that helps the school with the needs that they may have to make that environment safe and help the children not only learn but to function in our everyday society

Keith: mm-hmm and so you know if anybody listening to this just in these first 15 minutes or so you've already dispelled the myth that SROs are just you know the position for the ones who are you know killing time to retirement or whatever you know I've read a little bit about it I know that there are some stereotypes out there correct doesn't the first 15 minutes or so you've already dispelled all of that because there's you can't just be out to be a good one you can't just be out there killing the time until retirement and being effective that's all right not not these days

Corproal Revels: yeah and you know when this first came about that was that was you know and in even for me as I have watched my classes they have evolved over the years when I first started teaching I had this type of dynamic and now I have a much different dynamic and and it's very it's been very interesting to see because I even mention that to my classes you know you had the retired on duties in the beginning and now I've got students who are SWAT members they were going in to work in the schools Wow totally different dynamic but that's what you've been and I think it goes back to what is the goal of each individual SRO program what do they want to do what do they want to see of it you know and if you have the right people in place and you give them right the right training you can have a very good program but I always go back to my leadership here in Lee County Sheriff Jay Jones he had a vision he put some people in place he makes sure that we stay trained and then you get the product that we have here we're very fortunate and then we have this tremendous partnership with the schools I'm go around all over the place and and I talk about our partnership and how we work together and there's people that say excuse me you do what I'm like yes and it's about working together and in trust they have to trust it when I tell them something I'm going to do something I do it but then again they got to trust that when I'm doing something I'm doing the right thing right so it's you know over time we've built that trust and we have what we have today

Keith: so I'm gonna circle back to a couple of things but the first thing I want to just get your take on because you said there's now a SWAT team member that's it so what would you say to those people

who say that this is you know sort of a militarization or almost a prisonization of the schools and you know what would your response be to those folks with those concerns

Corporal Revels: well in there there is that concern that putting this in your gonna cause more criminalization of the education system well and I and I go back to we should be doing more of the my day should consists more of the mentorship and the informal counseling doing the prevention piece instead of just response I mean because if I'm doing a good job in preventing the bullying if I'm doing a good job in preventing some of this other stuff then I don't have to resort to making that arrest by doing a good job of preventing a fight from happening I don't have to make an arrest so I should be doing a lot more prevention and a lot less response so in saying that that helps with that criminalization yeah um but we also the the positive piece is if they see me in there every day and they get to know me they understand I'm there to help them then if something was to happen when I come in and I'm talking to them about bullying it wouldn't seem punitive it would seem like oh that's just deputy Pam making sure I'm making good decisions and that's what we want them to understand yeah they will not just me but any law enforcement we want them to say hey they're here to help me not just take me to jail because that's not what we're all trying to do

Keith: yeah so I mean like when I was in school if you got in a fight you got to sent to the principal's office you got written up you got suspended or whatever with the increase of SROs in schools there have and I was reading online you know people arguing about how some of those things that just got sent to the principal's office gets you now sent to to booking is that is that true at all or is that sort of a just a misconception that people have

Corporal Revels: well I go back to how do you want your program mm-hmm how do you want your program because I can make an arrest every day at my school if I really wanted to with this little code we call disorderly conduct yeah but does that child really need because they said one little word does he need to go into the juvenile justice system okay so that's what we're facing and it all depends when you're the program and the standards of your program and here with us you're gonna see we don't do a lot of arrests we do the ones that we feel are necessary right necessary to keep our schools safe yeah and and I think you would find that we have very low arrest rates okay matter of fact I'm gonna say I haven't arrested anybody and it may be five years six years okay so it's very low because because you if you go back and ask that why you understand for example I had a young man one day I was walking in the hallway and he's outside the classroom with a teacher and the teacher was talking with him and she's like can you can you do something with him he's disturbing my class so I talked with him a few minutes and come to find out I just did disturbing the class because he didn't know how to do the math problem so instead of going up to the board and getting embarrassed he'd rather act out yeah is that any reason for him to be arrested right no it's about asking the right questions but then again there is that fine balance I'm there to make sure that those kids when they walk on that campus whether they're they're getting out of that vehicle that car or they're getting off that bus that they get right back in that vehicle or right back on that bus and they go home from where they've come I take that very seriously mm-hm and so yes if it's necessary to keep that environment safe yes yeah but we try to make sure we're doing more prevention so there's less of that okay um we also work on prevention as far as you

know sometimes you have internal threats sometimes you have external so we're the all the time working on prevention on whether its internal or its external

Keith: you're talking about the internal and external threats I mean so we're a rural county we have all of our schools are in relatively rural areas the layouts of those schools are pretty well open and so how do you handle the securing such a porous campus like like we have at all of our schools how do you how do you handle that

Corporal Revels: and in we're not the only ones you and what we have mostly here are what we call open campuses yeah um and there's very few in the state that actually have a closed campus I mean that there's no but maybe one way in one way out and they have to have special doors for fire so we're not unique in that but it does offer some challenges when it comes to security but that's where being that good SRO if you stay up with what you're supposed to be doing you go in and you provide training for your schools so not only are you the eyes and ears but so are they and you know everybody may have a special responsibility to it hey there's a door right there so here's your special responsibility so there's so many different things that we can do when it comes to that but the biggest thing is that a talked about it but you gotta train on it yeah yes

Keith: the teachers are sort of your auxiliary eyes and ears to make sure that absolutely can be at all even the students

Corporal Revels: yeah that's correct and and that's one thing we try to do over the years is elicit the kids to be a part of this thing that we call safety right it's their responsibility too it's not only just mine and the principal and assistant principal but it's also the staff the entire staff it's our bus drivers our custodians it's everybody so we try to like broaden that out so somebody see something hear something know something they need to come and tell just like the kids so and your kids they know that they know everything that's going on in that campus they know if somebody's not supposed to be there versus somebody who he is so if we train them right to recognize certain things and come and tell the right people then you have expanded your what I like to call surveillance over your whole campus

Keith: when we first wanted to try and try and get with you to talk on the podcast it was shortly after the parkland yes and so this is going to be coming out about the time of the one-year anniversary of this in February and so shortly after that you were the subject of a New York Times article for the for the most part and so there's an example in here of there you got a report about a guy in camouflage carrying a gun near one of our campuses yes can you tell us a little bit about because the story doesn't really go into it much can you tell us a little bit about what was going on with that situation

Corporal Revels: and that was that was just one of those days that they just happen to be here and

Keith: oh, you didn't pay somebody to come in to add a little drama to your interview

Corporal Revels: let me tell you something I'd have a better idea than that we just kind of sort of I started out with a phone interview at a phone interview and then later on the in the day they called me back and said hey we enjoyed your phone interview so much we'd like to come down and visit you at your place so that's how they got here okay so they came down and we really took we took them all over the county down Loachapoka we took them to Beauregard then we took them up to Smith to show them sort of how we did business as an SRO team with our schools and when we got up to Smith's we were almost done and we had two young children come up and tell their teacher that they saw a man in the woods with a gun that's how it came out though this was at one of our elementary schools it was up in Smiths

Keith: from the article, I thought it was in Loachapoka

Corporal Revels: and we were in Smith and these two kids unbeknownst that the New York Times was in Smiths station they thought they saw somebody with a gun and went up to the teacher in the school went to lock down um and they were there and they went in to lock down too because I told them you're here now I have to go and do my job so that's kind of how that worked out and you know it was just one of those things that it just happened you know but it did show them that everything that I had told them that day how we operate here in Lee County how the SROs operate how the schools operate how we operate together they saw it everything I had said it just it was reiterated

Keith: so did it turnout was there somebody out there or

Corporal Revels: we never found them there was some speculation it could have been one or two things maybe some maybe a hunter the woods maybe somebody was doing some work on the lines out there and they saw something they thought was a gun you can never confirm it yeah but I'm gonna tell you we take things very seriously around here can't afford not to and I tip I tell people all the time these are my babies so we will take all precaution until we know that it's safe to do something different and so that just happened that day we didn't know this is the Intel we got from these two from these little kids and and and you know when a kids coming up and saying I think the bad guy over here versus scared upset you can tell the difference and we felt it was legitimate so we did what what we knew we had to do but we will always do what we think is the most appropriate thing in that in in the moment to ensure the greatest safety

Keith: yeah the only time I remember the school being locked down when I was in school across the street from what is now South Smiths Station every when I was in school it was just the Smiths Elementary was a south trust bank mm-hmm and the piggly-wiggly parking lot over there and it had gotten robbed Oh in the middle of the day mm-hm and the next thing I know you know we're in lockdown just in case he decided to come across the street and get himself into a hostage situation right kind of thing and that was that's the only ever lockdown I can remember when I was a kid because it was very rare but it's just you know things have changed so much since in the last 20 years sometimes the last 10 years



Corporal Revels: that's right that's right and and even with that we have evolved when it comes to the different security levels and lockdown is something that we save for those imminent threat type moments because when we go into lockdown there are certain things that have to happen within those classrooms within that school and and it's imperative and then we have a little bit lower level which we call secure your area and with that we can actually tell our schools what should it look like in this case so every case may change that just a little bit but that's a little bit lower secure security level and then we have what we call heightened awareness heightened awareness is just something goes along with the name there's something happening that day or that hour that we need just to be a little bit more aware of what's going on and again the circumstance would dictate what we tell them we want this to look like so we operate with three security levels

Keith: so I'm glad that y'all are counting on me because I have horrible situational awareness things could happen in front of me and it won't be till well after it's done that it registers with me of what has happened so I'm glad that I'm not the one that's being counted on to take care of these guys to keep an eye out for these things

Corporal Revels: well and that was one of the things you know when we when we put in place this heightened awareness cuz we should always be at a certain level of awareness yeah but when we if we send out an email or we tell the teachers we need to be on heightened awareness about this hmm then yeah now now you are really concentrating on what you're supposed to be looking for

Keith: yeah I just get in my own little world and somebody could come up behind me and knock over the head and I wouldn't know it until I wake up later on speaking of how things have changed there's been massive changes just since you started at 14 years ago social media wasn't a big deal yes back then just I think some earlier this year there was a thing at Beulah I think with with a social media post of somebody a threat so so many of us how do you how do you combat those kinds of things with things things that people do and say on social media if sometimes even with it where they're not at school and it's out of school hours but that kind of stuff can be carried into how do you how do you handle stuff like

Corporal Revels: that that is been probably one of the greatest obstacles and challenges we've had and that we face every day there's so many different levels of what you're speaking on you have the big threatening messages that causes panic and alarm to our community then you have the everyday back and forth between our young people harassment and the cyber bullying that causes problems not only for that one particular child but to the school environment and then you have everything negative that can be negative that our young people can get into on the internet that is again changing even the way that they think it's more than just these little incidents it's an every day occurrence if you want to do some research screen time has been is really put forth then put forth in the forefront about our young people and too much screen time what is it actually doing to their brain but it's not only that we're looking at now there's kids who are addicted to screen time literally some of the first protocols if you're seeing a young person with the mental health issue that's one of the first things they'll ask is what is their screen time social media things like that and when the first things they do is they detox them from

the phone yeah that's serious you know with adolescents now that goes back to the teen brain okay from the time it kicks in adolescence lasts till about 25 ish that's a long time so it's not until about after that time that you start start going back and using your logical piece of your brain more than the feeling piece so our young people are just not in the best place to be able to reason with some of the stuff that they're seeing and doing yeah you know with with the phone yeah and and I think what you're gonna start seeing a little bit more from us and upcoming future is a little bit more parent education we are really reaching we really want to reach out to our parents and make sure they understand the dangers yeah I think we hear about some but I'm not sure they know truly how deep and how far they go so reaching out and educating them a little bit more so they can help us help their young people I think I think that's the way we're going to start even in the future

Keith: as you say these kids their brains don't finish cooking until about 25 so when they make poor decisions you know everything is hyperbolic on the internet you know kill this and write write this like how do you separate what is I've heard termed a terroristic threat versus just you know smack talk and how do you make sure that a student realizes that what they say on the internet matters right and that they shouldn't be saying stuff like that without giving them a record

Corporal Revels: well in that's the problem I mean because that that has happened I mean when you when you put a threat on social media and it causes your community to have a rash of check outs from your school and it puts it in a panic you're probably gonna be charged for terroristic threats with just a felony mm-hmm it's a felony and and and it's not like they haven't been told I think it's it because we talk about all the time in the schools about what's appropriate what's not appropriate to be posting right but for some reason it the it's like it's still socially acceptable in their age group yeah and until it gets where it's not like that then it then they're gonna continue to do it you know and that's why we're gonna really try to push this education on the parents because we need them to be a little bit more engaged with what the kids are doing with your phone and and not just fun but just the Internet in general social media yeah because right now I think that's one of the the pieces that if we were to increase that I think we would see a little bit less

Keith: I just like to think about like in the 70s the parents having to sit down and have their know listen let me tell you about CB radios

Corporal Revels: much different today

Keith: so we're we're recording this a couple of weeks before the Christmas break or the winter break um so during that two weeks what do you do what do you do when we're not in session do you get to just sit at home and chill out or do you have to do you have a patrol you got to do when we're not in session

Corporal Revels: that's a good question we do try to make sure that if we are if we take any personal time that it is when the schools are out so we do we do benefit from the same holidays being under administration so yes I'll take some time off during Christmas and then I'll come right back when we

start our staff professional development yeah and start working with our different schools on the upcoming year and training and things like that it depends during the year what's going on

Keith: what about during the summer do you get to go fishing all summer

Corporal Revels: no no there's some people that do but I don't no during the summer my team we do some camps for young people junior deputy Academy yes sir and then we usually all take off around on the fourth of July and then we come back in July we do a good month of just SRO training okay in the schools working on active shooter response working on our techniques working on some really nitty-gritty stuff it's important to what we do every day and it and it's it's very tricky being in the schools and some of the stuff that we have to do as far as have to see a shooter training so making sure that our plans are good for our schools there's so many things that we do during the summer now can we do patrol absolutely so we kind of go where needed that make sense

Keith: if Sheriff Jones says you go you go

Corporal Revels: absolutely but they give us there's so much that we can be doing site assessments to see about our campuses is there something new coming in that we need to do some kind of assessment on it was to risk versus what we need to do to mitigate that risk so there's site assessments our training as far as active shooter goes there's so many different things so um we can stay busy during the summer

Keith: what do you say is your most rewarding part of your job as an SRO

Corporal Revels: there's so many pieces and

Keith: I know it's like like one of your children you can't you can't pick just your favorite

Corporal Revels: that's right if I had three children I'd love all the same uh uh yeah I just I really love the job I love coming in every day and it's something new yeah I love having the opportunity to be in a positive environment because it is a positive environment you may have some things that you have to work on during the day you know and our kids are facing some of the things that they're facing but it's an opportunity to help try to make it positive for them so it's just a real good environment to be in but specifically for me I love teaching so I get to teach again not taking away from the 4-year degree teachers but I like to do my thing so I like to uh so I get a lot of good so many things that I like about my job that I think to me over the years I think what I found out you know if you take a personality test I did that years ago I found out that I'm a guardian protector okay so in this little personality thing it fits me to the tee because I just want to help people and make sure they stay safe and do so this this job is like an arrowhead for me

Keith: that's great yeah the we by my former co-host Kyle he would he always said that the teachers sort of had the same personalities as their students so the pre-k early elementary teachers they are like just like chipper and they're kind of very kind of I saw one of their students does this job sort of reinforce for

you that you couldn't pay me to go back to go back to school like that as a student it does for me sometimes Oh once you go back to school as a student

Corporal Revels: I told somebody the other day that I am really glad that we didn't have some of the stuff that these young people have to deal with mm-hmm every day and at the same time getting education yep you know and I'm going I'm older than you I can already tell

Keith: not by much maybe like a month or so

Corporal Revels: no no I was like he we didn't have problems in schools mm-hmm and and where I went to school we didn't have problems at all I went to a very good school but everything that our young people are exposed to now it's it's is just tough yeah and I'm glad that I don't have to navigate through the young person's life nowadays

Keith: yeah say what I'm glad that these weren't around when I asked you know I am to hold up my phone yeah cuz if at anytime anything that I was saying or doing could have been recorded no like I was out you know doing anything all that wrong but right you know in the privacy of my friend group and stuff I was doing well like every other kid and I would say things that if they were out there now would cause me trouble I know I don't necessarily believe them or I've evolved since then it's been 20 years I've evolved since then on those kinds of things right if some of that stuff was out there hanging out there never going away right um you know I'd be up the creek

Corporal Revels: yes and I'm feel the same way you know I that's why I told this interview I said you know I'm just glad I don't have to you know deal with some of the things these young people have to deal with and they're still successful yeah I mean they're still doing it so and you know with a little bit of guidance here and there and making sure that we're not making really big or bad decisions our young people they're handling it very well

Keith: I don't know I guess I've got a grown up in it there's the only thing I knew I probably would have been fine but I'm still I still think about it sometimes it'd just be like thank you good Lord that I missed out on that part all right so a so we talked about whether your rewarding part what's the most challenging part of being an SRO

Corporal Revels: I'm gonna go back to arm still to this day if I have to go to a home that I see is you know not what I would consider the most appropriate you know that's still hard because you want to try to make sure you're doing what you need for that child to be successful so they can do what they need to do I think that would be probably my most challenging piece of it I love I love all the other stuff but for that to me because sometimes some of our young people are some pretty rough environments and it's not their fault right and we just want to try to encourage them so that they will finish school and

Keith: rise above that

Corporal Revels: yeah that you know have a chance to do something hmm you know that's different and better in sitting and really fulfill their greatest potential I think I think that that's the biggest thing you know you won't be on not to lose hope or anything like that you really want to see them reach their potential yeah

Keith: yeah when I I worked at DHR before I before I came over here and I was in the food stamp program and so the first couple years I was in the State Office of Montgomery working in a special project that was food stamp related but the assistant director time just the sweetest man you'll ever meet he used to be a county director up in Northeast Alabama and so he told me some horror stories and he he said you know what because you couldn't pay me to do Child Protective Services and he told me some of the horror stories and he said there was a guy about my age at the time who became a caseworker in Child Protective Services and just this horror story that I won't get into but just the next day he came in and he handed his resignation and they were like the why because I just can't I can't do it and keep my sanity he goes I've got children at home and I just can't so um how do you how do you leave that stuff at work and not take it home with you at night or do you

Corporal Revels: I do I because I I guess I just love what I do so much but I have a farm okay so I didn't really really realize how hard and how much I worked until I got the farm because after I got it I would want to hurry home so I could feed my animals yeah and I have goats llamas and sheep and some donkeys really cool yes so I think if if there's anything and it kind of takes me away it's that to go down and relax and um you know get to love on them a little bit that helps yeah

Keith: that helps of clear your head

Corporal Revels: well and until you know what helps me too is if you work with that child and you see them go off and do better that's the ultimate reward because that then then you see doesn't have to be that way and you don't you don't have to just stay in that rut of and even for me you don't have to stay in oh that's just terrible there can be positive and so part of my job is possibly find resources and do some things to help and I think that's what helps me okay well because it's it's it's not like I don't have anything I can do so if if you can do something I think that's what helps me

Keith: that's great um so when I first met you it was last year when you were leading the crisis response and management training up here at the central office so can you just give us a little bit give a little thumbnail sketch of them about that and what that means and that kind of stuff

Corporal Revels: very good so again going back to you know I put in that we had to almost be like those emergency managers well the state requires all school systems public school systems have what they used to call a safety plan now its emergency operation plans and we're very fortunate again that this school system and our agency worked really hard to make sure that these plans are up to date but then what we also train on them so that you sitting in this office even though you're not in a school but you're part of the school system that you have some kind of idea some kind of option but if something bad was to happen you can you know what to do right or at least there's a couple options for you to do

because again that's part of my responsibility is to make sure I'm training all these folks they have options and how to respond to crises that may come up

Keith: yeah speaking of crises if god forbid we have a situation here like there was and parkland who talked earlier or frankly too many other schools what should parents students and even staff what should they do what should they keep in mind in any kind of emergency it was really any kind of emergent situation not just an active shooter but that's the one that grabs the most headlines but in anything like that um you know should parents be flying up to the school to snatch their kids out of the school you know what what should everybody keep in mind whenever there was something like that happens

Corporal Revels: well we we always want to ask for support from our community and that is with that support needs to be a little trust so if something does happen we really need them to look to credible information sources for example the schools and the sheriff's office for good information and not build it up on social media if we do have something we've got some plans in place when we need them to go to these outlets so they know what to do rushing to the school it's going to depend on what's happening but I would ask for their their patience and you know and if they hear this and I hope by you know by the end of this interview they'll really understand that when we do something it is for the greatest benefit and safety for these children and if something was to happen that's what we're doing yeah and we're going to do our best to get them back to their parent as quickly as we can with some of the other things that we have to do at the same time right so I guess the biggest thing would be to make sure they're going to that legitimate information source and help support us and trust us in that moment and and when if we do ask them hey meet us over here they meet us over here to get their babies back

Keith: yeah and so pursuant to that I'll just point out as how to step in as somebody as a representative of the central office of that when you register your kids make sure that you put your accurate contact information in because that goes into a system we call parent link and that is how we send notifications to parents via text message email phone calls letting them know what's going on last week there is an incident Beauregard we were able to send a targeted message to the Beauregard community so just Beauregard knew what was going on there's no point in getting the whole county up in a tizzy over what was going on outside so just if you're listening to this make sure that you have accurate information and in our system so we can make sure that we get that information out to you and we'll also probably be posting stuff on the official County social media accounts there's a Lee County Facebook page and the Lee County Twitter account that I talked about in the intro of every episode so make sure you follow those and for nothing else then for that kind of information should god forbid anything ever happened yes so um now my mom she is a member of the Ruritan Club out in Smith station and so I think it was this summer she she come back from a meeting and she calls me up she goes we had this awesome Lee County deputy come out and talked to us she has Pam revels I said I know corporal yeah she and so you talked to them about something called the yellow dot program yes what can you tell us a little bit about that real quick

Corporal Revels: well the sheriff's office provides several different programs and one of them being the yellow dot program the yellow dot program is a national program and it was established for senior drivers but what it was is in a time that you have an accident the most critical hour is that first hour they called it the golden hour okay which comes up with the yellow dot yellow dot golden hour yes so yeah not my idea I just I just promoted yeah so when we had the opportunity here in Alabama and again with the Sheriff's Office sheriff said yes I'm to push this program in my community because it could possibly help save lives so this is this is how it works of course you invite me out to your place and I talked a little bit about it but you get a packet this packet is in a yellow folder and it has information sheets about the driver and the possible occupants in the car so if you're a family of four you would have two packets one for the maybe two adults and one for two kids we would just go standard like that so these packets they go in your glove compartment okay and you had this little yellow dot that goes in the back window so if you're ever in an automobile accident and you're rendered unconscious and we come on the scene and we need to know good information about you so we give you critical aid we can go if we see that yellow dot we know to go in the glove compartment and get your information that keeps us from having to look for purses that keeps us from having to try to find phones and even if you have the ice important contact what if it's locked we can't get into it and I tell folks all the time you know purses I call them the black holes okay there's all kinds of stuff in there and I you don't want me ramble around in the purse trying to find identification things like that so that that's what it was really intended for it's at that first critical hour of a automobile accident you're rendered unable to give information and that provides good information for first responders but so some of the best part is it it tells somebody - for you to call for example next of kin where your license doesn't have that your phone you may not be able to do that and to me I think that's important even for my parents I like to have that in their car because if something was to happen to them they're gonna call me yeah and that's something that you don't have in your vehicle anywhere else um there's a there's a slot that says hospital you know what hospital do you want to go to well on mine I put the best I don't care where that is you do is take me there so it's really customize you can customize it how you how you needed and what's good for you but it's all intended to provide the best care and as immediately as we can

Keith: so if somebody wants somebody like you to come out and talk to him about that house the best way to do that

Corporal Revels: call the sheriff's office and say you want some information on the yellow dot and if you want a program you're they'll probably send you to my cell phone

Keith: okay um so as we wind down because I think I monopolized enough time there's a question that I have stolen from Dan Rather and this is either gonna be brilliant or not but what question have I not asked you that you hoped I would have

Corporal Revels: the biggest question would be the state of Alabama is doing a really good job in this thing that we call school safety and we've been doing a good job Lee County Schools Lee County Sheriff's Office great partnership we've been doing a really good job maybe maybe we haven't told how good we're doing in the future I think you're gonna see a lot more parent education about what we're doing

as far as school safety security levels things like that so that they do feel a little bit more educated and empowered and I think that's going to help out in these critical incidents and situations that people are not as panicked is they would be because they because now they know where we're at and in what we're doing we just kind of kept it to ourselves because we didn't want to give anything away yeah but nowadays I think it's even more important that we do share some of that information oh I think that would be the biggest thing I would finish up with is we've come a long way we are in a very good position now but we never ever want to say that we've got it completely done

Keith: oh because then the universe would be like hold my drink and let me show you how you don't have it

Corporal Revels: that's right because we want to continue to learn and evolve so that we can make sure we we make this school system in schools as safe as we that we can

Keith: I I'm hoping that a lot of parents will listen to this and get some there if they if they listen to this they're gonna get some fantastic information out of it so the final thing that I want to just ask you is so and you may have to think long and hard about this but what is the most awesome experience that you've had in your time as an SRO for Lee County Schools and you can't pick today right here

Corporal Revels: you kept going um two years ago that was my anniversary for my 12 years so I had my students walk across the stage that I started in kindergarten in awhile so that was a milestone for me some of the some of the great experiences is when I have students who come up to me that have graduated and then they're doing stuff and they say but they call me deputy Pam and then they tell me how well they're doing that's good I think that's some of the best experience experiences that I've had is when my young people come up and they they sell hello and engage me in adult conversation and tell me how well they're doing in I think just being able to be around these young people and just being a part of such a critical piece in their life I think that's probably my best experience

Keith: well that's awesome corporal Revels I really appreciate you taking the time I'm glad that I just stayed after you sit down cuz this turned out to be as fantastic as I thought it would be so I really appreciate you spending the time spending the time to chat with us for this and I think that if since you you're the one that's training new SROs I think we're going to be in very good hands for a very long time so I want you to stay awesome

\*Ukulele Music\*