

PLANTATION SUNRISE NEIGHBORS

November 11, 2007

CHILD SAFETY



PROVIDED TO THE MIAMI HERALD

PROMOTING WEB SAFETY: Attorney Howard Talenfeld is speaking out for young people who surf the Internet.

Concerned lawyer helps launch war on Web predators

■ A Plantation attorney who has made it his mission to keep kids safe recently helped out in the Broward portion of a state cybersafety tour.

BY JENNIFER COHEN
Special to The Miami Herald

Some of Broward County's children have it rough. More than 43,000 are currently in foster care. Many are abused or missing.

Other children are victims of sexual predators. According to the Federal Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, one in seven children between the ages of 10 and 17 have been sexually solicited online.

Howard Talenfeld, who founded Florida's Children First, has one mission: keep children safe.

Talenfeld, of Plantation, recently sponsored the Broward launch of state Attorney General Bill McCollum's School CyberSafety Program.

McCollum's appearance here was part of a tour to pro-

mote the Child Predator CyberCrime Unit, in Florida schools since August. It is designed to teach children to use the Internet safely.

"It's a secret world, and most of the time you don't know the people they're talking to," McCollum told parents as he held up a sign with "LMIRL," the Web acronym for "let's meet in real life," online language used by sexual predators.

"Parents need to stay vigilant because an online sexual predator may look or sound like a peer," Talenfeld said.

A trial lawyer, Talenfeld has dedicated much of his career to helping Florida's most vulnerable citizens.

"It is important that all of us help the less fortunate children in our community," said Talenfeld, the father of five.

In 2001, he founded Florida's Children First, a not-for-profit organization that helps ensure that foster children have appropriate legal representation for educational,

health and developmental services needs. Talenfeld also recruits and trains attorneys to provide legal counsel to children. He has been instrumental in obtaining money for Florida's Guardian ad Litem Program and the Broward County Children's Services Council.

"Howard is the glue that holds Florida's Children First together," Executive Director Andrea Moore said. "He has a vision of how things could be for children at risk and never loses his focus on working toward that vision."

Florida's Children First plans a public event on Feb. 21 at the Riverside Hotel in Fort Lauderdale. For information, call 954-796-0860 or visit www.floridaschildrenfirst.org.

Parents can report suspected online predators at 800-843-5678.