Shining a light on online safety

Do you know how to keep your children safe when they are using social media or playing an online game? If the answer is not really then you need to come to the Out of the Dark Expo on Saturday, 11 March 2017 at the State Library of Queensland, South Brisbane from 10am – 3pm. Hosted by the Queensland Family & Child Commission, in partnership with the State Library, this free event is for people who are digital novices as well as digital natives because we all have something to learn about how to stay safe online.

Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon said, “Our young people are the most connected generation ever seen. They live in a digital world and their online interactions provide them with a sense of meaning and belonging. The digital environment is not without its risks. It is apparent many young people and their families do not have the strategies to deal with these dangers and this can have profound impacts for their health and wellbeing as well as their personal safety.”

Recent research, released by the Triple P program shows 80% of parents are worried their child will be exposed to online pornography, 78% are worried their child will be bullied online and 68% are worried their child may become addicted to being online. These fears are real and valid as Roy Morgan research has also revealed children and young people now spend more time on the internet than watching television. Yet many parents do not have the knowledge or understanding of social media to teach their children how to effectively protect themselves when they are online.

The Out of the Dark Expo will showcase products developed by a range of organisations such as the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Bravehearts, the Carly Ryan Foundation, and the Alannah and Madeline Foundation to name a few.

“You will also be able to talk to experts from the e-Safety Commission, Queensland Police Service’s Taskforce Argos and the Department of Education and Training’s Cyber Safety team. This is just a few of more than 15 organisations who have joined us to help educate children, young people and their families about how to be safe and protected when they are online,” Ms Vardon said.

“But this isn’t just about information, it’s also about participation. If Snapchat is a mystery to you or you are not sure how to set up social media accounts then the hands on tutorials at ‘Old Skool’ are for you. You can help develop a new reporting tool with the team from the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation in the Lab or see what’s on the horizon in the Digital Futures exhibition space.”
“We will also be premiering a range of products developed by our young people’s working group. Noffs Street University artists will be painting on site or you can collaborate with their Rap crew. Share your thoughts at the activation station. Everyone completing an Expo passport will have the chance to win some great prizes generously donated by Telstra. Booyah Beans and some of Brisbane’s great food trucks will help keep your energy levels up.”

The digital world provides us with a sense of community to be better equipped to deal with the risks, come out of the dark and head to the Expo on Saturday 11 March. We all have a part to play in keeping our kids safe when they are online.

Find out more at the Out of the Dark Expo Facebook event page https://www.facebook.com/events/818837694921944/ or visit qfcc.qld.gov.au.

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