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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** So then they started making everybody turn them off because airplane airplane mode didn't. I mean, I guess it's pretty rare, but it does happen, like somehow that it interferes with that wireless signal.

[00:00:12] **Speaker 2** I see. Okay.

[00:00:14] **Speaker 1** So. I'm not sure if going to make you turn it off or not.

[00:00:19] **Speaker 2** Oh, sure. Sure. You bet.

[00:00:23] **Speaker 3** Okay. Sorry. While she's doing that, I'll have you.

[00:00:25] **Speaker 2** Oh, sure.

[00:00:26] **Speaker 3** Or is it already off?

[00:00:27] **Speaker 2** It's on silent. But I'll just turn it off. Perfect.

[00:00:33] **Speaker 3** Yeah, we just like to make sure. Because even if it's on silent, sometimes the signal of the cell phones still power off. And then do any more water before we get going.

[00:00:42] **Speaker 2** Oh. Thank you.

[00:00:43] **Speaker 3** Okay. Who's.

[00:00:46] **Speaker 1** And Kurt, you're going to be more beautiful when you leave here than you were when you came.

[00:00:52] **Speaker 2** Is is that possible?

[00:00:53] **Speaker 1** Were people going to stop you in the sidewalk? Excuse me, sir. Can I help you with anything?

[00:01:06] **Speaker 2** Number of you have a Milwaukee connection, is that right?

[00:01:08] **Speaker 1** I lived there for two years. I worked in Austin. Oh, okay.

[00:01:12] **Speaker 2** You know, channel 12?

[00:01:13] **Speaker 1** Yeah, right about the work there as well. She was there. She was there a little bit for me. We overlapped a little, just about six months, I think. I think I was do it when I got there. She was only there for maybe six months, maybe a year. I forget, we forget. It's so long ago. But, yeah, I lived in, I was in Oak Creek briefly.

[00:01:33] **Speaker 2** So.

[00:01:33] **Speaker 1** Because I didn't like to be too close to the station. Because that's when you live too close. They call you all the time, and. But then I realized when it snowed and things like that, it was a little too far. Yeah. So I ended up moving to the East Side. So I lived over the East side for about a year.

[00:01:49] **Speaker 2** Okay.

[00:01:50] **Speaker 1** And I left there and I went to Sacramento. Oh, do.

[00:01:53] **Speaker 2** We hear that?

[00:01:54] **Speaker 1** And I was in Sacramento for two years and I went to Tampa from there.

[00:01:57] **Speaker 2** Okay.

[00:01:58] **Speaker 1** And I was in Tampa for. Yeah.

[00:02:00] **Speaker 3** I'm comfortable for you to put your other foot on.

[00:02:05] **Speaker 1** I can do it, but I know that I swing it, so. Yeah. Thanks for catching that.

[00:02:09] **Speaker 3** Yeah.

[00:02:11] **Speaker 1** Man. No no no no, please. I can do it. Okay. I just need to do that.

[00:02:15] **Speaker 3** Yeah. It's pretty distracting.

[00:02:17] **Speaker 1** When, you know, I would have stopped swinging it once we started. I'm just. We haven't started, so I'm just relaxing and. Okay. Okay. But if you guys to give me a heads up, I. Yeah, I could. I don't have to. I can stop swinging that leg. Okay.

[00:02:30] **Speaker 3** I just don't know who's uncomfortable.

[00:02:32] **Speaker 1** No, no. It's fine. Just takes a little effort to get it up there. Thanks for catching that shimmer.

[00:02:44] **Speaker 3** Yeah. Are we ready to start recording?

[00:02:46] **Speaker 1** Okay. Just let me know. Yeah. And then? And then I have a clock. I have a timer on that one. Right. Okay.

[00:02:51] **Speaker 3** Cue you from over here.

[00:02:53] **Speaker 1** Yeah. Because. Yeah, I plan to wrap up right around right around 30. You know. Yeah.

[00:03:01] **Speaker 3** So you want him to set the clock for 30. Right.

[00:03:04] **Speaker 1** That's fine.

[00:03:04] **Speaker 3** It'll I think it.

[00:03:05] **Speaker 1** How it fits if it has a running time on it that that gives me where I'm at. Yeah. and I usually just wrap it up by saying I got time for one more, and then I'll. That'll that'll give you an idea that I'm about to wrap it up. And Kirkwood doing this, in real time. That's the plan. Okay. If something catastrophic happens, like, my legs falls off this stool and I start swinging my leg, which they don't like. They don't like. Yeah. We can, you know, we have the ability to start over, but we prefer to just kind of roll through here. And if anything, we would pick up where we left off. You know, but, but, yeah, the whole idea is that it's just a two old friends.

[00:03:51] **Speaker 2** Conversation.

[00:03:52] **Speaker 1** Chatting. Yeah. And then we can define old in different kinds of ways, I guess. Right.

[00:04:03] **Speaker 3** So, ma'am, I'm actually not going to cue you. What will happen is whenever you want to start, we're already recording, so that's one hour. We'll start. The clock is.

[00:04:11] **Speaker 1** Whenever you just start. Okie dokie. So the pressure's on me. Nice. I like I like that we know, I like, you know, it's funny. I can hardly see you over there anyway because of the light. So it's all good, so. Yeah. Okay. Okay. All right, you guys all right? I feel I feel like a lot of pressure right now. I think I've never done this before. Kurt. But here we are. Yeah. Kurt was hard to reach out. Welcome to In Focus.

[00:04:39] **Speaker 2** Thank you so much.

[00:04:40] **Speaker 1** You know, I stumbled on, your organization and the work that you guys do in. And I'd love to just even start off by talking about your mission statement. It says help first responders comfort children in crises. But you do that through reading. Tell us how it works.

[00:04:56] **Speaker 2** We do. Murph. And the the primary device that we provide to first responders is a backpack. The backpack is filled with new children's books along with drawstring backpacks. And so we we provide them to the first responders. They keep them in the vehicle. So as they head out to maybe a car accident, domestic issue, maybe a house fire, if there are children in the area, they will invite, the child or children into their vehicle or some safe place. They'll open up the backpack. The children will choose a book to read, and they read it together. So now the child, who was probably pretty upset, scared, highly emotional, is comforted through the presence of that first responder and the power of the book that they're reading together. And really important point here is they're also distracted. So if the ambulance is there and grandma is not doing well, we're distracted. We're looking at the book, not over there.

[00:05:55] **Speaker 1** I'm going to say, how does reading help them, distract from things? And how did we deal with this, before we learned that this is something that helps them?

[00:06:05] **Speaker 2** Wow. Good question. And, we are currently supporting 350 departments. Department being an EMS unit, a police department, things like that. And honestly, before reach, a child was able to provide these resources. I'm not sure there was a good solution because you're a first responder going to a scene. Highly emotional child. What do you do? And to further complicate things. What if that first responder is not a parent so they don't have the parenting skills, the knowledge, the experience and things like that. So we we are trying as fast as we can to get these books and backpacks out to first responders across Wisconsin, because we know that children are in crisis.

[00:06:49] **Speaker 1** Yeah. And I'd love to hear, what's your reach right now? Like, how far out are you, in terms of reaching, different departments and, you know, different, regions of the state of Wisconsin?

[00:07:02] **Speaker 2** Happy to report that we support 350 departments, which is thousands of first responders. The flip side, though, is that there are approximately 2,001st responder departments.

[00:07:15] **Speaker 1** To help us explain what when we say first responders or we're talking fire police, what else?

[00:07:20] **Speaker 2** Fire police? Sheriff? University. Police and state patrol. So our largest supporter and partner is the State patrol. They have 550 vehicles across Wisconsin. And every one of those vehicles is carrying one of our backpacks. Wow. But another department might be Lodi, for instance, with two vehicles. So they carry two of our backpacks.

[00:07:43] **Speaker 1** So paint a picture for me when a first responder arrives to the scene, you've got this horrific thing that's happening. You've got this young person. First of all, what's the age group of of the folks we're targeting here as far as the young people?

[00:07:54] **Speaker 2** Yeah. The first responders tell us ages 2 to 12. Anything older than 12, that boy or girl? Young man, young woman. They probably have a device. So they're on an iPad, iPhone, whatever the case may be. So they may not find the books as engaging as those that are younger. So it's 2 to 12. And, and I'll just point out that that was feedback that we received from the first responders. We have a group of first responders that we call the Advisory Council. They give us feedback constantly. So our mission is to support them, and they provide feedback to us to ensure that we're on the right track.

[00:08:35] **Speaker 1** Yes, be extremely intense for first responders when they show up at something like that. To assess things in real time so quickly. Any sense of kind of what that feels like for them?

[00:08:48] **Speaker 2** Well, since we are on campus, I'll share the story from the UW police chief twice removed, who came on to a situation where boyfriend took a knife to girlfriend's throat, and there were two children that were enroute home from school, and the police chief was on site, and she engaged with those young girls. And, it was an experience that she found to be probably the most challenging in her professional career. Sometime later, she found out about reach of child. And she said, I want a backpack in every one of the vehicles that are part of the UW Police Department, so that at least there was this tool, the solution to help the first responder to deal with sometimes a really tough situation.

[00:09:44] **Speaker 1** Yeah. And, I was going to say you guys have a name for, the bags, you call them reach bags? Yes. What's in them? Because you have in them.

[00:09:53] **Speaker 2** So we have, 20 brand new children's books and a comparable number of drawstring backpacks. So.

[00:10:00] **Speaker 1** Again, what you have here. I see you brought the back now. Yes, Kurt, unless you're in school again, I assume you brought this with.

[00:10:07] **Speaker 2** I did. So again, if we can get one of these into every first responder vehicle in Wisconsin, I'll be able to retire.

[00:10:16] **Speaker 1** So how close will it is?

[00:10:18] **Speaker 2** We're a long ways away. A long ways away. But we're working diligently, especially in the larger communities of Milwaukee, Madison, Wausau, etc. but this this is the bag that they keep in their vehicle. And the process that they use, again, is inviting the child to choose a book that they will read together.

[00:10:40] **Speaker 1** And Jocelyn Stock. Yeah, I know that one.

[00:10:45] **Speaker 2** And so now they are together. First responder child. Reading the book together. And again, if I'm that child, I'm looking here. I'm not looking there. And we get asked all the time, what about stuffed animals or something like that?

[00:11:02] **Speaker 1** Yeah. It seems like that might work.

[00:11:04] **Speaker 2** I think it does work to comfort the child. But again, if I'm holding this stuffed animal, where are my eyes? My eyes are still there with grandma.

[00:11:15] **Speaker 1** Because the whole idea. You don't want them looking at this traumatic thing that's taken place. That's right in front of them.

[00:11:21] **Speaker 2** There is a story that our current Dane County sheriff tells Calvin Barrett, and it's tragic. And it was at a very young age. But the bottom line is, in his words, something happened in his home that no one should ever have to see. The good news is, first responder took him to another room, spent time reading a book again. Sheriff ferret at the time was about five. And. And he tells that story as though it happened last week. Wow. Just amazing. Yeah.

[00:11:54] **Speaker 1** And what's the sense you get, when you've gotten that child to be distracted? Like, how do you how can you tell that that it's working, that you've kind of accomplished your mission to get them to focus on this book and not this horrible incident that may have happened?

[00:12:09] **Speaker 2** That's a really good question. And I would just say that the typical scenario is that when the first responder arrives, the emotional level of the child is off the charts usually, and the child is having, without a doubt, the worst day of his or her young life.

[00:12:27] **Speaker 1** So we're talking. They might be screaming a little bit. They might be crying a little bit. It might be a little disoriented, just not knowing kind of what's going on.

[00:12:34] **Speaker 2** Yes, yes, all of the above. And all they really want is some degree of normalcy. I want to get back to what was happening pre-crisis pre trauma. And so this is a temporary solution to at least bring them back from that highly emotional state to being very content. And we we receive so many testimonials from the first responders saying thank you. You know it works. We just didn't have anything that could engage the child at such a level that he or she had transitioned from off the charts, emotional to content.

[00:13:13] **Speaker 1** Yeah. I wonder, you may or may not know this, but, like, what happens, to this trauma if these young people don't have an escape from it? Like, I think back to my generation, like, you know, the word trauma, I don't even know if it really existed in the way that it does now. And we've obviously learned a lot more about it over the last, you know, 4 or 5 years, decade or so, however you want to measure that. But what happens to that trauma? Like what does it do to them? How does it affect them for the rest of their lives?

[00:13:47] **Speaker 2** There was a research effort underway at Marquette University a number of years ago, and what they found was that, untreated, the the trauma could very well lead to emotional challenges. Emotional problems, year later, years later, later in life, things like that. They also found that if you can interrupt that process, interrupt that, in essence, PTSD from establishing yourself within the child, he or she is very likely to avoid some or all of that emotional. Baggage isn't the right word, but the emotional impact of being traumatized.

[00:14:31] **Speaker 1** Yeah. The pain. Pain? That's a I assume you're getting a chance to, learn how to cope with it earlier in life, and you've got, some tools at your, at your side, that can help you navigate that. I would imagine that would, help someone get through it better.

[00:14:46] **Speaker 2** Yeah, yeah. And part of the issue is that the child is keeping whatever books they read together.

[00:14:52] **Speaker 1** Or they get to keep the books they do.

[00:14:54] **Speaker 2** And so they may find that by looking at this book weeks later, months later, years later, it brings them back to a situation where they just felt good, they felt comfortable, they felt content. And so it's all of the the process that we try to inject into the system of transitioning the child from emotional content, but also to give the first responder a tool that they can feel like, wow, I had a real challenge here, and I was able to solve the issue by spending time with the child and reading the books with them.

[00:15:31] **Speaker 1** I wonder, does it give them, this kind of a positive security blanket, kind of a feeling like even maybe they reflect on this trauma, this event, and then now they can pick up that book and it reminds them of the calm that it brought to them. Is there any sense of that? You know.

[00:15:47] **Speaker 2** I think there is more. But I have to be careful here because I've been part of this organization for 14 years. I have never personally engaged a child in a traumatic situation. Our role is to get these resources to the first responders. So they they really have the ability to gauge the impact of time with the child reading the book and just, you know, the overall experience.

[00:16:15] **Speaker 1** Yeah. I'd love to hear how, since you say you have never engaged, how did you find yourself on the frontline, so passionate about this issue. How'd you get there?

[00:16:25] **Speaker 2** Thankfully, there were people that came before me, specifically in 2007, there was a husband and wife from Waunakee, and they gathered up the books that were in the house because the kids were off on their own. And, mom and dad were empty nesters. So the thought was, well, what should we do with these books? So they took them to the Waunakee Police Department and offered to have this as a resource when the police officers are engaging with children, and they received such a positive response that they decided to engage their family and friends and invited them to donate books, which then they took to other first responder departments across Dane County. And they had been doing this for five years when I met, in this case, Paul, and asked him about the organization. Again, this is in 2012, and I just thought, wow, I never heard of something like this. This is really great. And what I've since learned more of, among other things, is that Wisconsin, we believe, is the only state in the country that has these types of resources. And we've been asked, I've been asked by about 15 states to introduce the program in Arizona, in Missouri and Illinois, etc. I've been asked multiple times now to introduce the program in Australia. Why don't be a bit a bit of a hike. But, so we think we're the only ones that have this and and yet we're still, you know, lacking full penetration across Wisconsin. So we've got a lot of work to do.

[00:17:56] **Speaker 1** But other states are looking to learn from what you guys are doing.

[00:17:58] **Speaker 2** They are, in fact, a woman from Phenix came and visited with us, and she now has all of our templates, all of our, resources. And she's hoping to introduce something similar for the state of Arizona.

[00:18:12] **Speaker 1** That's impressive.

[00:18:13] **Speaker 2** Hope it happens.

[00:18:14] **Speaker 1** Yeah, good luck with that. Can you paint a picture for me in terms of, the amount of engagement that our FIRStrillionESPONDERS are seeing in these situations where they come across these, you know, these kids that are dealing with traumatic things, like, it's like, how many people have you reached, through your, your backpacks? Maybe, you know, since you started or in the past year or so. And how often do they come across these, these traumatic situations?

[00:18:43] **Speaker 2** So a couple of thoughts. Last year we distributed 30,000 books. So here's 20 and then take that times whatever a big number. And and that's the that's the distribution of new children's books that we provided last year. This year will be in the range of 30 to 35,000. So that's an example of our pushing out these resources to the first responders. But let me bring it down to a specific community, a specific incident September of last year. We traveled to Stevens Point and deliver these backpacks to the Stevens Point Police Department and Fire Department. September of 2023. Five days later, I received an email from a lieutenant in the Stevens Point Fire Department. So I just want you to know, we had a medical issue, a medical emergency at home. I walk in. There's dad having some some serious health challenges. And then there's a six year old and a four year old. And I said to the kids, I said, how are you guys doing? And the six year old said, not good. Not good. So he went to his vehicle, fire vehicle, grabbed his backpack, said well listed on the Davenport. Opened up the backpack. They started reading books together. And so how often this happens again? We don't know. But that lieutenant in the Stevens Point Fire Department was so grateful that he had a resource to use to comfort those two. You know, those two children. Eventually mom comes home and the medical emergency is addressed.

[00:20:21] **Speaker 1** And in our pre-interview, which, you know, wasn't very long, we just we talked maybe 15 minutes or so. You spoke to me about the joy you get, providing the first responders with these, these book bags and, and you also spoke to me a little bit about the joy that the FIRStrillionESPONDERS get in terms of reading the books. Can you speak to that a little bit for us?

[00:20:41] **Speaker 2** You bet. There's there's no better feeling for me than to go to a community and provide these backpacks and specifically when they put them in the vehicles. So recently we went to Delafield and they have eight vehicles in the police department. We deliver them, they put them into the eight vehicles. We know that it's likely that same day or maybe the next day those police officers are going to encounter a child in crisis. So we know that they now have this tool that they can use when, when they're out and about and addressing whatever issues there might be in the community. The other thing is, from the perspective of the first responder, the police chief in Madison once removed. So Chief Coleman told us often that he finds the greatest benefit going to his men and women in the police force who are not parents. These are people that have all the professional skills, right? They're great law enforcement officers, but they they don't have the parenting expertise and the parenting mindset. So he said, these backpacks are great for everybody, but they're really powerful for the first responders, the police officers that are not parents.

[00:22:01] **Speaker 1** Yeah. And then do you have to be a parent to, get it in terms of, you know, this impact and then being kind of put on the spot, like, I mean, do the first responders have designated people that only read to the kids, any situations or can any of the first responders? You know, in that particular unit answer the call to read those kids?

[00:22:26] **Speaker 2** Yes, it could be anyone. And it's not uncommon for multiple departments to show up at the scene. And, so the story that I might tell is that, Middleton's fire chief, Aaron Harris, was at the scene of a pretty bad car accident and in a four year old girl had to be extracted, and he knew that she was in pain. And so he decided to hop in the ambulance with her, and he grabbed one of the books and started reading it to her. And he noticed right away that she was totally focused on the book, and she was just not at the moment, aware of her pain. He finished the book and she said, read it again. And he read it like five times because the book, it was a relatively short book. The trip to the hospital, you know, was 15 minutes or something like that. But for every moment that he was reading the book, she was focused on him and the book that focused on her pain. And, so really powerful. The one thing I'll mention to your, to your question, though, is first responders tell us all the time that they receive tremendous training and they have incredible resources. The one thing that they don't get is training and how to engage an emotional child. And so maybe the training is lacking, but the resources are not. If we can get these backpacks into their vehicles, they now have a solution. And we're just so happy to provide those those solutions.

[00:24:05] **Speaker 1** You have this wonderful ability as the host of InFocus. I give out superpowers.

[00:24:13] **Speaker 2** Kurt.

[00:24:14] **Speaker 1** I give superpowers away and know that people say, hey, you've got a superpower. What are you going to do with yours?

[00:24:20] **Speaker 2** Well, what I'd like to do, if you can help me with this, is to let everyone across Wisconsin know about reach, Child. You know, we again, we were founded in Waunakee in Dane County in south central Wisconsin. A lot of people know about us and and love us and support us, and we're so grateful for that. But but how about in Bayfield County? Door County in Racine County, you know, so, I would use that super power to raise the awareness across the whole state. Let people know that our business model is basically to raise money from a community and convert those dollars into books and backpacks and put it right back into that same community. And I would contrast that with there are many, many great organizations that we could donate to. But this one, I mean, you literally see your dollars going from your wallet to the fire department or your bank account to the police department. You literally see that and son of a gun. An added benefit. If you have children, maybe one or more of those will be comforted by those first responders.

[00:25:31] **Speaker 1** Yeah. And you bring up the issue of money. You know, 30,000 books in a year, giving them out. I mean, that that somebody has to pay for that. So how do you guys fund this, this great effort that you're doing?

[00:25:43] **Speaker 2** I would say there's primarily three avenues that we use. Number one would be and most significantly, would be community foundations. I've learned that there are community foundations in pretty much every pocket of Wisconsin, and they have been unbelievable. And I'm so grateful for them. There are a number of businesses. Especially businesses that are headquartered here in Wisconsin, but maybe have multiple locations across the state. They have brought us into their council, their headquarters, their corporate office, but then they allowed us the opportunity to provide these same resources to the other communities where they have a presence. And then thirdly is, the the individual donations that we receive when people find out that we operate basically at the intersection of children and first responders. What's not to like, you know? So when people find out about us, they're so incredibly supportive. So back to that superpower, Murph. That's what I'd like.

[00:26:46] **Speaker 1** Thanks, I love it. And then, I'm curious to know if you guys ever hear from some of these kids when they get old enough to kind of express themselves in terms of the overall impact of, what that, first responders, interaction, meant to them, when it happened to you guys. Have you seen any of that? Have you? Have you come across that yet?

[00:27:07] **Speaker 2** We have not. And again, we've been doing this since 2005. 2007. I'm sorry, but maybe a story, which is more common. And that is, I was giving a presentation at Asbury Church to there happened to be a big Bible vacation school, and, we've been invited a few times there, and it's just a wonderful opportunity to to talk about reach your child. But also, the kids are donating money that's going to go into books and backpacks. But as I was finishing my presentation, walking out of the, chapel area, I guess a woman rushes up to me and she gives me a check and she says, my granddaughter suffered a a terrible incident that involved a first responder, and she didn't have anything like what you guys are offering. So in my small way, I'm going to help to make that happen for some other child. That that's fairly common is to hear from, a family member, but not the child directly.

[00:28:13] **Speaker 1** Yeah. So looking down the road, do you think there will always be a need for a program like this, to help these young folks?

[00:28:22] **Speaker 2** My mother is such a wonderful supporter of reach a child, and she's the one that puts the labels on the books and things like that. And and she often mentions, it's too bad that there's an organization like reach a child, because that means that there are children in crisis. Well, Murph, you know, that that is reality there. There are children in crisis as we speak, and there will be forever. But at least we can address that through the backpacks and the books and take the child off of that emotional roller coaster and bring them to a better place. So, yeah, I think Reach Your Child is going to be around, you know, kind of forever. And perhaps we'll go outside of Wisconsin, but we've got some work to do in states.

[00:29:09] **Speaker 1** That's a good thing, right?

[00:29:10] **Speaker 2** Yeah. It is, yes. You bet. Yeah.

[00:29:14] **Speaker 1** You well, you mentioned this already a little bit about some of the, traction you've seen from, different states, that are kind of paying attention to you. What do they like about it?

[00:29:27] **Speaker 2** I think they have found that, stuffed animals are nice. Blankets are nice. Other tools that might be provided to the child or children are nice. There's nothing quite like this. And so, we've never we've never given out anything other than books. And and we're going to keep with that model.

[00:29:51] **Speaker 1** It sounds like we're, that you're evolving. And then we're in the we, as I guess people and grown ups are evolving in terms of how we help young people. Is that the sense you get?

[00:30:01] **Speaker 2** Oh, thank you so much for asking that question. And I'll answer it by way of real life situation. There's a wonderful gentleman in the Sun Prairie Police Department, Sergeant Tommy Foy. Sergeant Tommy four is also on our advisory council, and he came to us years ago and said, you know, I give out way more books in a positive situation than in, in a, in a crisis issue. And he said, for instance, at the time he was a patrol officer in San Prairie and, he would see boys and girls, maybe playing or whatever. He'd go up to them and, and he'd say, well, who have you likes to read books? And Sergeant Tommy Foy is chiseled and like me. Yes, exactly. And tall and handsome. And I mean, he's he's wonderful. He's a teddy bear, but he's wonderful. Anyways, so, maybe because he is such a fucking, person of authority, so to speak. Everybody would raise their hand, say, well, yeah, I like to read. So we'd give them a book and he tell them, the next time I see you, if you can tell me what that book was about, I'll give you another one. So the children in some prairie have been building their personal library, thanks to Sergeant Tommy Foy. And so the 30,000 books that we gave out last year, for instance, my guess is a small fraction were used in crisis situations. The vast majority were engaging with kids in a positive situation, a positive relationship, and we couldn't be happier. That's how we have evolved in in terms of changing the business model.

[00:31:43] **Speaker 1** I was going to say that has to be good too.

[00:31:45] **Speaker 2** It's awesome. And honestly, Murph, we're always looking for other avenues that would be, you know, not not directly first responder related, but, would serve as a channel that the child might flow through at some point. Dade County Health Department is an awesome partner for them, for us. We love them. And and even the Overture Center where we provide books for the Saturday morning program for kids. And, you know, I'll come up with the name of it, I think, and it was time.

[00:32:20] **Speaker 1** To stop by each other at work this.

[00:32:22] **Speaker 2** Morning. Yeah. Kids in the rotunda. I'm sorry. So. So we provide books for the families that come for kids in the rotunda and things like that. So, again, not part of the, FIRStrillionESPONDER universe, but we know that families are benefiting from books.

[00:32:39] **Speaker 1** What? What's the. I'm going to wrap this up shortly here, but what's the what's the market out there in the state, that you'd love to be in, that you're not in right now? That you'd love to reach anything? Stand out.

[00:32:50] **Speaker 2** Yes. Racine. The whole county of Racine. It's a it's a dynamic, economically very dynamic area. And it's a large population. And I regret to say that at the moment, we don't have any relationships with the city of Racine, Racine County, or any of the communities in Racine. So that is a significant area of focus for us here in 2024.

[00:33:17] **Speaker 1** Good luck with that. And less thing here. I want to say, I get a sense, curt, that, there's no place else you'd rather be than living in this space of reach a child. Is that the case? And why is that?

[00:33:31] **Speaker 2** It is a case. And I, just about two hours ago, I was interviewing a candidate for the Reacher child board of directors. Wonderful young professional. And, I just couldn't help myself. I just, I said, okay, I'm going to share another story, and I promise that's the last one. And I can share one more story. You know, there are so many wonderful situations that I'm experiencing in this role, and I'm so delighted that there are so many first responders that are experiencing another type of exhilaration, another type of satisfaction because they took that child and comforted him or her, and now the child is in a better place, and the first responder, honestly would be in a better place.

[00:34:16] **Speaker 1** Two very well, thank you very much. We appreciate you joining us for In Focus.

[00:34:21] **Speaker 2** Thank you for.

[00:34:24] **Speaker 1** Good stuff, man. Thank you. Oh, good stuff.

[00:34:26] **Speaker 2** Really good questions.

[00:34:27] **Speaker 1** Know you're the man. You make it easy, brother. It's really, really good, Kurt. Thank you. Nice job.

[00:34:35] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:34:37] **Speaker 1** Do we need to do it again when you guys are rolling on it?

[00:34:42] **Speaker 2** Yeah.

[00:34:45] **Speaker 1** No, that was nice, Kurt. Thank you. Oh. So I'm not sure when it's going to air. We've got a. Again, I've already done, but I'll make sure you get a heads up on it. Okay. Yeah. And then every now and then, they they might do a clip on here now to promote the segment online.

[00:35:13] **Speaker 2** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[00:35:14] **Speaker 1** But I'll let you know if any of that stuff happens too.

[00:35:16] **Speaker 2** Well, thanks for the opportunity.

[00:35:18] **Speaker 1** No. Let me give him my car, too. Am I okay to move it up?

[00:35:20] **Speaker 3** Are you guys all good if we stop the recording?

[00:35:21] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I think so. I just want to make sure you guys get what you need.

[00:35:24] **Speaker 3** I'm gonna grab this microphone.