

Boca police buy 'tracking' wristbands for those with autism, Alzheimer's

By Dale M. King

CITY EDITOR

The story of a little girl with autism who wandered away from her home in Wellington and drowned in a nearby pond wrenched the heart of every resident of Palm Beach.

Boca Raton Police Services Department wants to prevent this from happening here.

Project Lifesaver of Palm Beach County last week presented tracking equipment to the department. The apparatus tracks special wristbands that have been designed for people with autism and Alzheimer's to wear in case they wander away from caregivers, said police Public Information Officer Sandra Boonenberg.

She said a radio frequency located inside the wristband allows a lost person to be tracked with the Project Lifesaver equipment.

"Every year in Palm Beach County, numerous people who have Alzheimer's

or are autistic wander away from their homes," she said.

Among those attending the presentation were Boca Raton Mayor Susan Welchel; Patrick Rooney Jr. of the Autism Project of Palm Beach County; Robert Rubin of Rubin Herrington, LLC, whose autistic son, Scott was once missing; Liz Lugo, CEO of the Mae Volen Senior Center; Michelle Damone, project manager from Project Lifesaver of Palm Beach County and Police Chief Dan Alexander.

Boonenberg said the police department paid for the equipment.

Project Lifesaver's primary mission is to locate and rescue missing persons. Officials from the agency said it has created many partnerships with local law enforcement to help save money and time for taxpayers.

In Palm Beach County, the organization has pilot programs with Boca police, Jupiter Police and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.