

A note from Officer Corson, RJH School Resource Officer about preventing car prowls

I have heard the buzz around school about several recent car prowls in our parking lot. I am very upset about the incidents and the personal intrusion into our school environment related to these car prowls. We need to help prevent these incidents in the future. As the investigation continues, I will share with you information about prevention and the apprehension of the suspects.

Some of you might remember that when I left RJH in 2005 I was assigned to the Pro-Act Unit. This Unit focused on car theft and car prowls problems in Redmond and throughout the region. We were an undercover unit that followed and apprehended suspects involved in these types of crimes. The Eastside Pro-Act Units have made a substantial dent in this problem. With that said, there are and always will be these types of crime in our area.

I interviewed many of the people we apprehended and identified some common themes about why they target our area (remember, these points below are from their statements!)

- *“Most people who live in this area have money and are always leaving expensive things on their car seats.”*
- *“People on the Eastside and in parts of Seattle always leave their purses, phones, wallets, computers and GPS’s right out in the open in their cars and it is so easy to get to, no lie!!!”*
- *“All you rich people who think it’s so safe over here....don’t lock your cars and if you do you still leave the things we are looking for in the front seat area...it’s quick, it’s easy..... and we get the car registrations, your mail, your wallets and purses, checkbooks and credit cards, even driver’s licenses and passports that we later use in making false ID.”*
- *“People don’t realize that when they turn on their car alarms that most cars don’t even sound off unless the door is open.....all we do is reach into an open window, or break out the window and reach in and grab the thing they think area safe...in an alarmed car. As long as we don’t jar the car or open a door we can grab what we see...if we don’t see it we go to another car...there is so much stuff over here.”*

Even as we are investigating the car prowls at Redmond Junior High, please take these points to heart. My message is... always store your valuables in hidden and safe places that are out of view from the outside, or, better yet, don’t leave them in the car at all. Remove all cell phones and GPS units (along with the charge cords) from view. If you have a trunk, use it. What is in sight will make you a target. Also... look around when storing items to see if anyone is watching: the suspects have told me that sometimes they dress in business suits and carry briefcases just to make people think they are legitimate.

When it comes to car prowls and car thefts, the Eastside is a target because of habits and behavior of the residents that continue to provide the items these thieves are seeking. We can help by getting the word out to our friends, neighbors and co-workers. We can decrease our risk of being a victim of car prowls and car thefts by taking a few proactive precautions.

If you have any questions please stop by or contact me and I will come to your location for a visit.

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