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PRESS RELEASE

SAFE SURFIN' FOUNDATION FOUNDERS SHERIFF MIKE BROWN AND DR. JANET BROWN HONORED AS 2025 LYNCHBURG LIVING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



Pictured above: Sheriff Mike Brown (retired) and Dr. Janet Brown, Founders of Safe Surfin' Foundation; a 501c3 Non-Profit established in 1998 to educate youth on digital safety and citizenship.

SSF HEADQUARTERS; FLOYD, VA - Safe Surfin' Foundation is thrilled to announce that our founders, Sheriff Mike Brown (retired) and Dr. Janet Brown, have been selected as part of the 2025 "Community Champions" recognized by Lynchburg Living magazine. Their selection is featured in the November/December 2025 issue, honoring a group of dedicated individuals whose service and advocacy have significantly strengthened our community.

A Shared Mission of Service

From the moment Safe Surfin' Foundation was established, Sheriff and Dr. Brown dedicated themselves to building a culture of digital safety, youth mentorship, and community empowerment across the Central Virginia region and beyond. Their work is grounded in the belief that every young person deserves not only access to technology, but tools, guidance, and a safe environment in which to use it.

Over the years, their leadership has led to:

- Outreach programming which brings together law-enforcement experience and academic insight to teach cyber-awareness, online etiquette, digital safety and self-advocacy skills.
- Community partnerships that recruit educators, local organizations, parents, and youth leaders in a collective mission of safe, positive digital engagement.
- A living example of service: Sheriff Brown's multiple years of protecting and advocating for public safety, and Dr. Brown's continued commitment to instruction, research and community wellness — together reinforcing that technology and community go hand in hand, and that behind every screen is a person deserving respect, support and safety.

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Celebrating the Honor

“Being named a Lynchburg Living Community Champion is a tremendous honor,” said Sheriff Mike Brown (retired). “This recognition reflects the hard work of many — staff, volunteers, youth, community partners, legislators — not just us. We accept it on behalf of everyone who believes in the mission of Safe Surfin’ and who strive every day to make it real.”

Dr. Janet Brown added, “We’re deeply humbled to be recognized alongside so many committed community stewards. Our hope is that this spotlight inspires others to step up, be connected, and create safe spaces for digital growth.”

Next Steps & Ongoing Commitment

Looking ahead, the couple and their Safe Surfin’ team remain committed to deepening their impact through innovative, evidence-based programs. Highlights include:

- The launch of ***Skyll Movie Games*** in Nitro, W.V.—a Safe Surfin’ initiative developed under West Virginia Senate Bill 466; legislation championed by the Foundation. This interactive experience educates youth on the dangers of sextortion, human trafficking, and online sexual abuse through immersive storytelling and prevention strategies.
- Expansion of youth cyber safety training, strengthened partnerships with schools and community organizations, and the rollout of new parent/guardian modules to foster family-wide digital awareness.
- Continued refinement of programs using the latest research, ensuring that Safe Surfin’s work remains relevant and responsive to the challenges today’s youth face online.

The urgency of this mission is clear. A national study found that 15.6% of young adults report experiencing online child sexual abuse in childhood, 11% report image-based abuse, and 3.5% have faced sextortion. In 2023, our partner, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children recorded over 26,700 cases of financial sextortion—more than double the previous year. Meanwhile, a meta-analysis of adolescent prevention programs revealed that early intervention significantly reduces both victimization and perpetration of sexual violence. These findings affirm the Foundation’s core belief: early, targeted education can change lives—and even save them.

As Safe Surfin’ continues to grow its national reach, Sheriff Brown and Dr. Brown remain steadfast in their shared mission to protect youth, support families, and build a safer, more informed digital future for all. Safe Surfin’ Foundation is proud to celebrate this recognition with our community, and are inspired to keep building a safer digital future, together.

END



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FOUNDATION**

About Safe Surfin’ Foundation

Since 1998, the Safe Surfin’ Foundation (SSF) has been dedicated to protecting youth from online exploitation, human trafficking risk, cyberbullying and sextortion. Through peer-to-peer education models like Cyber S.W.A.T., SSF partners with schools, law enforcement, and community organizations nationwide.

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