

# New Documentary Tells the Story of Safety Town, the Nearly Century-Old American Child Safety Program

*The film follows a hands-on program built around miniature towns that now reaches children across more than 40 U.S. states and 50 countries.*

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, June 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A [feature documentary](#) now completing production tells one of the great untold stories in American civic life: Safety Town, the nearly century-old program where children learn pedestrian and traffic safety, fire safety, emergency response, personal boundaries, and civic responsibility inside miniature-scale towns built and run by their own communities.

Written and directed by H Spencer Young and shot by cinematographer Claudia Raschke, ASC (RBG, Boys State, Julia, My Name Is Pauli Murray), the film was recently named a finalist for the Rogovy Miller/Packan Documentary Film Fund. Safety Town began in Mansfield, Ohio, in 1937, was relaunched in Bedford, Ohio, in 1964, and today operates across more than 40 U.S. states and over 50 countries, with participation estimated in the millions. Patrick Hamm, whose work has screened at SXSW, IDFA, and CPH:DOX, serves as producer.

Safety Town's miniature cities feature working traffic lights, scaled-down buildings, real streets, and pedal cars that teach children how to move safely through the world around them. For nearly a century, the program has run on volunteers, retired educators, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, police and fire departments, and PTA parents. Rooted in child safety, it has also become a working example of civic life sustained at the neighborhood level.

"This is one of the great untold American stories," said H Spencer Young, the film's writer and director. "What drew me to Safety Town from the very beginning was what it represented on a larger level: childhood, public trust, civic imagination, and the fragile social fabric connecting American communities. At a moment when conversations surrounding safety, loneliness, public life, and human connection have become increasingly urgent, the themes emerging from this world feel startlingly contemporary. The deeper we traveled into it, the more the film began revealing unexpected questions about how societies teach trust, independence, empathy, and coexistence."

The film was shot across the United States with children, families, educators, volunteers, city officials, police, firefighters, and the multi-generational communities tied to Safety Town's

history. The production also assembled nearly a century of archival material, including rare photographs, films, audio recordings, organizational records, and educational media documenting how American ideas about childhood, safety, and community have changed.

"For something like this to run on word of mouth for 90 years," said Dr. Douglas Brinkley, the film's historical advisor, "can anything like this happen again in America?"

As the film enters its final phase, the team is opening conversations with partners, institutions, Safety Town alumni, and cultural organizations connected to the program. To learn more, share a story, or connect with the team, visit [thesafetytownmovie.com](http://thesafetytownmovie.com).

#### About H Spencer Young

H Spencer Young is a writer, director, and interdisciplinary artist whose work spans documentary, narrative film, conceptual art, and visual storytelling. His film and moving-image work includes directing the feature documentary *Swing State*, the Honor Spring/Summer 2012 fashion film premiered by *W Magazine*, and the music video *Warning Bell for Joan As Police Woman*, featured by *The Atlantic*. He edited and did sound design for Rashid Johnson's *Samuel in Space*, commissioned by Ballroom Marfa, exhibited at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and acquired by the Detroit Institute of Arts. He was also a story advisor on the Tribeca Film Festival premiere *Jack Smith and the Destruction of Atlantis*, named one of *Entertainment Weekly's* 10 Best Films of 2006. His art has shown at Art Basel and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, and his work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, and *The Guardian*. He studied directing and cinematography at FAMU in Prague under the sponsorship of writer Arnost Lustig, and has taught filmmaking and art to hundreds of children in New York City.

#### About Grand Unified

Grand Unified is a New York production company and creative studio working across film, contemporary art, fashion, music, and brand storytelling. Its work includes global campaigns, museum and institutional collaborations, and brand films for clients including Hudson's Bay Company, Lord & Taylor, Nike, Juice Press, Saks Fifth Avenue, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

#### About Safety Town

Safety Town is a child safety education program founded in Mansfield, Ohio, in 1937 and relaunched in Bedford, Ohio, in 1964. Today it operates across more than 40 U.S. states and over 50 countries, with participation estimated in the millions. Through hands-on instruction in miniature-scale towns, the program teaches children pedestrian and traffic safety, emergency response, fire prevention, stranger awareness, and civic responsibility.

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