MU students create app to improve campus, city safety

BY Seth Klamann

1 When SafeTrek users enter a place in which they feel unsafe, they open the application and place their thumb on a button in the center of the screen.

2 When users remove their thumb, they have 10 seconds to type in a four-digit PIN to disarm the application.

3 If the user does not type in a PIN, the application will send an alert and the location of the user to an emergency dispatcher.

4 The application also shares the user’s location before and after the alert is sent, as well as important information from the user’s SafeTrek profile to assist emergency responders.

Sources: SAFETREK
COLUMBIA — After winning the Reynolds Journalism Institute's smartphone app contest last spring, the two Zachs now want more than a pat on the back for their personal safety app, SafeTrek.

"As far as we can take it, we will," Zach Beattie said about the plans he and his partner Zach Winkler share. "If it works (in Columbia), we'll move to other cities."

The app, which is making its way through the legal department of the Columbia Police Department and not yet available to the public, is designed to help users who feel unsafe but aren't quite ready to call the police.

It works like a 911 hand grenade: When the user feels uncomfortable, he or she removes "the pin" — that is, the user opens the app and places a finger on the screen. When the danger is gone, the user lifts that finger off the screen and enters a four-digit code — restoring the pin, figuratively speaking.

If the situation becomes threatening, the user removes his or her finger. If the code is not entered in 10 seconds, the police call the user's phone. Boom goes the grenade.

While SafeTrek is not the only app of its kind on the market, Winkler is convinced the app's simplicity sets it apart, as does the risk-free reassurance.

"The real goal is to eliminate that feeling of being unsafe," Winkler said. "Maybe you're being followed or maybe scared; it can give you a little bit of comfort, holding down that button and knowing that you're doing something proactive to protect yourself."

Blue light blahs

For students at MU, the campus blue light system is designed to remove that unease. Like a phone booth without the booth, each has a phone and distinctive blue bulb and is within view of another blue light. The idea is that students who feel uneasy can move from light to light until they arrive at a safe place, calling the police if necessary.

But Beattie and Winkler, together with then-partner Natalie Cheng, felt the blue lights were more confusing than illuminating.

According to a 2010 Maneater article, the blue light system had resulted in more than 1,600 calls from 2005 to the article's publication three years ago. Only three of those incidents required police to file a report.

The trio began by conducting studies, asking students how they felt about the lights. "When we did these surveys, we started to discover students don't know how to use (the blue lights)," Beattie said. "There's a lot of confusion around them. ... That's kind of where the problem originated, and we started to develop SafeTrek."
Research in hand, Beattie, Winkler and Cheng approached MU Police Chief Jack Watring, but he couldn't really picture how the app would work and what kind of burden it would place on his small staff. He pointed the pair toward the Columbia Police Department. The three also approached Columbia Police Chief Ken Burton and then spoke to interim Emergency Management Director Scott Olsen, who is also chief of the Boone County Fire Protection District.

After good meetings with both men, the trio met with Brian Maydwell, a systems support analyst for the Public Safety Joint Communications Center.

Maydwell said those early meetings helped to shape the app into a tool dispatchers could use.

The group "worked with us quite a bit when they were doing their development," said Maydwell, whose department controls dispatchers in Columbia. "We were helping along with what actually works in this industry."

Maydwell said the app also includes safeguards against accidental calls. "Any phone can pocket dial, but their app requires a multiple-step process, and that prevents pocket dials," he said.

**The price of peace of mind**

With the contest over, research and development done and the summer underway, Cheng left the group.

"There was an internal conversation about everyone's workload within the group," Cheng said. "We weren't able to solve it, so I exited the team."

Beattie and Winkler brought on classmates Nick Droege and Aaron Kunnemann as chief operating officer and chief administrative officer, respectively. The app was then submitted to the legal department of the Columbia Police Department.

"It's been a back-and-forth conversation," Droege said. "We want to make sure the app is a product that is useable and helpful and something that (the department) wants."

While the immediate application for SafeTrek addresses the peace of mind Winkler sees as a selling point, Beattie thinks the information that can be gleaned from using the app is another asset.

"The most valuable part to police departments — beyond additional safety to citizens — is the information behind the app," he said. "Every time someone uses it, we log where they were traveling, where they feel unsafe. When lots of people use it, it almost creates a heat map."

That has the potential to give police more data about trouble spots on campus, and Beattie and his partners find that exciting.
But Columbia Police crime analyst Jerry East doesn't think it will change the way the police patrol Columbia.

"I appreciate what the app's trying to do. If somebody's attacking you, it's hard to pull out your phone and dial 911," East said. "In terms of how we do business, it probably won't change anything. It's additional data we have."

As they wait for the Police Department's legal arm to work out the details, Beattie says he and his partners continue to move toward the app's launch, though they haven't set an exact date for the unveiling of the app.

Beattie said the group is also working through price models that involve billing campuses and cities, but ideally citizens will not be charged for downloading and using the app.
Game days disrupt Faurot Field renovation project

By Katherine Knott

Amid an active construction site at Faurot Field at Memorial Stadium, Mizzou Athletics is opting for a wait-and-see approach on crowd control and foot traffic.

But first, the construction site needs to be cleared so the area is usable for spectators.

The cleanup process includes laying concrete, covering up exposed areas and moving all equipment to an area south of the stadium. The cranes will festoon the student side of the stadium all season, and athletics officials have debated decorating them for games.

The east side of Memorial Stadium will be an active construction site for the duration of the 2013 season as crews build an upper deck that will have more than 4,000 seats and a club level with at least 800 seats, according to Mizzou Athletics. The renovations will also comply with new Americans with Disabilities Act regulations.

In the meantime, the east side will need to be safe for the thousands of students going to the game, athletics spokesman Chad Moller said. Inspectors will check the area before each home game to make sure it is secure.

The construction on the east side is the second phase of a renovation to Memorial Stadium. For first phase, the rock M was moved closer to the field, and the north concourse was expanded. The west tower was also renovated.

Once work on the east side is completed, the capacity will increase by more than 5,000 seats. For the 2013 season, the official capacity was reduced by 3,880 seats — to 67,124 — due to construction.

During the work, the vast majority of the east side will be unusable, and foot traffic will be impacted, Moller said. In the path to the student entrances are three concrete towers and many more supports. Students will continue to use traditional student gates now situated under the skeleton of the upper deck.
The construction might cause the Tiger's Lair student section to make adjustments to its game day operations, but director Jake Hamilton said he is waiting until after Saturday's game against Murray State to make any judgments.

"We don't know what the construction is going to do for us, and so we want to wait and see," Hamilton said.

Wait-and-see is Mizzou Athletics’ approach as well. While other student entrances will deal with the same problems, Athletics has told Tiger's Lair that everything will work the same way, Hamilton said.

"We have no way of knowing until the first game," Moller said.

If something changes from the norm on game days, Moller said it will be communicated to fans.

Hamilton visited the construction site to hang the Tiger's Lair flag, and he said he thought the stadium will be ready for Saturday.

“A couple days ago, I was like, ‘This is not going to get done,’” he said. "But they have laid concrete, boarded up exposed things. They have had to barricade off some spots where they don't want people, and that's what is going to be difficult for us."

With certain areas off-limits, Hamilton and his team cannot plan ahead because they will not really know what they have to work with until game day.

Hamilton's main concern is getting people in the stadium and line control. The construction might complicate the process, he said, but he thinks it will be good for Tiger's Lair. He plans on using the construction site as a resource to help with line control since the supports can act as physical barriers.

"The new additions are beautiful, and we work around whatever we need to as long as we can get our people into the stadium," Hamilton said. "I'm not worried about it."
The MU Student Health Center has converted from paper to electronic records.

Scott Henderson, director of Medical Services at the MU Student Health Center, said the center switched its records in late June.

"(The paper filing system) was used up until June 24 of this year," Henderson said. "A patient of the Health Center would (formerly) just have a paper record in our office. We have gone to electronic records."

This transition will allow for more effective communication within the center and takes away from the confusion that paper filing can sometimes cause, Henderson said.

“Electronic records are just more reliable than paper ones,” senior nursing student Katie Gibson said. “It’s really easy to make an appointment. I would much rather go to the Student Health Center than a hospital.”

Switching to an electronic records system was a process that took more than three years from start to finish, Henderson said.

"I came on board three years ago and it was in early discussions before then,” he said. “We started the process in earnest about one year ago."

The switch will allow the center to more easily share records with the University of Missouri Health System.

"If a student is admitted to the university hospital or seen in a university clinic now, there is the ability for shared information,” Henderson said. "Hopefully, this will lead to better care."

Henderson said the center deliberately made the transition in the summer, when system glitches would affect fewer students.
“We have been very fortunate that we intentionally planned on going live during summer when fewer students were on campus,” Henderson said. “We have not have any major problems or transition issues.”

Students will now make all prescriptions electronically.

“Records will be immediately available,” Henderson said. “(The new system) will, in the process, have the potential to speed up communications.”

Henderson said electronic records are becoming standard in the health care industry.

"We are using the same system product that the entire university hospital system is using. We were in the timeframe (that was planned out),” Henderson said. “Most student health centers are going through this process. It is an expectation among healthcare providers.”

Students are still advised to set up individual appointments by calling (573)-882-7481.
MU organizations battle stigma, stress with Tigers Take Action Carnival

Wednesday, August 28, 2013 | 6:38 p.m. CDT

BY Sarah Walsh

COLUMBIA — MU residence hall coordinator Scott Bosley spent an August afternoon keeping cool — as the target of a dunking booth in the center of campus.

"I'd say I got dunked about fifteen or twenty times," he said while drying off. "That last guy was on a roll."

Bosley was one of 12 volunteers who agreed to be dunked in the name of mental health and relaxation Wednesday at the second Tigers Take Action Carnival.

The carnival, which was coordinated by the MU Counseling Center, featured snow cones, cotton candy and games hosted by various MU organizations. Each booth featured a tip for students to lead a more mentally and physically healthy lifestyle: "Exercise!" "Be creative!" "Sink stigma!"

The goal of the event was to help students relax and to destigmatize campus services that students are sometimes reluctant or embarrassed to use, Counseling Center outreach coordinator Christy Hutton said.

These services include mental health care at the Counseling Center, food assistance at Tiger Pantry and peer support at the LGBTQ Resource Center.

"Stigma is the reason students don’t get help," Hutton said. "When we look at statistics, we see that 80 percent of college students who die by suicide don’t get any kind of help. By getting rid of stigma, we can save lives and help students have the college experience they came for."
Hutton added that she hopes interacting with campus staff in an informal setting at the carnival will help students view them as more approachable.

Tiger Pantry director Paul Haluszczak, who helped run a beanbag toss for the carnival, said he has noticed stigma surrounding his organization manifesting itself as a significant gap between the number of people who sign up for Tiger Pantry services online and the number who follow through in person.

"That's our best measure of how many people are maybe too shy to physically come in to our facilities," he said. "We currently have 250 clients compared to the 350 who had originally signed up. Shrinking that gap is one of our main goals, and we think this event is a good way to help with that. Tiger Pantry is a really friendly environment."

Martesha Woodhouse, a junior at MU, said that the carnival helped her take a break from the stresses of the new school year.

"When I saw this, my eyes lit up," she said. "We’re all just big kids, and we just need to escape, sometimes, from classes and organizing and studying. It’s good to know that Mizzou cares."
MU to provide agricultural development in Ghana

MU will soon provide support to Ghanaian farmers and agencies to help reduce poverty and hunger in the area.

The University of Missouri Assistance Program officially announced its registration as an international Non-Governmental Organization in the West-African country, effective Aug. 16.

The program, which is managed by the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, will increase Ghana’s agricultural productivity by providing training, research assistance and technical expertise to local farmers, Ghana’s Ministry of Food and Agriculture and U.S. government relief agencies, according to a CAFNR news release.
Improving Ghana’s agricultural extension system, or the communication of agricultural research from the researchers to farmers, is one of the major challenges the program will need to tackle, said Julia Shuck, an MU graduate who spent six months with another NGO in Ghana after graduating.

Ghana’s agricultural extension programs have been problematic due to the lack of proper infrastructures, human resources and a unified system of language, Shuck said.

“In the U.S., every county has an extension office with experts who can go out and help farmers,” Shuck said. “The issue in Ghana is that there is one extension agent for every 13,000 farmers. These extension agents are unable to develop a close connection between the researchers and the farmers because they are spread out so thin.”

Even though more than half of Ghana’s 25 million people farm, lack of proper agricultural infrastructure and extension services make future food security a growing concern for Ghana, said Joe Horner, an extension economist at CAFNR.

“Their agricultural colleges and farmer institutes were established in the 1960s, and since that time, little new investment has gone into the agricultural sector, while the population has tripled,” Horner said.

MU’s involvement will make it the first university-based NGO to operate in Ghana. Shuck emphasized the importance of a long-term Missouri presence in the country for making connections with the locals.

“A lot of people will not take you seriously if you are in and out for a few days at a time,” Shuck said. “Many professors from different universities would come in for a couple of weeks, and tell people what to do based on their limited knowledge. It doesn’t always help because they don’t know the local situation.”

William Meyers, director of CAFNR International Programs, said that having a Missouri presence in the country will convince the locals to be more willing to work with the program.

“Being there shows that we are serious about engaging the pressing issues and allows us to respond when there is an opportunity to get involved,” Meyers said.

During her time working in Ghana, Shuck aided local farmers in writing reports and taking photographs to send to the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Feed the Future program. She also encouraged Ghanaian farmers to not only farm for sustenance but to increase crop yield and sell the excess crops for education and health care.

“A lot of these farmers are living at the poverty line to begin with,” Shuck said. “There are no social safety nets to catch these people if they have a bad year. If they have a drought, for an example, there goes their food for a year.”
Ghana is not the first country the assistance program worked with as an NGO. CAFNR has had a presence in Kenya since 2003, primarily providing training programs to locals and aid workers.

Meyers said he is confident in the program’s future in Ghana.

“I am encouraged by the fact there were a lot of interest and support for having a Missouri presence there,” Meyers said. “Ghana had appeared on our radar as a good place to send assistance and seeing positive results.”

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Staff cuts at Ellis Fischel impact quality of patient care

BY Dale and Karen Metcalf

The University of MissouriHealth System has decided to make a budget or staff cut in the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center. The cut is in the Advance Practice Nurses that give direct care to cancer patients and their treatment.

Four important positions that give consults and guidance to patients and their caregivers were cut one month ago with a two-week notice.

Patients received a letter in the mail telling them the service would no longer be provided. Patients were left to wonder what to do and who to call if they have a reaction to their treatment or simply have a question about what to expect from the procedure.

The question I would like to ask is what is to be accomplished? Does the cut make care more efficient? How is that, when now we have to contact the doctor for a prescription change or any change in the follow-up care? The doctor may be in surgery or not on call. Then do we go straight to the emergency room? Incur a hospital stay? Have an unscheduled appointment and wait?

The Nurse Practitioners saved time and money it would seem to me. They are able to prescribe or stop medications when reactions occur. They are available by immediate contact on the phone or by text.

Sometimes the simple reassurance you are doing the right thing is all that is needed to calm the anxiety of a patient and caregiver.

Have you ever been diagnosed with cancer? Just the word brings anxiety to a family. Health care today is about prevention. Preventing unnecessary visits, hospital stays, emergency room
appointments and preventing exposure to other infections by simply visiting a waiting room. Cancer patients undergoing treatment are vulnerable to infection. They experience anxiety every day.

It seems that this was an action taken without thinking about preventative care. The health care industry today is about outcomes rather than fees for service. Cancer care requires a team approach. A team that can incorporate all aspects of human care. We were asked where we wanted to receive our chemo here in Columbia. We told MD Anderson we wanted Ellis Fischel simply because of the team approach they had. This included Advance Practice Nurses. We would rethink that decision now given the current circumstances.

*Dale and Karen Metcalf are Columbia residents. Dale Metcalf is a cancer survivor; Karen Metcalf is a caregiver.*
Albert Lee Henson III, known to all as Lee, passed away Saturday, Aug. 24, 2013, at The Neighborhoods in Columbia.

There will be a gathering in Lee's honor at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 3, at Stotler Lounge in Memorial Union on the campus of the University of Missouri

Lee was born Nov. 11, 1940, in Detroit, Mich., to Albert Lee Henson Jr. and Elizabeth Spray Henson, both of whom predeceased him.

He grew up in Chicago and graduated from Lyons Township High School in 1958 and got his bachelor's degree in English from Brown University in 1962. In 1967, Lee married Maggie Billings, and together they would have four children. In 1974, Lee earned his law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Lee and Maggie lived for many years in Kansas City, where Lee worked as a civil rights negotiator for the federal government. In 1986, Lee became paralyzed from the chest down in a bicycle accident. Lee and his family relocated to Columbia in 1990 to start a new life. Lee led Services for Independent Living for three years before joining the University of Missouri, where for 20 years he strove to create a campus that was accessible to all, regardless of disability. His work touched countless lives and left the MU campus a better place for all to study and work.

He also served as a member of the Columbia Disabilities Commission, Columbia Northwest Rotary, Columbia Comprehensive Plan Task Force and the Columbia Vision Commission. He was also a member of the Missouri and American Bar Associations and the Association of Missouri Mediators.

Lee was a warm, generous, humorous man who was never without a kind word or a joke for anyone. He was an avid Missouri Tiger fan and could be found cheering his beloved Tigers on at every home football and basketball game for many years.
Lee is survived by his wife of 46 years, Maggie; his children, Alex Henson (Liza Teodoro) of Richmond, Va., Kathy Gehrig (Paul) of Issaquah, Wash., and Nick and Carey Henson, both of Columbia.

Lee took great joy in his granddaughters, Marcy and Erin Gehrig of Issaquah, Wash., Amelia and Anna Kate Henson of Richmond, Va., and Kallie Henson of Columbia, who will miss their Granddaddy and Pa Pa very much. Lee is also survived by his brother, Judd Henson (Melanie) of St. Petersburg, Fla.; sister-in-law Amy Montebello (Andy) of Strafford; brother-in-law James Billings (Judy) of Springfield; niece Katie Montebello of Springfield; and countless other friends, relatives, former student aides and co-workers.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Lee Henson Scholarship Fund in care of the MU Student Veterans Center.

Online condolences may be left for the family at www.parkerfuneralservice.com.

It has often been said, but in Lee's case, it was true: To know him truly was to love and be loved by him.