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## **Foundation 1023 launches emotional wellbeing initiative in Texas for the children and families of First Responders with a book called ‘The Wolf was Not Sleeping’ sponsored by FirstNet, Built with AT&T and Cisco.**

Foundation 1023, a charity committed to supporting the emotional and mental wellness of First Responders, has launched an emotional wellbeing campaign in the state of Texas which helps children of First Responders cope with their fears over the dangers their loved ones may face by way of a children’s picture book called ‘The Wolf was Not Sleeping’.

The children’s book (and supporting emotional wellbeing resources which accompany it) will be given to over 50,000 Police, Fire Fighters and EMT’s across Dallas, Houston, Austin and surrounding suburban and rural areas across Texas in December. The aim is to enable first responders to share the pride they feel in their work with the young people in their lives, and open conversations within First Responder families to help support them with the emotional challenges they can face within their roles.

The precious tale, written by Avril McDonald and illustrated by Tatina Minina, is part of the Feel Brave series. It tells the story of a wolf cub who finds it hard to sleep because his dad is a First Responder, and how he overcomes his fears with a little help from a friend. The idea came from New Zealand firefighter and father Kris Kennett who lost a colleague and friend to suicide and felt that more needed to be done for the children and families of First Responders. The book was piloted with First Responders in New Zealand and the evidence-based results on its groundbreaking success have encouraged other countries to follow suit. The Texas roll out, initiated by Foundation 1023, sponsored by AT&T, Cisco, and [FirstNet®, Built with AT&T](#) is the first to bring this wellbeing initiative to the children and families of First Responders in America.

Foundation 1023’s Founder Melody Mesmer said: *“Children in First Responder families often know of the amazing work their family members do and also know that they are frequently referred to as “Heroes” by others. And while they know and appreciate their families’ job, they are also exposed to the dangers of these professions be it from television, movies or the internet. Many children develop a fear of having their family member injured or killed while at work and it can be disruptive to their daily normal. Unaddressed, these fears can become intrusive and disrupt school, time with friends and sleep cycles. This story and the accompanying resource will guide families in sharing the pride of their work, all while assisting young people to start and have open conversations about their fears and anxieties.”* Additional details can be found at [feel-brave-initiative](#).

*“When first responders are called to a disaster, it’s not just the professional that is impacted,” said Dr. Anna Fitch Courie, DPN, RN, PHNA-BC, Director, Responder Wellness, FirstNet Program at AT&T. “Families and loved ones are often behind the scenes, facing their own struggles and worries. Whether it’s time away on special days or holidays, or more intense emotional stress from fear, families of first responders make sacrifices for their communities that can deeply affect them. This book intends to open up conversations between responders and their families; deepen the connections they have; and provide resources to help anyone that is struggling. AT&T and FirstNet are committed to supporting the mental health and wellness of our first responders and their families to help make our communities safer. Together, we can help address the problem of mental health in public safety by starting these important conversations.”*

“Cisco strongly recognizes the importance of mental and emotional wellbeing in the workplace. First responders perform duties under extremely tough conditions and dedicate their lives to helping others. We are happy to do whatever we can to help them and their families in return. Our hope is that these new resources will help strengthen connections and understanding among family members,” said Masum Mir, Vice President and General Manager of Mobile, Cable and IoT, Cisco. “We respect and value the efforts of Foundation 1023, and we appreciate the opportunity to collaborate on this important initiative.”

## ABOUT Foundation 1023

Foundation 1023 is committed to supporting the emotional and mental wellness of First Responders and their support family who are experiencing illness, loss or stressful life events by providing confidential resources for emotional and mental wellness services, as well as access to peer supported outdoor activities, education and events designed for personal wellness and connection. Since 2016, approximately 2,500 First Responders or families have received services including 6,500 hours of mental wellness care and over 500 peer support team members have been trained. For more information, go to [www.foundation1023.org](http://www.foundation1023.org). To donate to Foundation 1023, go to <https://foundation1023.org/support>

## ABOUT FirstNet, Built with AT&T

FirstNet® is the only nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform dedicated to and purpose-built for America's first responders and the extended public safety community. Shaped by the vision of Congress and the first responder community following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, FirstNet stands above commercial offerings. It is built with AT&T in public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) – an independent agency within the federal government.

With more than 21,800 public safety agencies and organizations subscribed – accounting for more than 3.7 million connections nationwide – the FirstNet network is providing first responders with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it, unique benefits like always-on priority and preemption, and high-quality Band 14 spectrum. These advanced capabilities help emergency managers, fire, EMS, and law enforcement save lives and protect their communities.

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## ABOUT Cisco

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