



Producing Secure ID Cards for a Thriving Prep School

A southwest Florida school uses multi-purpose proximity cards to easily identify school staff and deliver stronger security on campus.



SNAPSHOT

Industry & Application

PreK - 12 School / Access Control & ID

Organization Profile

Evangelical Christian School is an accredited college preparatory school serving infants through grade 12.

Area of Improvement

Integrate a proximity card that keeps pace with the demand of current security and photo identification standards.

Identification Solution

ValuProx Proximity Cards - High-quality, value-priced prox cards with the performance equivalent of name-brand prox cards.

Outcome

A reliable combination of access control and photo identification credentials for the entire ECS school staff and faculty at a significant cost savings.

Officially opening its doors to students in 1973, Evangelical Christian School is located in the southwest part of Florida near Fort Myers. The student body includes pre-school children through high school seniors, with a combined student population of over 1,000 kids. For 45 years, this non-denominational college preparatory school has maintained its mission of providing unparalleled excellence in education for all students.

In addition to superior education standards, staff and student security are paramount to Evangelical Christian School. Following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, ECS Safety Director, Matt Gerl – along with school administrators – made the critical decision to significantly increase the level of security on their campus by integrating proximity cards. “We decided that we needed increased security to bring some order to the chaos. ECS is a very strong and enduring family-oriented organization. While there’s definitely a homey feeling here, we still must have protection and safety measures in place,” Gerl explained.

CHALLENGE

Increasing Security with Stronger Credentials

ECS had an access control system in place for about 18 years. The school had originally invested in a name-brand proximity card and began issuing secure ID badges to the entire employee and non-employee staff. “We wanted to improve our ID badge security. We also wanted the ability to easily monitor our school and see who had used their card, where and when,” Gerl said.

This included teachers, faculty and support staff, coaches, maintenance department, cafeteria, school nurse and the school’s security division. ID badges were also created for emergency locations within the building to enable law enforcement and fire department officials to enter the school in the event of an emergency. This prevents authorities from having to break down school doors to access the school’s interior.

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- Matt Gerl, Evangelical Christian School Safety Director



Because proximity ID cards are multi-functioning by nature, the school chose to include their kindergarten hot lunch program in tandem with the ID badge program. Students’ names were printed on cards, coupled with their lunch ID number. Each kindergarten teacher kept track of the student lunch cards, passing them out when once they got to the cafeteria and then collecting them after the students finished their lunches.

After exceeding its card-printing lifespan by several years, the school began looking for a replacement card printer. Gerl again reached out to his dedicated ID Wholesaler Account Manager, Zachary Knutson, asking for help to find a new card printer that could accommodate the school’s unique badging requirements. Knutson recommended the Datacard CD810 printer because of its high-volume output, professional-grade quality and speeds that surpass any other direct-to-card printer on the market.



Datacard CD810 ID Card Printer

To help make the school’s ID badge program even more financially sustainable, Knutson told Gerl about ValuProx Proximity Cards. Equivalent to the major name-brand prox cards, ValuProx cards feature a compelling list of benefits:

- ValuProx cards cost 4 – 14% less than standard proximity cards.
- They provide universal compatibility with 125 kHz prox card readers.
- Cards can be programmed and shipped in **days** versus weeks from other proximity card manufacturers.

Gerl felt that ValuProx cards would be a wise direction for the school to take, because as an ID Wholesaler customer since 2010, he fully trusted Knutson’s endorsement of the technology cards.

SOLUTION

Integrate a Powerful & Secure Proximity Card Solution

In June of 2017, Gerl purchased his first order of ValuProx Proximity Cards from ID Wholesaler. “Like most folks, I appreciate a great value. I was convinced after we first started using ValuProx cards that I’d made the right decision,” Gerl said. “I trusted Zach’s recommendation of the cards, and that’s why I switched to ValuProx.” He went on to say that, “When I have something that works as well as ValuProx does, there’s no need to try something else just because it’s the latest and greatest.”

Gerl now prints secure ID badges annually. Employee, non-employee and kindergarten lunch ID badges are re-printed and re-issued to ensure that cards are as up to date as possible. 2018 was the first year that ECS began incorporating the school year date on their cards for added security. “We print about 150 badges each year and re-print any lost or broken cards during the school year.”

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RESULTS

Rely on the Expertise of a Photo Identity Leader

When asked if he’d recommend ID Wholesaler to his colleagues, the school safety director said, “Absolutely! I think I’ve had one or two non-functioning ValuProx cards in the thousands I’ve ordered. These cards can really hold up!” He went on to say, “I’d had lots of problems when I purchased prox cards from another technology card vendor. ValuProx proximity cards are significantly more durable.”

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