

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Feb. 1-7 National Burn Injury Awareness Week
- Feb. 8-14 National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week
- March 21-27 National Poison Prevention Week
- April Youth Sports Injury Prevention Month
- April 18-24 Week of the Young Child
- April 26-30 Playground Safety Week
- May National Bike Month
- May 1-8 National SAFE KIDS Week
- May 23-31 Buckle Up America Week
- May 23-29 National Safe Boating Week



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Keep Us Current - Please advise SAFE KIDS of mailing list corrections or deletions by calling Beth Freeman at 405/271.5695 or via e-mail: beth-freeman@ouhsc.edu.

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COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Count Your Blessings ... Then Make Your Voice Heard

At this time of year when people are counting their blessings, we at SAFE KIDS are certainly aware of ours. Numerous SAFE KIDS friends and supporters, past and present, come to mind. I hesitate to start naming names, but I will anyway. Just know that this is the tip of the iceberg, and ALL of you are deeply appreciated. Here are a few, in no particular order:

- Chris Moler, who helped found our board more than 14 years ago, and has served countless hours over the years.
- Lois Jennings, our current board president, who thinks nothing of volunteering her teenagers when they need to "work off" a debt to mom.
- Our supporters and donors, who trust us to be good stewards with their money, whether it be \$25 or cumulative thousands.
- Jim Sutterfield, who volunteers religiously at every opportunity and has for years, proving that retirees don't have to take to their rocking chairs.
- Lori Parmenter, who, despite surviving a serious burn as a young adult, has spent much of her life volunteering for safety organizations including SAFE KIDS.
- Jack Elliott and Ron Williams of KYIS-FM, who with their weekly SAFE KIDS segment for the past *ten* years, have probably done more than anyone else to promote child safety.
- Delbert Karnes, who took it upon himself to build us what I call the "seat-belt-on-a-stick" that we still schlep to car seat

classes to this day, and use as a teaching aid.

· Jennifer Duclos of the OSU-OKC Child Development Center who is one of about 150 certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians around the state who inspect child safety seats through our referral service (see related photo, this page). *And*, her employer – and many others like them – who allow this even though it is not technically part of their job.

· Our small but dedicated staff, who work here not because of the big bucks they earn, but because they love what they do and believe it makes a difference.

As I said, these are but a few. I hope you can take the time during this season to count *your* blessings. Happy Holidays!

On a totally unrelated note, after you've counted your blessings, I hope you'll sit down at your computer or pick up the phone and contact your legislators about the upcoming booster seat bill. Yes, it's almost that time of year once again. Our proposal, which would amend the current child restraint law to protect children under age 6 with booster seats, needs your support. Although the legislative session doesn't officially start until Feb. 2, it's not too early to contact your lawmakers. If you don't know who they are, go to www.lsb.state.ok.us, then go to "Find Your Legislators." It's never been easier to make your voice heard.

SAFE KIDS doesn't have a paid lobbyist, which means we have to rely on grassroots

support from folks like you. I might remind you that most if not all registered lobbyists contribute heavily to political campaigns – which can make some lawmakers feel indebted to them. This is how the game is played. It's all legal, at least for now. But I am also idealistic enough to think there are some lawmakers who can't be bought. They are going to do the right thing. But *you* have to tell them what the right thing is. With thousands of bills that come across their desk every year, they cannot possibly be an expert in each subject.

So, like I said, count your blessings, then pick up your phone ...

– Martha Collar, Coalition Coordinator



Thank-You Gift

General Motors Job Bank volunteers Mary Mattioda and Barbara Williams help Jennifer Duclos load booster seats into the OSU-OKC Child Development Center van. SAFE KIDS donated 10 of the seats to the center to help them get in compliance with the new DHS transportation regulation that went into effect Aug. 1. This child care center serves as a model for others, with Jennifer, a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician, inspecting seats each week as one of SAFE KIDS' permanent fitting stations. Other child care centers needing assistance in obtaining boosters should contact SAFE KIDS.

PUBLIC POLICY PROGRESS

Contact Your Lawmaker Now About Coming Booster Seat Measure

Be on the lookout for a measure to be introduced in the 2004 Oklahoma Legislature, increasing the minimum age for putting children in seat belts to age 6. Currently, Oklahoma's child restraint law allows parents to place children in seat belts when they turn 4 or reach 60 lbs., whichever comes first. Both the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend keeping kids in booster seats until around 8 years old or 80 lbs.

The problem is that most parents assume if it's legal, then it must be safe. The two are not synonymous, as many parents have learned the hard way. We are currently seeking a "spokes-family" for this campaign. If you know of a family who has lost a child or had a child seriously

injured because they were being transported without a booster seat, *and* if this family would be willing to speak publicly about their experience, we would like to talk with them.

Also, it's not too early to contact your lawmakers, especially those who voted "no" on a similar bill this year in the Senate: Branan, Brogdon, Coates, Coffee, Dunlap, Fair, Ford, Gumm, Harrison, Johnson, Kerr, Laster, Laughlin, Littlefield, Maddox, Milacek, Myers, Price, Pruitt, Rabon, Reynolds, Riley, Rozell, Shurden, Smith, Snyder, Wilcoxson and Williamson.

Twenty-two states have adopted similar measures in the past two years. Eventually, Oklahoma will, too. Let's not be last!



Walk This Way

Students at Fillmore Elementary lead the walk on "Walk to School Day" in October. The 3rd annual "Walk This Way" program included educating kids, parents and motorists about pedestrian safety issues, beefing up speed enforcement, and environmental modifications including erecting a fence and adding stop signs.

"If a woman has to choose between catching a fly ball and saving an infant's life, she will choose to save the infant's life without even considering if there is a man on base."

— Dave Barry

Graphic Design . . . Shauma Schroeder

THANKS FOR MAKING OKLAHOMA SAFER FOR CHILDREN

- | | | | | | |
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The above reflects contributions received from Sept. 1 to Dec. 12. Membership forms can be found at www.oksafekids.org.

What's on Our List to Santa? Donations for Car Seats, a New PC, Digital Camera — and More!

Each holiday season, your business and your family receive many requests for donations to nonprofit organizations. December is Annual Giving month for SAFE KIDS. We are experiencing something new right now, however — we are very busy, and normally December is our “slow” month! That is good – but that translates to the need for additional funding especially for the car seat program. Last year, SAFE KIDS was able to commit over \$50,000 to this program, providing free or discounted seats to low-income families. That amount will not allow us to serve the anticipated referrals for this year. So, we have work to do. Remember, \$120 will buy three seats for underserved families – and we will have the chance to educate the parent one-on-one.

One of the most rewarding programs SAFE KIDS offers is the car seat loaner program for special needs children. We have learned that not a single health equipment rental company in the state will provide these seats. We get requests from doctors, nurses, and social workers throughout the state looking for these seats. We have the only loaner seat program available to families – but the seats cost between \$200-\$500 each. However, there are children who are in full body casts, are neurologically injured and must have head support, or are developmentally challenged and cannot be placed in a standard seat. These children also have the right to ride safely. SAFE KIDS is committed to make that happen, and you can help. You can earmark your donation to the loaner seat program.

Two weeks ago a 3-year-old child and her twin 2-year-old siblings were killed just east of Oklahoma City. The 6-year-old remains in critical condition. The children were not in car seats because the family did not have the money. SAFE KIDS is committed to eradicating these unnecessary deaths in children. We do not want to fail another child. Join SAFE KIDS today and help us make every child safe.

And finally, since it is Christmas and we have been very good – we have a wish list!

- A new PC would be nice. One of our computers is about eight years old. You can literally eat lunch while waiting on it to warm up!
- We print all our own flyers for car seat checks, bike rodeos, etc. We would love to have a color printer (we've never had one).

- We would love a digital camera. We take pictures of high-risk traffic and child pedestrian areas, events, volunteers, etc.

- We make about 10,000 copies each month. We would love some bright-colored paper.

If you have any of these things you could donate, they would be most appreciated.

Now, for the 2004 Golf Ball Drop ... We're looking for a few good men and women! No car seat check in the freezing cold, no parking lot bike rodeo in July! We just need a little of your time – to help us promote this fun annual event. In case you haven't heard, a helicopter will fly over a designated hole at our annual golf tournament in July, and drop 2,500 golf balls. The first one that lands in the hole will bring a \$2,500 cash prize to the lucky winner. What we need you to do is take a sheet with 25 numbers and get a suggested \$10 donation from friends and co-workers for a chance to win the \$2,500 prize.

Last year, I used these as stocking stuffers for my family, and they loved them. Didn't win, but they had fun. These are great for office gifts, your golf foursome, and your brother-in-law in New Hampshire!! And, to make it very easy – we can accept cash, checks or credit cards.

All you need to do is call our office (405-271-5695) or send an e-mail to patricia-wimberley@ouhsc.edu and we'll send a packet. All the funds from the golf ball drop support the SAFE KIDS general project fund and are tax-deductible.

Let this be your Christmas present to SAFE KIDS. Call us for your sheet of 25 numbers today. Thanks, and have a happy and safe New Year.

– Patricia Wimberley, Development Director

Save the Date
Friday, May 7
7th Oklahoma
SAFE KIDS Summit
Oklahoma City
Watch for details soon!

RESOURCES

Online Resources Available

Did you know that SAFE KIDS has two resource catalogs that are updated and online? One is for videos; the other is for all other SAFE KIDS resources (books for adults and children, exhibits, etc.). Check them out at www.oksafekids.org.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Hidden Hazard

Sports fans are filling the bleachers to cheer on their favorite team, however, many people are unaware that bleachers can pose a danger to children. Since 1988, at least four children have died from bleacher-related falls. In 2001, more than 10,500 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for bleacher-related injuries. The majority of these injuries and deaths were due to falls.

For more information on bleacher safety, visit the “Hidden Hazards” section at www.safekids.org. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has also created recommendations for retrofitting old bleachers to prevent falls. It can be found at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUBS/330.pdf>.

New Air Bags — Are They “Smart” Enough?

A recent report in *USA Today* indicated that some automakers are dubious about the reliability of the next generation of air bags which, to meet federal regulations, must be able to discern key characteristics of the person sitting in front. By September 2003, at least 20 percent of the fleet must be outfitted with the “smart” air bags.

Depending on the method used, it is possible that a child might appear to be an adult due to the weight of a safety seat used. Certain seating configurations chosen by adults might lead the bag to respond to the adult occupant as if to a small child.

To help with these problems, NHTSA is offering to continue education to keep children in the back seat and to inform adults of the importance of sitting “properly” to avoid mistaken reactions from air bags.

PROGRAM NOTES

SAFE KIDS Summit Issues Call for Proposals

SAFE KIDS has issued a “Call for Proposals” for breakout sessions for the 7th Oklahoma SAFE KIDS Summit, Friday, May 7. If you would like to share your knowledge and expertise in the field of unintentional injury prevention, please contact SAFE KIDS for a “Call for Proposals” form. Preference will be given to successful projects and programs that can be replicated in communities across the state. Proposals must be post-marked by Jan. 12, or may be faxed to (405) 271-2974. For more information, call (405) 271-5695.

Bike Helmets-R-U's

If your school, church or community group is planning a bike rodeo for spring 2004, contact us to receive 10 free helmets. These helmets can be distributed through drawings as door prizes or any method you choose. Groups are asked to fill out a one-page application form, including the date, time and location of your event. Each group is eligible to receive helmets once a year. Contact SAFE KIDS to receive the application form, (405) 271-5695, or go to our web site, www.oksafekids.org.

Kudos to Shauna!

Shauna George, who has served SAFE KIDS as a part-time office assistant for the past three years, was one of 14 college students from Oklahoma selected to interview for a Rhoades Scholarship. The prestigious award results in a two-year scholarship to Oxford University for the finalist. Shauna, a senior at Oklahoma City University, competed against students from such notable schools as Emory, Notre Dame and Wake Forest. Although Shauna was not one of the two students selected to continue in the competition, we are SO proud of her!

UPCOMING CPS TRAININGS

Do you know a locking clip from a harness retainer clip? How about an automatic locking retractor from a splitter plate? Sounds technical, and it is, but it all becomes clear with a little education.

If you are in a position to help educate parents about child passenger safety, this class is for you. It is especially geared for child care providers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency care providers and health professionals. Cost is \$10, and continuing education credits are available. The following “Introduction to CPS” classes are scheduled for 9 a.m.-6 p.m.:

- Jan. 14 - Anadarko
- Feb. 11 - Oklahoma City
- March 10 - Shawnee
- May 11 - Lawton
- June 9 - Checotah
- Aug. 18 - Oklahoma City

The following “Technical Update” classes are scheduled for 1-4 p.m., and are geared for advocates who have had at least the introductory class, but have not had any training in two years:

- April 14 - McAlester
- July 21 - Oklahoma City
- Sept. 15 - Enid

The following CPS certification classes are scheduled:

- June 1-4 - Oklahoma City
- June 7-10 - Tulsa

For more information on additional classes in Tulsa and northeastern Oklahoma, contact Tulsa Area SAFE KIDS, (918) 494-SAFE, or mbogle@saintfrancis.com. For all other classes, contact Oklahoma SAFE KIDS, (405) 271-5695, or safekids@ouhsc.edu, or register online, www.oksafekids.org.