



CITY OF GLENDORA

For Immediate Release

For Immediate Release: November 3, 2009

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Glendora Selected as “Model City” for New Child Passenger Safety Program

Media Event Scheduled to Announce the Program

- WHAT:** News Conference and Media Event
- WHERE:** Washington Elementary School
325 West Gladstone Street, Glendora, CA 91740
- WHEN:** November 9, 10:30 a.m.
- WHO:** Principal Jeanine Robertson, Glendora Mayor Karen Davis, Chief of Police Charles Montoya, Glendora Police Department CPS Technician and Officers, representatives of California Office of Traffic Safety and SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.; Washington Elementary School children.
- TOPICS:** New booster seat safety program for Glendora kids; traffic safety; model city program.
- VISUALS:** Demonstration of the 5–Step Test with children in cars

(Glendora, California)— Glendora is slated to become a “model city” in a state–funded campaign to get elementary school children buckled up safely. Community members and the media are invited to attend a demonstration event at Washington Elementary School to announce the new program.

The year–long initiative, spearheaded by non–profit SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. with the Glendora Police Department, aims to make all Glendora parents with children aged 4–12 aware of the importance of the properly fitted safety belt in protecting kids while riding in the car. The effort is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A has shown in many settings that most children do not fit in belts properly before age 10–12. Booster seats need to be used after children have outgrown safety seats with harness straps until the child fits the vehicle safety belt correctly, at about age 10 to 12 — much longer than most parents realize.

Karen Davis, Mayor of Glendora, helped initiate the program.

“We are very excited about this program coming to Glendora,” said Mayor Davis. “I had no idea how many kids in our community are riding at risk, including my own daughters, then 9 years old, when proper belt fit was explained to me at a safety seat checkup. I encourage all of our schools and community groups that work with kids to get involved and learn how to bring a booster seat safety event to the families in their programs.”

Safety experts agree that booster seats are very important for proper crash protection, reducing by half the risk of injury to a child.

“It is very simple to learn if a child fits a safety belt properly, but the consequences of *not knowing* can be devastating,” said Glendora Police Chief, Charles Montoya. “If the belt doesn’t fit properly, particularly if the lap belt crosses the stomach, the child is likely to be badly hurt in a crash. Booster seats lift the child so the belt is positioned properly on the strong bones, to take the force of a crash on the pelvis and shoulder, not the soft abdominal area,” he said.

“After steady increases, the rate at which children are properly secured in cars dropped this year,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Through the work of the Glendora Police Department and SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A, we aim to turn that around, so that more children are protected in cars.”

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death and serious injury to children, because most children are not properly protected. Last week, SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. and Glendora Police Department officers conducted classroom presentations followed by the 5–Step Test in parked cars for students in four classrooms, kindergarten through grade 3, at

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Washington Elementary School. Only two of the 66 children, who were very large for their age, fit well in just a safety belt. On another day, only 16% of children were observed leaving the school riding in boosters. Twenty percent of the children were sitting in the front seat, where injuries are twice as likely to occur as in the back seat.

“We need to change the way we are transporting our kids,” said SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello. “Almost all kids K–3 and many upper graders need to ride in a booster. Every family can learn the 5–Step Test for belt fit.”

Tombrello recounts the story of a Lake Tahoe family whose children, aged 8 and 9, suffered horrific injuries this past summer because they weren't in boosters.

“Their parents are now faced with the knowledge that their children's life–changing injuries could have been prevented by a product that can cost less than \$20. That's why we aim to bring the message, '*Boosters Are For Big Kids*,' to every family with children ages 4 through 12,” said Tombrello.

The program, sponsored by California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, also offers a statewide helpline for parents and a new car seat inspection station at the Glendora Police Department. Any member of the community who wishes to get involved with the program is invited to call the Safe Ride Helpline at 800-745-SAFE (English) or 800-747-SANO (Spanish).

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SIDEBAR

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat from about age 4 until age 10–12.

If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test below the next time you ride together in the car. You may find that your child is not yet ready to use a safety belt without a booster.

The 5–Step Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to make both the shoulder belt and the lap belt fit right for the best crash protection. Your child will be more comfortable, too!

For best protection, all children should ride in the back seat until they are ready to drive. It's twice as safe as the front seat.

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