

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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### **Crash Highlights Dangers to Children Riding with Impaired Drivers**

Modesto, CA (November 11, 2017) – Michael Boesen, a five-year-old boy who was ejected during a rollover crash that killed his mother several weeks ago, has lost his battle for life. The vehicle driver-- mother of the five-year old-- was Sarah Nicole Cahoon. She also was ejected and then crushed when the vehicle rolled over her. Neither the mother nor the son was buckled up.

Rollover crashes are particularly violent and serious. They represent just 2.3% of crash events but generate 78.3% of child crash injuries. But despite the severity of the crash, Cahoon's nine-year-old daughter Jasmin, who was buckled up, sustained only minor injuries.

A spokesperson for the California Highway Patrol declined to release Cahoon's blood alcohol count but said an autopsy indicated it was above the legal limit. According to Stephanie Tombrello, Executive Director of *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A., children being injured or dying in DUI crashes is a little-recognized problem – especially when the driver is the parent. “Of the 1,132 traffic deaths among children ages birth to 14 years in 2015, 209, or 16 percent, involved an alcohol-impaired driver. Many more kids are injured in DUI-involved crashes. Rather than being put at risk from dangerous choices by the driver of another vehicle, 68% of these children were riding with the DUI driver, usually a person responsible for their welfare and often a parent.”

Since children cannot refuse to ride with adults in their lives, they are especially vulnerable to being driven by caregivers under the influence. Moreover, even more kids

also are put at risk by parents who think they are buckling up their children correctly when in fact they are not. Research shows that 9 out of 10 kids ride in safety seats or belts that are not being used correctly, even though 85% of caregivers think their children are properly restrained. “These tragic cases should serve as a reminder to all parents that children need to be protected in the car. Don’t take a chance on your child’s safety – get your safety seat properly checked by a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician,” Tombrello recommended. “At our checkups, we regularly record 90% or more of the caring families attending having their children at risk.”

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