

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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## Facebook Campaign to Bring \$25K to Pasadena Children Needs Your Votes!

ALTADENA, CA (April 27, 2012) — \$25,000 to support a local safety initiative could be coming Pasadena's way – if Facebook users vote to support the project.

Altadena-based non-profit SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is one of 100 charities selected by insurance company State Farm's Youth Advisory Board to participate in their *Cause An Effect* campaign. Facebook users can vote up to ten times a day to support their favorite cause. Voting is open from April 27 – May 17, after which each of the top forty causes will receive \$25,000.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. wants to bring its booster seat safety program to elementary school children across Pasadena. Kids of this age are much more likely than younger children to be killed or injured in crashes because most are not restrained properly. Most children need to ride in a booster seat until 10-12 years old – but few families know just how much it matters.

One family that does is the Sanders family, who are vigorously backing the campaign. Their world was turned upside down on May 17, 2009 when a crash left Finn, then 8, and her brother Johnny, 9, fighting for their lives. Both children were buckled up in safety belts, as was their father, Graham.

Graham's belt protected him well, and he walked away with only a sprained ankle, but Finn and Johnny were not so fortunate. Too small to fit their safety belts properly, both

children sustained life-threatening injuries. Finn suffered a broken neck, five broken ribs, contusions on both lungs, and nerve damage to her vocal cords. Johnny suffered major abdominal injuries and required several emergency surgeries to save his life. It was a week before his distraught parents knew that he would pull through.

Mom Jill is now a passionate advocate of booster seat safety. Like many parents, she had buckled up the kids in safety seats when they were younger but thought that by 8 and 9 years old, they had outgrown them. “We learned our mistake when it was almost too late,” said Jill. “It was so hard to learn that our children’s injuries could have been prevented by a \$20 booster seat. We urge everyone to vote for ‘Boosters Are For Big Kids’ so that this life-saving information can be brought to other families.”

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. has forty years of experience of promoting the safety of children in cars. The Boosters Are For Big Kids program engages whole school communities in learning why boosters are important, harnessing positive peer pressure by teaching children how to assess if they and their friends need a booster to stay safe.

The program has already been introduced to two Pasadena elementary schools; winning the *Cause An Effect* grant would allow the program to be brought to many more children.

“There is a great need for this information,” said SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello.. “A recent survey of children traveling to school in Pasadena showed only 14% in boosters, and 20% completely unrestrained. Winning this grant would allow us to protect many more.”

For further information, or to arrange interviews with Stephanie Tombrello or the Sanders family, please contact 310-222-6860 or [stombrello@carseat.org](mailto:stombrello@carseat.org).

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