



CITY OF GLENDORA

For Immediate Release

For Immediate Release: October 10, 2008

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KIDS AT RISK, PARENTS ASSISTED AT SAFETY SEAT CHECK UP

(Glendora, Calif.) – As a mom of three young children, Deborah Clark knows what it's like to be busy. But when she heard that a safety seat check up was being held in Glendora, she knew she wanted to make the time to ensure that Abbi, 18 months, Johnny, age 5, and Caleb age 7, were riding safely. She ended up being surprised by what she learned.

“I wanted to double-check that Abbi was as safe as she could be, but I was pretty confident that the other kids were okay in the car as we've always been careful,” said Deborah. “But I found out that all three of my children weren't as safe as they could be. Abbi should still have been riding facing the back of the car, Johnny's seat was missing some parts, and Caleb still needs to use a booster seat. I was very surprised, but it was great to know that the kids are now as safe as possible,” she said.

Deborah's experience was typical, according to SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director, Stephanie M. Tombrello. “Almost all parents make mistakes with the way their kids are riding in the car,” she said. “Of the 38 children we saw today, none of them were correctly restrained, and most had multiple errors in the way they were riding – the most being ten errors on one seat. We were delighted to be able to ensure that all

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these children went home with the best possible protection," said Tombrello.

Glendora Mayor Karen Davis also was surprised by what she learned at the checkup, which she attended with her 9-year-old twin daughters. "It's crucial for everyone to get the right information when it comes to their children's safety," she said. "I thought one of my daughters was big enough not to need a booster, but I found out today she does. Every parent should do the 5-Step Test to check if their kids need one too."

More than ninety percent of the children who attended safety seat checkups in the Los Angeles area last year were buckled up incorrectly. Using a seat incorrectly substantially reduces the protection it offers to a child. In 2006, 179 child passengers under 15 died in California and, in addition, 18,318 were injured, as a result of vehicle crashes. More than 80% of the small children killed would have survived if they had been properly buckled up. Typical mistakes include:

- Installing the safety seat too loosely – it shouldn't move more than an inch side-to-side or toward the front of the car.
- Securing the harness too loosely – you shouldn't be able to gather a pinch in the fabric.
- Letting a child ride facing the front of the car too soon – riding rear facing is recommended until 24 months.
- Moving to a booster seat from a seat with a 5-point harness too soon. A number of seats now on the market allow children to stay in a 5-point harness up to 50 to 80 lbs.
- Not using a booster seat for a child who cannot pass the 5-Step Test (see www.carseat.org). Most kids need a booster until they are 8 – 11 years old.

Parents who were not able to attend the Glendora checkup but want further information

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about riding safely may call the Safe Ride Helpline on 310/222-6860 or check at www.carseat.org.

The October 1 checkup took place in the Sam's Club parking lot in Glendora. Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians and other trained volunteers from law enforcement, social service, and health agencies inspected each safety seat to make sure it fit the child properly, was correctly secured, and was in the safest possible location in the vehicle. The checkup was sponsored by the Glendora Police Department, California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Sam's Club and Subway.

"The checkup was possible because of the hard work of many people," Tombrello said. "SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. would like to thank all those who volunteered, Glendora Police Department, Sam's Club and Subway – and of course, the parents and grandparents who took the time to ensure that their children are riding safely."

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