

SafetyBeltSafe News

Volume 24, No. 3



May 2003

SBS USA Volunteers At Work

The SBS USA network of volunteer child passenger safety (cps) advocates truly strengthens organizational effectiveness. A single volunteer can make an enormous difference.

Sabrina Huffman of VA was frustrated. Every day, she saw an ad for the new Disney charge card showing a youngster using a shoulder-lap belt without a booster—and with the lap belt, the part most likely to injure a child when misaligned, directly on the youngster's abdomen. She thought of the MediaWatch form developed by SBS USA and sent in the report.

SBS USA Exec. Dir. Stephanie Tombrello had a direct link to the project being advertised and was able to alert the Disney team at once that the ad, broadcast in their name, showed a child at risk. Within days, Disney and Bank One, the partnering company, had arranged to improve the shot and get it back on the air. SBS USA commends Sabrina and the two companies for moving quickly and effectively to achieve this.

NH member **Rosemary Smith-Berry** saw another safety seat misuse on the children's channel, Nickelodeon. An engaging segment on how mothers and children can interact positively while riding in the car together was marred by shots of the daughter sitting in a combination child seat/booster with the shoulder-lap belt OVER the internal harness, a misuse that has, in some situations, contributed to a poor interaction between the two systems, affecting the test dummy. Again, MediaWatch came into play.

Donna Ott and **Barbara Potts**, serving on the SBS USA Board of Directors, have been highly active in countering negative articles in the press on the expansion of the PA cps law to cover those up to age 8. SBS USA helped to support the efforts, but the initiatives were strictly their own, borne of years as a physical therapist and pediatric nurse respectively and as parents. Until their Board membership, they were unacquainted. Donna writes, "We worked separately

because we do not live in the same area but were able to encourage and support each other in our efforts." A summary of their campaign follows.

Information was distributed in public places (pediatric offices, stores, churches, dance studios, etc). They provided handouts for schools to send home on boosters, the new law, and the Children-N-Safety (pro rider.com) program which sells discounted boosters through schools. Those with CNS programs had extremely high levels of sales and parent satisfaction, with multiple re-orders. Recruits multiplied, as parents, new to booster use, began running booster sales and handing out brochures.

Short talks and other educational programs were provided for parent-teacher organizations, Girl Scout troops, and churches, including brochures, other handouts, "Boosters Are For Big Kids" video, and examples of highback and backless boosters.

Local reporters were encouraged to follow the story as the leading public health issue for children of booster age. Barbara and Donna monitored local media and wrote letters to the editor and Op-Ed columns. They also opposed legislative attempts to gut the law, writing letters demanding support instead.

Donna and Barbara recently held an SBS USA-style safety seat checkup day in Reading with the support of State Farm Insurance.

Another SBS USA member in action, **Annemarie Shelness** of NC, essentially the founder of cps advocacy, contacted Matt Lauer, co-host of Today on NBC TV, about his using a safety belt UNDER his arm as he pretended to be a cab driver!! She quickly rushed a copy of "Don't Risk Your Child's Life VI" to him to assure that his son is correctly buckled up.

Congratulations to all of the members around the country and around the world who are "taking action" to protect children.

CALENDAR

CONFERENCES

***9/22-24:** CA Conf on Childhood Injury Control: will cover national issues. Los Angeles Airport Radisson Hotel. More info at 619/594-3691 or www.cipp.org
***3/28-30/04:** Lifesavers 2004 www.lifeaversconference.org

SAFETY SEAT CHECKUP

*Call SBS USA to register
 Trained checkers are needed!
 Parents - register at 310/222-6860
 *6/14: 11 am - 2 pm, Tustin PD
 sponsored by State Farm Insurance*

New Products

Combi Int'l is importing 3 new child restraints from Europe. The **Tyro** is an infant-only seat with an adjustable base. The **Avatar** convertible seat has a 5-pt harness, in-car recline adjustment, 3-position recline for infants, and pivoting, 2-position base height adjustment to improve vehicle fit. The **Apogee** is a belt-positioning booster with removable backrest for children 33 to 80 lbs. It has an adjustable headrest, armrests, and a cupholder.

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New Board Member

Commissioner **D. O. Helmick** of the CA Highway Patrol has joined the SBS USA Advisory Board. Helmick has provided exceptional leadership for enforcement of laws covering occupant protection for many years. CHP officers and SBS USA have worked together on numerous events and campaigns; this "special addition" recognizes the mutual goals in a noteworthy manner.

Back Seat Bill

AB 1697 by Assembly Member Fran Pavley, which would prohibit transporting small children in the front seat, has passed the CA Assembly and is being considered by the Senate Transportation Committee. The back seat provision, with "best practice" exemptions would be integrated with V.C. Section 27360, which requires the use of child restraints for children until at least age 6 or at least 60 lbs.

RECALL

Graco Children's Products is recalling some SnugRide infant-only seats made between 3-1-02 and 3-6-03. Models sold as a part of a stroller system are not affected. Metal U-bars used to attach the carrier to the base may be missing from the bottom of the carrier, which can allow the carrier to detach from the base in a crash. Go to www.gracobaby.com or call 866-473-0163 for inspection details. If the bars are missing, call 800-345-4109 for a replacement seat. The carrier must be used without the base until it is checked and/or replaced.

THANK YOU

- \$25,000** - Nissan North America
- \$10,000** - Farmers Insurance Grp Safety Foundation
- \$5000** - Christine Ford HealthNet*
- \$4750** - American Honda Motor Company*
- \$792.17** - Hawthorne Savings
- \$500** - Aprica America, Inc.
- \$200** - St. John's Health Center San Joaquin General Hosp. Tarrant Co. SAFE KIDS
- \$155** - David Nakabayashi
- \$150** - Plaza Community Center
- \$147** - Fremont Investment & Loan
- \$100** - Baby Trend, Inc.
- BabySafe of Fresno
- Carlsbad Police Dept.
- Child & Family Resources
- Susan Corl, MSW, MPH
- Joan & Thomas Flanagan
- Karen Fond, CPNP
- Franklin Co. Health Dept
- Vera Fullaway
- Linda Galer
- Terri Gilpatrick
- Lori Jacobs
- La Touche Pediatrics
- Jeanine Lange
- MD Committee for Safety Belt Use, Inc.
- MS Safety Services
- Mono Co. Health Dept.
- NV Office of Traffic Safety
- NY Coalition for Transportation Safety
- NE Valley Health Corp.
- ProRider/Children-N- Safety
- REMSA Washoe Co. SAFE KIDS
- SAFE KIDS of GA, Carroll Co.
- Shriners Hosps for Children
- Rosemary Smith-Berry
- Strategic Safety
- Thelma Lager & Associates
- UT Hwy Safety Office
- Barbara Vancil
- Vista Community Clinic
- West Wendover Fire Dept.

* (revised annual total)

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Consumers Union Investigates LATCH Safety Seats and Recommends All Boosters Tested

In the 5/03 issue of Consumer Reports, results from evaluations of 25 safety seats on the U.S. market indicated that safety seats generally did well. However, 3 of the infant-only and 4 of the convertible seats rear-facing fared better using safety belts than LATCH in frontal crash tests. It has not yet been determined if LATCH will prove better in side impact tests and real crashes.

This finding may indicate that, tight attachment being equal, parents may choose to use either LATCH or a safety belt for kids under 48 lbs. in safety seats. (So far, the auto industry reports lower anchor or tether brackets should not be used if the child is over 48 lbs. or 60 lbs., respectively.) The Baby Trend Latch-Loc, with rigid LATCH attachments instead of straps, posed problems in LATCH installation if vehicle seats sloped back steeply. The effectiveness of the top tether in reducing forward travel of forward-facing seats was shown in that laboratory frontal crash testing couldn't detect any variability between lower LATCH or safety belt use with the top tether attached.

The difficulty in adjusting top tethers for all forward-facing convertible and combination seats by Dorel (labeled Cosco, Safety 1st, or Eddie Bauer) was noted, reinforcing a widely expressed opinion in the advocate community. The confusing labeling and identification of Dorel models were also reflected in the CU article. Nowhere did the company name "Dorel" appear, and the discontinued Cosco Designer 35 was not identified as such.

Other issues noted that contribute to incorrect use echo the reasons SBS USA omits some products from lists in flyers & brochures. For instance, if a harness system cannot be adjusted when the child is sitting in a safety seat which is buckled into the vehicle, it is highly likely to be left too loose or even unused (if it is too tight). Of those in the CU sample, Century 1500 STE, Graco CarGo, and Safety 1st "High Back Booster" (actually a Dorel combo child seat/booster) were singled out. Ironically, the earlier version of the Century model was easy to adjust from the front and a well-regarded program choice.

Another feature, primarily found in combination child seat/boosters, are shoulder belt guides that do not allow free movement of the shoulder belt. If a child moves forward and then back, the shoulder belt retains slack because it can't retract. Of those evaluated, the only combo seat that CU recommended is the Cosco (Dorel) Summit. The Britax Roundabout was the best rated convertible seat overall. The Graco SnugRide and Peg Perego Primo Viaggio were recommended in the infant-only category. CU mentioned a recall for the SnugRide that was announced near press time, but very few units were actually affected.

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"Summer about to expire!
Renew for 2003!*

***SafetyBeltSafe* News**

May 2003

Safety Seat Checkup Day

New Materials Are Available Now

Safety Seat Checkup Day was held at Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles on April 5th. We served 50 families who arrived in 56 vehicles, with 36 children. Another 24 children, including 13 unborn, were protected when their families brought their seats along without them.

Of the 60 safety seats evaluated, there were 3 boosters used correctly; one child passed the 5-Step Test for sitting in a belt only; and six safety seats that appeared to be used correctly. 135 errors were found with a range of 1 to 7 per safety seat!!

From 22 cities in 4 counties, 44 checkers representing 27 agencies participated. Civil Air Patrol LA Group 1, LA Center for Enriched Studies, and San Gabriel Police Explorers volunteered as Bucklebear, to handle traffic flow, and to help keep the event running smoothly.

Petersen Automotive Museum reduced entry fees for families and welcomed volunteers for free. Two SBS USA displays are still on view. In the Discovery Center, "Boosters Are For Big Kids" is an interactive display with the rear section of a Toyota Camry and a set of booster seats so children can try the 5-Step Test. "A Journey Through Time: Child Passenger Safety" is near the museum entrance and has a new feature, added with the support of American Honda, Ford, Nissan North America, and VW of America: model cars representing advances in safety over the decades.

We hope that anyone who has missed the displays will try to visit soon.

Safety Seat Checkup Day, 2004, is being planned now for April 2004.

With assistance from Kaiser Permanente, the SBS USA brochure for lower reading levels, "Keep Your Children Safe," has been revised for 2003. The brochure can be ordered in Spanish, Chinese, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Farsi, Armenian, Russian, or Korean as well at 12¢ each. An insert listing current safety seat models can be ordered in English/Spanish for an additional charge.

In April, the newest version of the SBS USA CPS Reference Manual was released. A treasure trove of technical tidbits, curricula, laws and regulations, program ideas, and flyers on many aspects of cps, it is received by participants in SBS USA Educator Workshops or available for sale at \$50. (\$7.50/s&h). The compilation of manufacturers' instructions with summary sheets for child restraints made 1996-December 2002 has been updated under a NHTSA contract and is available from SBS USA on CD (#450-CD) or digitally printed. Quantity orders of the CDs of 500 or more are available at a reduced cost. For more price information, visit www.carseat.org or call SBS USA.



Health Net

Health Net of California believes that safety is in everyone's best interest. As a health plan dedicated to wellness and prevention, we are pleased to support the community services of *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A.