

Protecting Our *Children*

New Safety Collaboration To Help Save Children's Lives

(NAPSA)—A new collaboration may help save children's lives and reduce their risk of being injured in and around an automobile.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 2 to 14. Children are also injured or killed in nontraffic-related vehicle incidents, such as backovers, trunk entrapments and heat-stroke.

To help reverse these statistics, Safe Kids Buckle Up, a program of Safe Kids Worldwide and General Motors, has teamed up with Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) to bring safety programs and activities directly to children and their families at BGCA sites.

BGCA's network of 4,000 neighborhood-based clubs serves more than 4.6 million young people in all 50 states and U.S. military bases worldwide. Meanwhile, Safe Kids has more than 600 local coalitions and chapters in the U.S.

The alliance coincides with the 10-year anniversary of Safe Kids Buckle Up programs, which teach families about keeping children safe in and around vehicles.

Despite reaching millions through the Safe Kids Buckle Up program, recent research shows that injury prevention interventions are still not reaching enough high-risk families, including some African-American, Hispanic, Native American and low-income families.

The injury rate for African-American children ages 0-14 is more than twice the rate of injury for white children (per 100,000) as



Recent research shows that safety programs must do more to reach high-risk families.

motor vehicle occupants, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Hispanic children ages 0-14 are also at a higher risk by having a 25 percent higher injury death rate from motor vehicles when compared to non-Hispanic children.

In addition, research shows that children ages 6 to 10 who do not properly fit into the adult safety belt are reluctant to use booster seats in vehicles, which could lead to more serious injuries in the event of a crash.

More than 60 percent of the BGCA's members are from minority communities, and 88 percent are 15 years old or younger.

"This new association with Boys & Girls Clubs of America is particularly important because it will allow us to bring these programs directly to families; we can't expect children who are at a high risk for injury to come to us," said Dr. Martin Eichelberger,

founder and chairman, Safe Kids Worldwide, the parent organization of Safe Kids Buckle Up.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is a strong supporter of the Safe Kids Buckle Up program, and the administrator of NHTSA, Nicole Nason, recently became a certified child passenger safety technician by completing a rigorous three-day training course.

"Keeping all children safer in vehicles is one of our top priorities," said Nason. "Programs like Safe Kids Buckle Up have helped change the culture of child car-seat safety in this country and are essential to ensure we protect our most precious passengers."

Financial support from the GM Foundation allows local Safe Kids coalitions and chapters to provide safety programs and activities at locations across the country, now including BGCA community centers.

These programs are offered at no cost to either nonprofit organizations or the families served. GM is the sole corporate sponsor of Safe Kids Buckle Up—the longest-running corporate/nonprofit collaboration in child passenger safety. The automaker and its foundation have provided \$50 million in financial support and vehicles over the past decade through 2009.

For more information about Safe Kids Buckle Up, visit www.safekids.org. For Boys and Girls Clubs, visit www.bgca.org. More information on GM can be found at www.gm.com.