



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### **NEW VEHICLE SAFETY PROGRAM FOR TWEENS LAUNCHED FOR CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK**

*Safe Kids Treasure Valley Holds Safety Fair at Chevrolet of Boise February 13*

**Boise, ID (February 12, 2007)** — Child Passenger Safety Week 2007 (February 12-17) will focus on safety for young tweens (children ages 8-10) in and around cars. A **safety fair at Chevrolet of Boise, 3 pm to 7 pm, Tuesday, February 13** will be the first time Safe Kids Treasure Valley has reached out directly to kids across the nation.

Child Passenger Safety Week has usually focused on the correct use of car seats for babies and toddlers, and while 98 percent of America's infants and 93 percent of children ages 1 to 3 are now regularly restrained, not enough children ages 4 to 7 are restrained properly for their size and age. This year, safety messages will be aimed at an age group often neglected in child passenger safety outreach. "We've always designed our safety messages for parents and caregivers, but older kids need to be developing their own safety habits as they become more independent," said Alissa Lean, coordinator of Safe Kids Treasure Valley.

"Most children ages 8 to 10 should be riding on a booster seat for the best protection in a crash," said Lean. "Children in this age group are among the least likely to be in the correct restraint. We need to make booster seat use among tweens just as automatic as it is for small children to ride in car seats."

Safe Kids Treasure Valley, along with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommends that kids who have outgrown car seats ride on booster seats until they are about 4 feet, 9 inches tall and 80-100 pounds. Most children reach this height and weight between ages 8-12. Safe Kids Worldwide has developed the Safety Belt Fit Test as an easy way for parents to determine when the adult safety belt in their vehicle provides optimal protection for their child in the event of a crash.

"The idea of sitting on a booster seat when you're in fifth or sixth grade is a hard sell — we realize that," said Lorrie Walker, child passenger safety technical advisor for Safe Kids Worldwide. "But we've looked at the science and know that it's worth the effort to change people's attitudes toward booster seats. They prevent injuries and save lives every day."

According to a new study released this week by Safe Kids Worldwide, car seat checkups provided by Safe Kids coalitions have been very effective in teaching parents important safety skills. But the research also showed safety advocates need to do a better job of getting their message and hands-on training to families in underserved communities. With a redesigned outreach program and a grant from Safe Kids Worldwide funded by Chevrolet/General Motors and Safe Kids Treasure Valley are trying to deliver safety messages to families.

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Interactive exhibits at Chevrolet Boise will teach Treasure Valley tweens and their caregivers about proper use of booster seats and safety belts, the dangers of trunk entrapment and heatstroke in parked cars, and the hazardous blind spots around vehicles. Activities will include:

### **Safety Belt Fit Test**

Children who have outgrown the height and weight limits for a car seat should use a booster seat until they are approximately 4 feet, 9 inches tall and 80-100 pounds. Nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians will teach parents and tweens how to perform the Safety Belt Fit Test to determine when a growing child is ready to move from a booster seat to an adult safety belt. In a recent demonstration, 30 Cub Scouts ages 7-10 took the Safety Belt Fit Test and only four could sit properly in adult safety belts without a booster seat.

### **Trunk Escape**

Children will be taught that trunks are for cargo and are not safe places to play. All new vehicles since 2001 are equipped with a glow-in-the-dark release handle inside the trunk. Parents and kids will learn the importance of staying out of trunks, and kids will learn how to find the release handle. They will also learn to keep keys and keyless entry devices out of reach of children.

### **Never Leave Your Child Alone**

Based on data collected by San Francisco State University, it is estimated that at least 30 children per year die of heat-related illness after being left alone in a parked car or getting into a parked car without supervision and becoming trapped. Even in mild weather, the temperature inside a parked car can quickly reach levels that are dangerous to young children — an effect we will demonstrate with digital thermometers inside and outside the vehicle. After seeing this demonstration, parents will understand why they can never leave a child alone in or around a car.

### **Spot the Tot**

Nearly 2,500 children per year go to the emergency room after being struck by a vehicle in a driveway or parking lot. Parents will learn to walk all the way around the vehicle to look for kids before getting in — and to keep toys and pets out of the driveway so children aren't tempted to play in that area. In this demonstration, adults sit in a driver's seat and kids line up behind the vehicle; the driver is usually amazed to see how many kids lined up behind the vehicle were not visible. Kids will learn to remind adults of the importance of doing a "walkaround" before getting in the vehicle.

Caregivers and children who participate together in Child Passenger Safety Week events in February will be eligible to win prizes if they visit [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org) and demonstrate their improved safety skills in an online game.

Safe Kids Treasure Valley provides car seat inspections and Safety Belt Fit Test assistance throughout the year as well. To find an inspection site or certified technician near you, *Call St. Luke's* at 381-1200. Visit [www.usa.safekids.org/skbu](http://www.usa.safekids.org/skbu) for more information about child safety in and around cars.

Chevrolet of Boise is at 9501 W. Fairview in Boise.

*Safe Kids Buckle Up® is a national program developed by Safe Kids Worldwide and sponsored by Chevrolet and General Motors to educate parents and caregivers about the importance of properly restraining children on every ride. The 10-year-old program has inspected approximately 820,000 car seats; held approximately 40,000 car seat checkup events around the country; donated approximately 365,000 car seats to low-income families; given hands-on training to more than 15 million parents and caregivers; and launched 119 Mobile Car Seat Check Up Vans — Chevy Express and Chevy Venture vans stocked with supplies and equipment to hold car seat inspections in underserved communities — with another six joining the fleet in 2007.*

*Safe Kids Treasure Valley works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Safe Kids Treasure Valley is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Treasure Valley was founded in 1996 and is led by St. Luke's Children's Hospital.*