



## COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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### **COUNTY RECEIVES CHILD SAFETY GRANT** ***“Keep ‘Em Safe” Program to Provide 2,000 Child Car Seats***

Thanks to a \$207,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) will improve child safety by offering vehicle protection education and providing 2,000 child car seats to low-income families.

Funding for “Keep ‘Em Safe” comes from a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“This is great news for San Diego County families,” said Chairwoman Dianne Jacob from the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. “The safety seats will help save lives and reduce the rates of injury during a crash.”

The “Keep ‘Em Safe” program will be implemented by HHSA’s local partner, the Pacific Safety Council, a non-profit, educational organization providing safety resources and child passenger safety education in San Diego County.

The program promotes the safe transportation of children through a traffic safety education campaign providing a total of 132 safety presentations and 50 safety check-up events throughout the County of San Diego. At least 2,000 no-cost, child passenger safety seats will be provided to people in need through September, 2010.

The goal of the campaign is to increase the proper use of child passenger safety seats and seat belt usage by families; provide safety presentations that include education on the proper installation and use of a child passenger restraint system for children of all ages; seatbelt usage air bag safety; the dangers of leaving children alone in the car, and awareness of SB 255 (Kaitlyn’s Law).

According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, traffic crashes are the top cause of death among young children. In 2008, about 4 children ages 14 or younger were killed in motor vehicle crashes every day, and many more were injured, the CDC reported.

The proper use of child safety seats, booster seats and buckling up will save children’s lives,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Doing it right every trip, every day, will make it a habit they will carry into adulthood.”

“Parents and caregivers can make a lifesaving difference by using age-appropriate, vehicle safety seats,” said HHSA Director Nick Macchione. “Whenever you’re on the road, make sure children are safe and secure, every trip, every time.”

The County of San Diego and HHSA are strong supporters of programs that provide services on child passenger safety, particularly for low-income families who use safety vehicle seats at lower rates. HHSA’s Community Action Partnership (CAP) has been administering child safety programs for the last five years and this grant is the result of HHSA’s efforts to sustain programs that promote health and safety.

For more information about the “Keep ‘Em Safe” program, contact Noemi Dueñas at Pacific Safety Council at (858) 621-2313 ext. 114.

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