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Website Helps Columbus Preteens Learn How to Stay Safe In and Around Vehicles

Columbus, GA— Being a preteen is all about testing boundaries and learning how to make decisions. But some choices, like the ones explored in Safe Kids Columbus's Buckle Up™ Program for preteens called the Safest Generation can be the difference between life and death. Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs from Sept. 12 to 18. Visit www.safestgeneration.org.

Safe Kids' Safest Generation website (safestgeneration.org) uses activities to help preteens become more knowledgeable about the newest vehicle safety technologies, receive information that debunks safety myths and learn how to make decisions that could save lives in the event of a crash. There's also information for parents to help make sure preteens are safe when riding with friends and neighbors and remind them to be a good safety role model whenever they ride in a vehicle.

"Often families understand safe behavior, but they don't always follow through on what they know," said Christy Hubbard. "Preteens aged 11 and 12 are facing some very difficult safety decisions and we want to give them the tools to make responsible choices as they become more independent. This is the first generation of kids to use car seats, booster seats and seat belts consistently, and we want to keep them on track as the 'Safest Generation' when it comes to vehicle safety."

Both parents and preteens can have a tendency to ignore their better judgment when it comes to vehicle safety. Research conducted for the Safest Generation program showed that nearly 50 percent of parents surveyed said that it was ok for preteens ages 11 and 12 to sit in the front seat of a vehicle. In small group conversations, parents justified allowing preteens to sit up front by saying their kids help them navigate or like to control the radio. However, According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, sitting in a rear seat instead of the front seat reduces fatal injury risk among children 12 and younger by 36 percent.

The Safest Generation is the latest program undertaken by Safe Kids Buckle Up, a partnership between Safe Kids USA and General Motors that has been teaching families how to keep kids safer in and around vehicles for more than a decade. Safe Kids Buckle Up has inspected more than 1.1 million car seats for proper installation and presented educational programs such as Spot the Tot, Never Leave Your Child Alone and the Cub Scout Automotive Safety Patch, covering many of the vehicle safety needs for children ages 0 to 12.

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For more information about your local coalition activities, visit www.safekidscolumbusga.com. Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.