



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**As Community Mourns Tragic Loss Due to a Heatstroke, We Remind All:
It can happen to anyone**

April 29, 2014 – (Kansas City, MO) –Safe Kids Metro KC joins the community and a Texas family in mourning the loss of their child due to heatstroke. The second heatstroke death of the year occurred last Tuesday in North Richland Hills, TX.

A neighbor confirmed that the 17 month old child was in the car with her grandfather and fell asleep. The grandfather forgot that the child was in the car and she died in her car seat.
(http://ggweather.com/heat/2_2014.htm)

As mentioned, this is the second death of the year, and both have occurred because a caregiver forgot the child was in the car. Now is the time to get the message out about the dangers of heatstroke as well as the real possibility that people can forget a child. We've heard time and again from people that they would never forget their child. We need people to realize that this can happen to them.

This happens more than you would think. Every 10 days in the United States a child dies when left alone in a hot car. In 2013, 214 innocent little children died across the US in this tragic, but preventable way.

"These tragedies are absolutely heartbreaking, and a reminder for all of us to be aware of the dangers of leaving a child alone in a car," said Regina Weir, Safe Kids Metro KC program coordinator. "Many people are shocked to learn how hot the inside of a car can actually get. And cracking the window doesn't help. That's why Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this preventable tragedy by never leaving a child alone in a car, not even for a minute. Bystanders can also help by calling 911 if they see a child alone in a car. But over 50% of the time, the adult simply forgot the child was in the car."

"In 2012, a Lee's Summit baby was the first child in the US to die of hyperthermia," said Weir. "In 2013, we had no local child heatstroke deaths, and we want to keep it that way for 2014."

It doesn't have to be the middle of the summer for a child to get overheated. Even with seemingly mild temperatures outside, the temperatures inside a car can rise 20 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. A child's body heats up three to five times faster than an adult's, making them more susceptible to heatstroke.

To help prevent these tragedies, Safe Kids Metro KC is gearing up for a local public awareness campaign starting May 1. We'll be calling on businesses and organizations to support the effort by displaying materials, and sharing information with their employees and members. We've created a PowerPoint

presentation, a YouTube video and will be contacting the local media to help spread the word so that this does not happen to any Kansas City-area family this year.

Together, we can reduce the number of heatstroke deaths and near misses by remembering to ACT:

- **A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you're not in it so kids don't get in on their own.
- **C:** Create reminders by putting something on the backseat of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. This is especially important if you're not following your normal routine.
- **T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

To gain perspective on such a tragic incident, we ask that concerned citizens read "[Fatal Distraction: Forgetting a Child in the Backseat of a Car Is a Horrifying Mistake. Is It a Crime?](#)" by Gene Weingarten, Washington Post Staff Writer.

Additional prevention information can be found at www.safekids.org/heatstroke, and statistics on child heatstroke deaths can be found at www.ggweather.com/heat.

For more safety information, please visit www.safekids.org.

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About Safe Kids Metro KC

Safe Kids Metro KC (SKMKC) works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children. SKMKC is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injury, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. Throughout the world, almost 1 million children die of injuries each year, and every one of these tragedies is preventable. SKMKC was founded in 2004 and is led by Mother & Child Health Coalition.

About the General Motors Foundation and Safe Kids Buckle Up

Beginning in 1997, General Motors and the GM Foundation have served as Safe Kids Worldwide's exclusive funding source for its Buckle Up program, a multifaceted national initiative, bringing motor vehicle safety messages to children and families through community and dealer partnerships. To date, more than 22.5 million people have been exposed to Safe Kids Worldwide events and community outreach efforts. Certified child passenger safety technicians working through Safe Kids coalitions have examined over 1.65 million child safety seats at over 85,000 events, and the program has donated over 600,000 seats to families in need.