

BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation Celebrates Child Passenger Safety Month 1-Year Anniversary

(Burnaby, BC) – On June first the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation will celebrate the first anniversary of Child Passenger Safety Month in B.C.

Last year the foundation declared June to be Child Passenger Safety Month as the kick off of a campaign to increase public awareness about child passenger safety and to prepare families for the changes to B.C.'s child passenger safety laws.

As of July 1, 2008, B.C.'s child passenger safety laws require all drivers to be responsible for transporting any child in their vehicle under the age of 9 in an age and weight appropriate child car seat or booster seat.

“It’s been a good year, especially with regard to booster seat use,” says Marg Deibert, Child Passenger Safety program manager for the foundation. “Leading up to the change in the laws we were seeing a slight increase in booster seat use, but after the new laws came into effect use of booster seats has gone up significantly.”

In fact booster seat use increased from 18% to 66%. While this is good news, Deibert says that there are still drivers out there who, for whatever reason, are compromising the safety of the children in their vehicles by not using proper child restraints.

As part of Child Passenger Safety Month 2008, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation launched the Child Car Seat Matching Fund to provide car seats and booster seats to families in need.

“We set aside \$100,000 to match gifts from donors to purchase child car seats,” said the foundation’s executive director, Allan Lamb. “Since then the foundation has received significant donations from the Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association, Metropolis at Metrotown, CIBC and Rotary Clubs, as well as smaller organizations and individuals.” The seats are being distributed through Family Resource Programs throughout the province.

The foundation also runs child car seat checks around the province where child passenger safety educators provide one-to-one education, answering questions and providing information about the proper installation and use of child car seats and booster seats.

Each year in British Columbia over 1,300 children under 9 years of age are injured or killed in motor vehicle collisions (roughly equivalent of 5 elementary schools). A correctly installed and used child car seat can reduce the risk of injury and death by up to 85%.

The foundation will be holding child passenger car seat checks in communities around the province during the month of June. If you have questions call the Child Seat Info line toll free at 1-877-247-5551 or visit www.ChildSeatInfo.ca.

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About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit www.BCAATSF.ca or call 604-298-5107.

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