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rear-facing • forward-facing • booster seat • safety belts

# Press Release

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**THE NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY BOARD NAMES YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL'S INJURY PREVENTION COORDINATOR CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR**

Giuseppina (Pina) Violano, Yale- New Haven Hospital's Injury Prevention Coordinator, just added "National Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year" to her list of awards and accolades. Child passenger safety is one of the nation's most significant injury prevention initiatives, considering that the leading cause of death and serious injury for young children are vehicle crashes. The U.S. currently has 34,300 certified child passenger safety technicians trained to install and educate caregivers on the proper use of car and booster seats. The National Child Passenger Safety Board chose to recognize one exemplary technician for their work and dedication to this field.

Pina has proven that she is not only committed to creating and maintaining a model child passenger safety program for the hospital, but also demonstrates outstanding commitment to educating the minority groups in her area. The New Haven area has a large Latino community, and Pina appreciates the cultural differences regarding safety and seatbelt use and that contribute to low usage rates among this group. Financial constraints, lack of knowledge regarding the laws, and language barriers are obstacles she hopes to help overcome. Pina recalls observing four children in one day who were brought to the emergency department because of injuries they sustained as a result of riding on the laps of their parents, not secured in child safety seats. She explained that many low-income families must rely on others for transportation because they do not own a vehicle, therefore do not see it a priority to purchase a child safety seat. In other families, an aunt or grandparent who may not have health insurance or access to medical care may be raising a child. As a result, many families lack access to current information on proper child restraint use. She works to ensure that educational materials (such as PowerPoint presentations and literature) are available in Spanish.

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Pina and her family immigrated to the United States from Italy when she was two years old. Due to the fact that that her parents always believed they would return to Italy, they spoke only Italian in her household. Eventually, her family made the decision to stay in the US and she mastered English as her second language in the sixth grade. As she earned her associate and bachelor's degree in nursing from Quinnipiac College, she chose to minor in Spanish.

Having Spanish as her third language, she has made great strides in reaching out to the Ecuadorian Consulate to better educate this immigrant group on the proper use of child safety seats and child passenger laws. She has also partnered with "Healthy Neighbors", a local coalition that assists low-income families with healthcare needs. By procuring a grant through Yale-New Haven Hospital Auxiliary, she has been able to work with Dorel and Evenflo to purchase seats at cost to provide free car and booster seats to caregivers who would not have been able to afford to purchase a new seat. Since becoming a certified technician in 2008, Pina has distributed over 350 seats over the past three years. It is clear that Pina has a true passion for her work, and believes every child, no matter what race, ethnicity, or financial situation should be healthy and safe. This tireless advocate spends many Friday nights offering educational programs in Spanish and schedules Saturday car seat check-up events to reach as many families as possible. Her outreach allows her to work with churches, Boys and Girls Clubs, Kids in Crisis, a domestic violence advocacy group, medical taxi services, and refugee clinics.

One cannot speak to Pina without feeling her energy and determination. In her own right, she is a successful, living example of the American dream. Pina put herself through school, earning a BS in nursing from Quinnipiac College. She worked as an ICU nurse for 12 years; Clinical Nurse Educator for 14 years and with the assistance of tuition reimbursement she earned her MSPH (Master's in Public Health) from Southern Connecticut State University. She has recently completed all the requirements for her doctoral degree in public health from Walden University. She is currently working on her dissertation, and chose child passenger safety as her topic. As part of her research, she is working with Connecticut's Department of Public Health (DPH) to analyze the state's crash data over a seven year period, related to motor vehicle injuries in children under age 12. She is also currently working with the CT DOT to establish a car seat "fitting station".

The National Child Passenger Safety Board awarded Pina with the first annual Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year Award at the Lifesavers Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 26, 2011. The Lifesavers Conference is an annual, national conference on highway safety attended by thousands in the fields of law enforcement, traffic safety, statewide and national highway safety planning, injury prevention and public health. When asked how a role-model child passenger safety technician, successful career woman, hard-working doctoral candidate and mother of four girls (Cristina, 19; Marcella, 17; Giana, 12; and Daniela, 9) can possibly balance her home and professional life, she credited her "wonderful husband Paul" as a secret to her success.

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