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Press Release

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**THE NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY BOARD NAMES SAFE KIDS TULSA AREA COORDINATOR
CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR**

Beth Washington, Safe Kids Tulsa Area Coordinator, was just named the first “National Child Passenger Safety Instructor of the Year” by the National Child Passenger Safety Board. Child passenger safety (CPS) 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 instructors who train to certify technicians 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 instructor for their work and dedication to this field.

Beth has worked for Safe Kids Tulsa for 13 years, originally coming to the organization as part of her college internship while majoring in health promotion at Oklahoma State University. She also became a certified child passenger safety technician and instructor in 1998, the year NHTSA created a national child passenger safety curriculum. She traveled from her hometown of Coweta, Oklahoma, to North Carolina to be trained as a CPS technician in the spring, and by fall was certified as an instructor. As one of the original instructors in the nation, Beth has certainly seen many changes in technology and best practices over the past 13 years. As the Safe Kids Tulsa Area Coordinator and one of the two state training contacts, she is a tremendous resource for installation advice, technical support, educational materials, or course information. Beth now mentors instructors and technicians for the eastern half of Oklahoma. Colleague Jenny Rollins called Beth, “The primary resource in Oklahoma for child passenger safety...she is constantly finding new ways to stay updated on information. She utilizes every opportunity to reach the community and get out the CPS message, whether it is through parades, meetings or assemblies. My favorite thing Beth teaches new technicians is that you are always learning in the world of CPS.”

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When asked what advice she would have for other instructors, she mentioned that the key is communication! Once a technician is certified, she adds them to her database and e-mail list. She sends technicians as much information as possible, such as recalls and event information. She is thrilled to report the excellent turnout of technicians and volunteers at local check up events, especially from police and fire departments.

In the last year, she was also pleased with the amount of training and outreach she was able to accomplish. Safe Kids Tulsa was able to check over 2,000 car seats and hold 63 check-up events and 25 educational workshops. She and her instructor team trained 263 individuals in child passenger safety from diverse backgrounds through Tech updates, Certification/recertification trainings, and 1 day introduction classes. Beth is conscientious about reaching at-risk communities and includes staff from Catholic Charities and faith-based organizations. In the past year she was thrilled to procure seats to provide for low-income families in North Tulsa, as well as to Burmese refugees residing in Tulsa.

Beth helps organize the Statewide Tech Update, now in its third year as the *Martha Collier Tech Reunion*, named in memoriam of Oklahoma's former Safe Kids state coordinator. Last year she called upon Ms. Artie Martin, formerly of General Motors, who represented the vehicle manufacturers on the national Child Passenger Safety Board, to speak. She also contacted manufactures including Combi, Evenflo and Britax to collect information so that she could demonstrate latest technology on their seats. Beth is passionate about continuing education in this field as well as encouraging technicians and instructors to do the same.

No stranger to recognition for hard work, Beth was awarded the Oklahoma Safe Kids Advocate Award in 2003. Another award that Beth is extremely proud of is the Safe Kids Buckle Up CPS Program: Above and Beyond Award that Safe Kids Tulsa received in 2009 while she was CPS Coordinator. Today she works to honor others for their contributions to child passenger safety within law enforcement through the *Buckledown Awards*, a statewide recognition program sponsored by State Farm Insurance.

The National Child Passenger Safety Board awarded Beth with the first annual Child Passenger Safety Instructor 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.

Colleagues who nominated Beth for this award commented on how much of her personal time she dedicates to the cause, both volunteering at events and traveling to teach and to support child passenger safety legislation. She is lucky to have a husband who understands the commitment of working in this field; in fact her husband Steve, a Tulsa firefighter, is also a CPS technician! They live in Okmulgee, OK, with their seven year-old son Garrett. The couple will soon return to installing infant seats in their own vehicles, as they are expecting a second child in August.

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