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Press Release#

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa Department of Public Health Program Manager Named Child Passenger Safety Instructor of the Year

The National Child Passenger Safety Board is pleased to honor Katrina Altenhofen, Program Manager of the Iowa Department of Public Health, as the 2012 Child Passenger Safety Instructor of the Year. Altenhofen was one of Iowa's first CPS technicians and instructors and has worked in the Emergency Medical Services field for more than 20 years.

"It is sad to think that injury is the No. 1 killer of children, yet most of the things that 'kill' our kids have prevention mechanisms in place," said Altenhofen. "Losing a child due to an unintentional injury is heartbreaking for a family, but when it could have been prevented, it becomes a tragedy for all of us."

Child passenger safety is one of the nation's most significant injury prevention initiatives, as car crashes are the leading cause of injury and death for young children. In 2009, there were 250 occupant fatalities among children younger than four years old. Of the 235 fatalities for which restraint was known, 31 percent were totally unrestrained.

Altenhofen began her career as a paramedic and joined the Iowa Department of Public Health in 1995, where she was certified as a CPS technician and instructor. She started Iowa's Child Passenger Safety Seat program in October 1998, with little statewide funding for injury prevention initiatives.

To help fund community unintentional injury prevention projects, she worked tirelessly to obtain an Iowa vanity license plate. In 1999, the "Love Our Kids" license plates went on sale and have helped fund hundreds of child passenger safety projects throughout the state.

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“Helping individuals become technicians and then working with families is truly an honor. The smile on the faces of each family member when they realize that they are doing everything possible to insure their children are safe when traveling is the most rewarding part of my position,” Altenhofen said.

In addition to her work in Iowa, Altenhofen was part of the expert panel that created the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration Transporting Children Safely in Ground Ambulances guidelines for states to use with their respective EMS agencies. She is currently assisting the New York state’s Emergency Medical Services for Children program to develop an online EMS CPS training.

NHTSA estimates that child restraints saved 309 lives in 2009 among children younger than five. An additional 63 lives could have been saved if all children younger than five had used child safety seats. Additionally, an estimated 9,310 lives have been saved by child restraints from 1975 through 2009.

The National Child Passenger Safety Board awarded Altenhofen with the second annual Child Passenger Safety Instructor of the Year Award at the Lifesavers Conference in Orlando, Florida on June 13, 2012. Altenhofen resides in rural Washington County, Iowa with her husband, Mike, and is the mother of three adult sons.

For more information about the CPS Instructor and Technician of the Year Awards and past award recipients, visit <http://www.cpsboard.org/awards.htm>.

List of Award Recipients

2012

CPS Instructor of the Year

Katrina Altenhofen
Washington County, IA

CPS Technician of the Year

Mandi Seethaler
Anchorage, AK

2011

CPS Instructor of the Year

Beth Washington
Tulsa, OK

CPS Technician of the Year

Giuseppina (Pina) Violano
New Haven, CT

About the National Child Passenger Safety Board

The [National Child Passenger Safety Board](#) is a collaborative voice providing guidance for the safe transportation of children and ensuring the integrity of the child passenger safety training and certification program. The 22-member Board brings together medical, public health and injury prevention professionals, law enforcement, auto and car seat manufacturers, as well as representatives from our nation’s most respected traffic safety organizations such as the Safe Kids, National Safety Council, AAP and AAA. It works collaboratively with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and with the Safe Kids Worldwide CPS Certification Program to provide insight from their respective organizations on the CPS technician training and certification program.

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