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Press Release

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THE NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY BOARD NAMES CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR

Charlotte, NC - Brandi Ballinger of Longview, Washington, was just named "National Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year" by the [National Child Passenger Safety Board](#) (NCPSB). Ballinger was honored during the annual Lifesavers Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, on March 25, 2017.

"I truly believe in the mission of having every child leave (the car seat inspection station) safer than how they arrived. I enjoy being a small part of making a difference in the lives of children and their families," Ballinger said.

Ballinger is an employee of Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue located in Kelso, WA, as the department's Public Education Coordinator. Her work includes community education on multiple safety topics including fire, water, poison prevention and home safety in addition to occupant protection for children. Her exemplary commitment and dedication in this area resulted in her nomination for national recognition.

"Brandi is dedicated to helping families in our community," said colleague Sarah Hoskins. "In the last year she has been helping agencies that transport children and trains them on the proper use and installation of car seats. These include at-risk families dealing with very difficult challenges. She is working with a local Child Protection Agency to help shape policies to guide solutions for transporting children in foster care placements."

Child passenger safety is one of the nation's most significant injury prevention initiatives. The United States currently has more than 39,000 nationally certified technicians who educate parents and caregivers on the proper selection and installation of child restraint systems.

Ballinger's experience in injury prevention began when she accepted a work study position at the Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue station while attending college. She was hired full-time by the department in April of 2000 and completed an introductory child passenger safety course for community educators. In 2005, she became a nationally certified child passenger safety technician.

"Brandi is a mentor to all technicians with our organization," Hoskins added.

Ballinger's work also includes collaboration and leadership within Safe Kids Lower Columbia. She has worked with the coalition on safety education programs since 2001 and currently serves as the Vice-Chair for the organization.

Since becoming a certified technician, she has put her skills and knowledge to work; she has not missed a monthly car seat clinic in over ten years. In addition to monthly clinics, she conducts personal appointments with families. Her local team conducts approximately 300 car seats inspections each year. She also educates approximately 200 individuals each year on occupant protection for children through classes offered to groups in Cowlitz County.

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