

SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills 2004 Annual Report

The Sandhills chapter of Nebraska State SAFE KIDS was formed in February of 2004 when members of the Ogallala area community came together to form a community coalition dedicated to preventing the number one cause of death for children under age 14: unintentional injury.



Partners:

The Sandhills District Health Department, which serves Keith, Arthur, Grant, Hooker, and Thomas Counties, serves as the lead agency for SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills.

There are a number of area agencies which have signed on as partners with SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills, including the Ogallala Police and Fire Departments, Ogallala Community Hospital, Banner Home Medical, Ogallala/Keith County Chamber of Commerce, Radiant Life Church, Perkins County Head Start, Keith County Head Start, and Nebraska Game and Parks—Boating Safety Section.

In addition, representatives from Ogallala Public Schools, Nebraska State Patrol, Keith County Sheriff's Department, Ogallala Youth Committee, and the Sandhills Crisis Intervention Program have participated in meetings.

Projects:

SAFE KIDS Week 2004

One of the first projects undertaken by SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills was participation in SAFE KIDS Week 2004, "Splash Into Safety." Participation in a water safety program was a perfect fit, since Lake McConaughy is in our service area.

We focused several activities toward the promotion of the use of personal flotation devices (PFDs). During SAFE KIDS Week 2004, our chapter president gave a presentation on PFD use to over 250 elementary schools students at the "Water Riches" program held at Lake McConaughy. The 20 minute program, held in 8 repeated



sessions, included a hands-on activity putting on PFDs. Hand-out materials on PFD use and general water safety were donated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lake McConaughy SRA, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, and University of Nebraska Extension Office all sponsored the program and assisted SAFE KIDS by allowing us to participate in the program.

We purchased 250 boating and water safety brochures from the National Safe Boating Council. They were distributed to area vendors and area kids at various programs during the year. Some of these flyers remain and will be distributed at future programs.

In cooperation with Ogallala Public Schools, every elementary student received the SAFE KIDS Water Safety Quiz and fact sheet. Our chapter purchased the blue paper for the copies, the Ogallala Community Hospital donated the copying services, and Ogallala Public Schools distributed 450 flyers at all elementary schools.

Two other programs began during SAFE KIDS Week and are covered below.

Life Jacket Reward Program



The life jacket reward program kicked off during SAFE KIDS Week. \$300 of grant money was matched by \$300 of local donations. The \$600 was used to purchase 130 child-sized life jackets with a pro-PFD message. The shirts were handed out at Lake McConaughy SRA to children 12 and under observed wearing their PFD while participating in water sports. For this program, we partnered with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, whose staff handed out the shirts. Park Superintendents, Conservation Officers, and the Boating Safety Officer distributed the majority of the shirts.

National Night Out

We chapter received 24 child- and youth-sized PFDs from Nebraska and National SAFE KIDS. The PFDs were distributed by drawings at National Night Out in Ogallala.

Car Seat Checkup Event

The child passenger safety check at Bill Summers Ford of Ogallala on Saturday, September 18, found that only three of the 19 seats checked were correctly installed. Problems found on the 16 seats incorrectly used ranged from having a seat not tightly secured in the vehicle, to not having the child securely in the seat, to having recalled or unsafe seats. SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills provided new seats free or at a reduced cost to the parents of six children at the event.



Outside Events

Chapter President Scott Eveland assisted with a kid's safety day event in Oshkosh at the Cabela's facility, and with SAFE KIDS day in Gering. He attended both of these events to represent both SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills and his employer.

Other Events

We provided Halloween safety information to elementary schools, distributed by Ogallala Police Officer Ron Fisher. We supported the Ogallala Volunteer Fire Department's Bike Rodeo at the Rubber Chicken Festival, including the donation of a child's bike.

Funding:

Our group got its start with a \$1,000 donation from Ogallala Community Hospital. We received several grants during our first year, including:

- \$500 from Nebraska SAFE KIDS for SAFE KIDS Week
- \$1,000 from Keith County Community Foundation for general programs
- \$720.86 from Nebraska SAFE KIDS for National Conference Attendance
- \$600 from Nebraska SAFE KIDS for Child Passenger Safety for Childcare Providers program (to be presented in 2005)

We also applied for but were denied a request from the Lute Foundation. A grant request from Ogallala Rotary for child safety seats is still pending.

Cash donations for life jacket t-shirts were received from Dr. James Rezac, the Craig Draucker Family, and Adams Banks in Trust. Elite Sports and Promotions donated the shirt set-up and discounted the shirts. We also received \$211 in donations from attendees of the car seat checkup.

Media:

The Keith County News has been an excellent partner, providing press coverage of our founding, SAFE KIDS week, Life Jacket Reward Program and the car seat checkup event.

KNOP-TV provided coverage of our founding and the Life Jacket Reward Program.

Miscellaneous:

Chapter President Scott Eveland was selected to represent all Nebraska chapters as the alternate attendee for the state coordinator at the National SAFE KIDS Conference in Washington D.C. in October. The entire cost of the trip was paid by Nebraska SAFE KIDS.

Looking Ahead to 2005:

- *Childcare class*
In January, we will offer the 4-hour CPS advocacy course to area childcare providers. Thanks to a grant, we will be able to provide free child safety seats to providers.
- *Child Passenger Safety Week 2005*
We are developing plans for CPS Week 2005 in February. A grant is available to conduct CPS programs in partnership with our local Chevrolet dealer, and we are working to build that partnership.

- *CPS Advocacy Course for OCH*
Ogallala Community Hospital has requested that its nursing staff receive the four-hour CPS advocacy, and we will work to offer that program in the coming months.
- *Technician Course*
It is possible that a Child Passenger Safety Technician course will be held in North Platte or even Ogallala in the fall of 2005. We will work with Nebraska SAFE KIDS to help with this class and attempt to recruit people from our area to attend.
- *Partnerships in area counties*
Garden County Hospital is interested in working with us on CPS issues. We need to be open to partnerships in surrounding counties—even those not covered by SDHD.
- *SAFE KIDS Week 2005*
SK Week 2005 features the theme “Follow the Leader.” This year, the emphasis will be on encouraging parents to set a safety example for their children by using seat belts, PFD’s, bike helmets, etc.
- *Kids Don’t Float...and They Can’t Drive the Boat*
We have applied for a \$2,000 grant from the BoatUS Foundation to start an educational campaign promoting PFD use by children and discouraging underage boat operation. We should receive notification in January, 2005.
- *Kiwanis Kids Safety Day*
The Kiwanis club will be hosting a kid’s safety day at Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church on March 19. We will partner with them for this event and plan to hold a car seat checkup on that day.
- *Fire Prevention Grant*
Nebraska SAFE KIDS is exploring a Fire Prevention grant. We are working with OVFD to develop a plan to spend grant monies available to our chapter.

Summary

The first year of SAFE KIDS of the Sandhills has been a great one. We have already done great things for our community, and can look forward to more for 2005.

Thank you! Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this program in 2004, and we look forward to many more successful years serving the children of our area.