

# Risk Guardian



PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY IN ONTARIO

## Buckle up safe & secure

A national child safety seat inspection program offering free check-ups was launched in June.

The *Fit for a Kid* initiative will see Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep retailers conduct a free child safety seat inspection, fitting and customer education service to help parents ensure their children are buckled up properly and safely. The service is open to all vehicles, regardless of make or model.

Canadian surveys show that as many as eight out of ten children are improperly restrained in safety seats.

To help ensure safety seats are properly installed, certified technicians conducting *Fit for a Kid* inspections will look for common mistakes such as children in the wrong seats for their size, seats that are recalled or damaged and seats not properly secured to the vehicle.

*Fit for a Kid* is Canada's first and only national child safety seat inspection service. The program was launched in cities as a pilot last fall and builds on the work of St. John Ambulance and the Canadian Coalition for Child Passenger Safety.

More than 60 retailers across the country offer free *Fit for a Kid* inspections by appointment and they take approximately thirty minutes.

A recent road safety blitz by officers of the Ontario Provincial Police resulted in the inspection of around 200 child seats over the course of four days.



**SAFE:** Two weeks young Ethan Saif is buckled up.

Ontario Provincial Police Traffic Sergeant John McNall explained: "During our road safety inspections we were shocked to discover there were problems with the installations of four out of every five child seats. We strongly support the opportunity offered by DaimlerChrysler to educate parents on car seat installations and ensure that children ride safely every time they are in a vehicle."

To book an appointment or to inquire about the program, parents should call toll-free 1-866-FIT-4-A-KID (1-866-348-4254). The French toll-free number is 1-877-ENFANT-1 (1-877-363-2681).

Further information about the program can be found at [www.fitforakid.ca](http://www.fitforakid.ca) or in French at [www.enfant1.ca](http://www.enfant1.ca).

St. John Ambulance is the exclusive training and certification partner for *Fit for a Kid* technicians. The training course and curriculum was developed with the help of the Canadian Coalition for Child Passenger Safety and the Government of Canada.

Parents who discover during the inspection that their current seat is not safe will receive a loaner as well as a discount coupon on the purchase of a child safety seat.

**See page 4 for top 10 tips**

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### Check Out This Issue!

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# Five year plan to cut fires by 50%

Cambridge Fire Department launched an incentive program in June to drive down residential fires in the city by 50% over the next five years.

The public education program *It's Up to You* puts the fire department into the community, talking to people and getting the message across that fire safety is everyone's business.

As part of the ongoing campaign, firefighters will hit the malls and shopping centres this summer to spread the fire safety message. They will also continue with regular home inspections, checking smoke alarms are properly installed and working as well as providing free fire safety information.

*Risk Watch* is also being given a big push by the local coalition of fire, police, emergency services, hydro and safety groups and school boards.

*Risk Watch* has already been adopted by the Waterloo Region District Separate School Board and is in place



**HANDS UP:** Grade 2 children from Clemens Mill Public School in Cambridge cheer for Risk Watch during a presentation at the launch of the fire department's 'It's Up To You' incentive program.

in city schools.

The program has also been launched as a pilot project by the public school board at Cambridge's Clemens Mill Public School and could eventually be adopted by public schools across the region.

By instilling the safety message in children now, lessons learned will be

remembered and applied in later life. It can lead to a reduction in deaths and injuries, a further reduction in financial losses and could lead to reduced costs for health care.

While fire officials maintain that Cambridge and Ontario are among the safest places to live in the world, they want to improve that record.

Over the past 20 years Cambridge has had 18 fire deaths. The campaign will focus initially on cracking down on fires caused by careless cooking, careless smoking and the improper use of candles.

"This is where we are starting the campaign, but we will be constantly monitoring it and changing it," said Fire Chief Terry Allen. "The real push of the program is to make people aware that they have a responsibility for safety in their homes."

For further information contact Captain Bill Donahue telephone 519-621-6001 or email [donahueb@city.cambridge.on.ca](mailto:donahueb@city.cambridge.on.ca).

## Ban baby walkers: Safe Kids Canada

Safe Kids Canada is calling on Health Canada to ban the sale of baby walkers and urging parents to destroy existing ones after a survey, unveiled in June, found nearly one-third of parents use baby walkers with wheels for their young children. Approximately 1,000 babies are injured every year while using a walker and around half a million baby walkers are currently in Canadian homes.

"Baby walkers should be banned. It should be illegal to sell them in Canada," says Allyson Hewitt, Executive Director of Safe Kids Canada.

Baby walkers enable children to reach hazards more quickly than they could on their own. Eighty-five per cent of walker injuries are a result of a child falling down stairs. A serious head injury is twice as likely, compared to an ordinary fall down the stairs. Children also suffer scalds and burns because the walker makes it possible for them to reach hazards in the kitchen.

## Planning to avoid disaster

Children and their families now have a valuable new safety tool to help them make better emergency preparations and to learn proper and safer responses when disaster strikes—'Risk Watch: Natural Disasters'.

The *Risk Watch* program, announced in June 2003, is designed to teach effective emergency response to natural disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires and tornadoes, and to reinforce the importance of preparedness for natural and other disasters, including hazardous materials spills and acts of terrorism.

The program is divided into grade levels with each age-appropriate section covering seven disaster areas. For further information log on to [www.riskwatch.org](http://www.riskwatch.org).

## Conference update

This year's fire and life safety educator's conference takes place in St. Catharines, November 19-21, and is entitled *Learn it Through the Grapevine*.

Speakers include: Sharon Gamache from NFPA, Fire Chief Terry Allen, Shaun Belding, former Toronto Fire Chief Al Speed, Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle and SMARTRISK's Dr. Robert Conn. Highlights include: a TAPP-C pre-conference seminar, strategic planning for the future, considerations for people with disabilities and the SMARTRISK Heroes Show, plus much more!

The cost this year is an amazing deal at \$175, with accommodation for an additional \$79 per night.

For further information contact Chris Leonard telephone 905-688-5601 extension 4223 or email him at [cleonard@stcatharines.ca](mailto:cleonard@stcatharines.ca).

# Getting a grip on summer safety

As a continuing part of the Halton Hills *Risk Watch* Coalition initiative, Holy Cross School recently held a bike helmet clinic, which checked 125 helmets. The results proved the worthiness of the initiative as 29 helmets needed to be discarded and all of the helmets had to be correctly fitted.

"It's not unusual for helmets to be incorrectly fitted," said Laurel Barnett, a police officer with Halton Hills Regional Police who was helping run a children's car seat clinic at the *Risk Watch* Summer Safety Blitz that took place in June.

The second Annual Summer Safety Blitz held at the Acton fire hall was a push to keep *Risk Watch* on the minds of children and parents during the summer months.

Other activities included a bike rodeo where a police officer accompanied children on their bikes giving them safe riding tips. All the children had to have their bikes and helmets inspected before they could participate.

The car seat clinic was a popular event with parents booking in advance—a long line of cars and SUVs passed through the fire hall with many certified volunteers from police, EMS and fire making sure the car seats were correctly fitted.

Fire trucks were available for inspections and there was a free barbecue courtesy of the main Halton Hills *Risk Watch* Coalition sponsor, Mr. Ray Johnson of Cooperators Insurance. Other information stations provided advice on fire prevention, water safety, *Risk Watch* and piercing and tattoo safety.

"All too often our brains shut off in summer as the school year has come to an end but we want people to remember safety lasts all year long!" said Halton Hills *Risk Watch* Coalition member and Deputy Fire Chief Brian Ellsworth.

Last year, Halton Hills—



**CUTE SMILE:** Police officer Laurel Barnett checks nine-month-old Callum is sitting safely in his mom's car.



**TIGHTEN UP:** Holy Cross teacher Laurie Bouzane checks Jordan's bike helmet.

with a population of 50,000 people—held their first summer safety blitz in Georgetown. The event is organized by the Halton Hills *Risk Watch* Coalition, which includes representatives from the Emergency Medical Services, police, education, health, fire and municipal officials including Mayor Kathy Gastle.

"Our population is steadily increasing and we are getting a lot of young families moving here and this is one way we can reach the parents as well as the kids," said Ellsworth.

Halton Hills has a history of tackling children's injuries. Before *Risk Watch* came along, an existing Injury Prevention Network made up of community organizations was already quite proactive with road safety programs.

"*Risk Watch* became a sub-committee of the award winning Halton Hills Injury Prevention Committee as it was a natural fit and everyone bought into it," said Ellsworth. "Right now we are in a good financial situation. The Catholic Board and the Independent school boards



**HEAVY LOAD:** Getting a grip on summer safety are cousins Ayla and Connor with Fire Safety Specialist Dave Pratt.

utilize *Risk Watch*. It is our hope that the public and French Catholic boards will soon adopt the program."

The Region of Halton Hills has adopted the Pre K/K components of the *Risk Watch* program for their Early Year's Initiative starting in the fall. Parents of pre-schoolers will help teach and implement injury prevention techniques within structured daycare settings.

While Halton Hills has recorded two saves as a result

of *Risk Watch*, for Ellsworth this is a sign that the injury prevention work must continue. "Knowing how to react to emergencies and having the necessary mitigation resources will always be important.

"However, we need to focus more on prevention of fire and life safety hazards. A fire alarm should never need to sound as we need to focus on preventing the fire or injury from ever happening in the first place," he said.

## Canadian Risk Watch

Committees of experts across Canada are providing input and assistance with the monumental tasks involved in Canadianizing the injury prevention program *Risk Watch*.

Revised materials include Canadian content, spelling and metric measurements and may also address preventable injury topics affecting Canadians, such as winter sports and farming activities. The most anticipated change is that the new program will be available in French!

The injury prevention group SMARTRISK was hired to complete the transcreation, after a contractual agreement between the National Fire Protection Association and the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council.

Injury preventers should continue to promote the existing materials. Exact distribution dates for the Canadianized version are not yet available. The revised curriculum will be available to every province and territory.

# Kids' car safety

Eight out of 10 kids in seat belts are at risk—and their parents don't even know it. Here's ten top safety tips as part of the *Fit for Kids* program.

For babies under one year old and less than 10 kg (22lbs) be sure they ride in rear-facing restraints in the back seat.

If less than a year old and more than 10 kg (22 lb) be sure they ride in a seat approved for heavier babies and continue to ride rear-facing until a year old.

Those children between the ages of one and four years and at least 10 kg (22lb) should ride forward-facing until they reach 18kg (40lb).

For children more than 18 kg (40lbs) be sure they ride in booster seats until they are big enough to fit properly in a seat belt, approximately nine years old and over 27 kg (60lb).

Old or second-hand child safety seats should not be used unless you are certain they have never been in a crash, been recalled and are not beyond their expiry date.

Remember: Never place a child safety seat in front of a passenger air bag.

Always read both the vehicle owner's manual and the instructions that come with the child safety seat.

Kids of all ages are safest when properly restrained in the back seat.

It's important to remember that the 'best' child safety seat is the one that correctly fits the child, the vehicle and is correctly used every time.

Do the right thing – always buckle up and make sure your passengers do the same.

# Brampton's centre

Brampton Fire and Emergency Services officially opened their Fire/Life Safety Education Centre on May 29, 2003.

The Fire/Life Safety Education Centre is a hands-on facility designed to educate residents (including children, seniors, individuals and groups) about how to identify risks and prevent injuries, at home, work and play.

In 1993, the Stephanie Gaetz **KEEPSAFE FOUNDATION** was established by Barbara Underhill and her husband Rick Gaetz, after their eight-month-old daughter Stephanie, died tragically at home. The Foundation is dedicated to reducing the incidence of childhood injuries, the leading cause of death for children across Canada. The Stephanie Gaetz **KEEPSAFE FOUNDATION** partnered with the Brampton Fire and Emergency Services to create Stephanie's Place, part of the new Fire/Life Safety Education Centre.

Stephanie's Place is modelled after a home, with a bedroom, bathroom, living room and kitchen. Fire and life safety educators will use the home atmosphere of Stephanie's Place to teach people how to identify risks in their own homes and prevent injuries from occurring.

The Brampton Fire/Life Safety Education Centre will offer the residents of Brampton the opportunity to learn the fire and life safety education skills, needed to save lives.



**PLACE:** Brampton Assistant Deputy Fire Chief Andy MacDonald and former world pairs champion figure skater Barbara Underhill.

Photograph by Denise Wallace

# Get out & stay out!

The theme for Fire Prevention Week 2003—which runs from October 5–11—is 'When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!' Fire Safety Council has assembled a kit of material for Fire Departments.

Partners in Ontario include Bell Canada, Enbridge Gas Distribution, Kidde Safety Energizer Canada, Home Depot Canada as well as Underwriters Laboratories. The kit includes a banner, brochures, posters, a full range of promotional items and a complete Fire Prevention DVD library. Visit [www.safecommunities.com](http://www.safecommunities.com) to download this order form.



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# Fire safety awards

Fourteen individuals and organizations, including six children, received Fire Safety Awards from the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council on June 18.

**Action Award:** Payman Barazandeh from Mississauga; Vincent Charlebois from Ajax; Adam Cochran from Waterloo; Alicia Harvie from Welland; Scorpio King from Belleville; Rudy Unni from Burlington.

**Advocate Award:** Robert Bulloch from Huntsville; Kevin Frankish from City TV, Kim Rennie and Gloria Cook, parent members of the Keswick School Council.

**Partner Award:** CHtv in



**ACTION:** Deputy Fire Marshal Doug Crawford and Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle with action award recipients.

Hamilton; KICX 104.1 FM in Midland; More FM in Huntsville; and the Wellington Advertiser.