

SAFE KIDS—Coalition Expands To Prevent Even More Childhood Accidents!

Shands Children's Hospital announces the expansion of the Alachua County Safe Kids Coalition to include the surrounding seven rural counties. The new coalition, Safe Kids North Central Florida, includes Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, Suwannee and Union counties, in its fight against the number one killer of children ages 14 and under — preventable injuries.

Safe Kids North Central Florida will work to reduce the number of children who die from motor vehicle and pedestrian injuries, bike crashes, fires and burns, drownings, poisonings and chokings, unintentional shootings and falls. Each year, nearly 6,300 children ages 14 and under die and more than 120,000 are permanently disabled each year from accidental injuries in the United States. Every year, accidental injuries kill and disable more children in North Central Florida than kidnapping, drugs and childhood diseases combined.

Nearly 1,000 children ages 14 and under were hospitalized or killed as a result of an accidental injury in the five-year period between 1999 and 2003 in our eight county region. The majority of these deaths were caused by motor vehicle crashes. "Many of these injuries and deaths could have been prevented with the proper use of car seats and bike helmets," said Mindy Underberger, Director of SafeKids North Central Florida. "Our hope is to reduce these numbers over the next five years."

Organizations participating include: Shands Healthcare; Gainesville Police Department; Alachua County Fire & Rescue; City of Gainesville/Public Works; Benton Pediatrics; Healthy Families GLAD; American Red Cross; The Oaks Mall; Florida Highway Patrol; Arrive Alive Driving School; Suwannee County School System; Starke Police Department; Gainesville Regional Utilities; The Volunteer Center of Alachua County; North Florida School Days; Gainesville Family Magazine; University of FL/ Bike Pedestrian Program; Starke Police Department; Gainesville Fire Rescue; North Central Florida Safety Council; Dixie County Even Start; SBAC-Partners in Education; University of Florida Police Department; Alachua County Sheriff's Office; Florida Poison Information Center/Jax; Childrens Medical Services and Cox Media.

Safe Kids North Central Florida is seeking new member organizations and volunteers to establish new partnerships in the eight county area. Groups or individuals should call Mindy Underberger at (352) 265-0543 for more information.

SAFE KIDS



North Central Florida



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