

Toyota Announces National Expansion of Safety Program for African American and Hispanic Families

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June 28, 2011 – CINCINNATI, OHIO – Toyota today announced a \$1 million commitment to support the national expansion of Buckle Up for Life, a safety program developed by Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, to help address the extraordinarily high number of African American and Hispanic children, teens and adults killed or injured in automobile crashes. With this commitment, Buckle Up for Life will expand to Chicago, Denver and San Antonio in 2011/2012, to provide safety measures and education designed to greatly reduce the number of fatalities resulting from vehicle crashes within the Hispanic and African-American communities. Cincinnati Children’s will simultaneously continue to implement the program in the Greater Cincinnati community. Other key U.S. cities will follow in 2013.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), automobile crashes are one of the leading causes of death within the Hispanic and African-American communities, and a lack or improper installation of car seats and less frequent use of seat belts are significant factors. Studies from the CDC and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) note that:

- Hispanic children are three times more likely to die in a vehicle crash than Caucasian children;
- Automobile crashes are the leading cause of death for African Americans under the age of 14 and the second leading cause of death between the ages of 15-34; and
- Non-seat belt use is the primary cause of accidental injury-related deaths for African Americans of all ages while motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Hispanics 1 to 44.

In response, in 2004 pediatric surgeons and injury prevention coordinators from Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center teamed up with Toyota to create Buckle Up for Life – or “Abróchate a la Vida” in Spanish – a multi-generational, faith-based safety initiative in 17 Hispanic churches in Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati that provides interactive vehicle safety education, free child car safety seats and car seat inspections to encourage safety habits among drivers and passengers. The program was subsequently expanded to Los Angeles in 2010.

Buckle Up for Life’s results have been substantial. For example, after participating in the Buckle Up for Life program in Greater Cincinnati, the number of Hispanic adults and children using seat belts and car seats more than doubled.

“Safety is a critical priority for Toyota,” said Patricia Pineda, Toyota’s Group Vice President of National Philanthropy. “In addition to enhancing the safety of our own vehicles, we are dedicated to supporting education programs that help protect drivers and passengers at every stage of life. Buckle Up for Life has proven to be a successful and sustainable model for meeting the pressing needs of the community, and Toyota is proud to support its expansion around the country.”

“We created Buckle Up for Life because we were seeing a disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic children coming into the hospital with severe crash-related injuries. This disparity was unacceptable and we knew we had to do something about it,” noted Dr. Rebecca L. Brown, Associate Director of Trauma Services and Director of the Buckle Up for Life Program at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. “We appreciate the significant input and support that Toyota has provided at every step of the way as well as their leadership in helping to bring Buckle Up for Life to a wider audience around the country.”