

ThinkFirst

Southern Illinois University
School of Medicine



Volume 1, Issue 1

NEW NAME BUT WE ARE STILL THE SAME!

MK's
Think Tank



ThinkFirst! What a great reminder for everyone! In each busy day, don't we all take a lot for granted? We are excited about our new title and the positive message it brings with it. Although it was hard to "retire" our "Risky Business" title and logo, our new name identifies our participation in the national ThinkFirst program and helps market our injury prevention partners throughout the state

as well as nationally.

Injury prevention has grown by leaps and bounds since we first started doing presentations in 1990. We have reached over 150,000 youth in central and southern Illinois with our injury prevention message. Our program is recognized as one of the leaders in head and spinal cord injury prevention throughout the state of Illinois as well as on a national level. In this newsletter, we would like to share our "new look" and some of our program activities and accomplishments, highlight our partners in prevention, and focus on the new occupant protection laws and revisions. Please check out our new website too -- www.siumed.edu/thinkfirst for a safe new year!

Mary Kay Reed
Program Coordinator

ThinkFirst is the Head and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Formerly known as "Risky Business", this program is now in its thirteenth program year and is funded primarily through a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation/Division of Traffic Safety.

Our program and staff are the same. So why did we change our name?

Although we have always been a part of the national injury prevention program, in the early years many chapters like ours had their own "local name". As the National ThinkFirst program has grown and "mushroomed", we are all interested in "joining forces" and becoming more unified at all levels—local, statewide and nationally.

We are excited about this change and want to share some of our accomplishments and goals for this project year:

- Safety and preventing injuries is #1. Really, no matter who we are or what we do, the reality that in a split second an injury could change our life forever is sobering. Reminding ourselves of that simply puts everything else in perspective.
- Partnerships—We sure can't do this alone! Our partnerships are definitely the most important part of this endeavor. Injury prevention is for everyone, and we all have an important part in this mission! As our program has grown and expanded through the years, so have our partnerships. It's amazing how much influence we all have on other people and what a domino effect it all is. Just buckling our own safety belt every time sets an example for others and can save countless lives.
- Education—The goal of ThinkFirst is to remind people to use their mind to protect their body! Educated choices can prevent injuries from happening. The reminder that we are not invincible no matter what age we are and that these devastating injuries do happen is simply a fact. But the good news is—most of the time these injuries don't have to happen—they are preventable!
- Program Expansion—Teenagers are our primary target audience with a focus on alcohol zero tolerance and motor vehicle safety.

Continued from front page

This project year our grant includes program monies to partner with several other agencies in program development and educational activities. These partners are:

ENCARE—Emergency Nurses Care is an organization dedicated to educating America's youth and adults on the dangers of drinking and driving, and drug use. ENCARE is also very active in child passenger safety, bicycle safety and older driver safety. www.ena.org

IDEA—Illinois Drug Education Alliance is a statewide volunteer coalition of citizens and community organizations dedicated to the goals of drug-free youth and the prevention of illegal, destructive, unsafe or unhealthy use of alcohol and other drugs. www.bestofidea.com

ILCAAAP—Illinois Churches in Action on Alcohol and Addiction Problems is a youth group who educates and provides alcohol and drug-free alternatives to high school students. They promote both an alcohol zero tolerance and seat belt compliance message. www.ilcaaap.com

- Check out our updated website! www.siumed.edu/thinkfirst
It's new, it's fun! Program activities and upcoming events are posted, plus links to injury prevention resources and injury statistics.
- Cruise for Clues! We are developing a "Driving Safety Scavenger Hunt" web game to educate and promote zero tolerance & traffic safety facts and links for Driver's Education students. In partnership with their teacher, they will earn extra credit points upon completion of the game. This is being developed by SIU School of Medicine's webmaster in conjunction with ThinkFirst staff and will be promoted to Driver's Education classes in Illinois. We hope to have it online by Spring, 2004.

School Program Reminder!

Principals, Teachers and Counselors: Now is the time to schedule Think First programs for 2004. It only takes a minute and it is well worth your time and your student's time to listen and learn. There are two ways to contact us. You may call our phone number **Think First – 217-545-9112 or 217-545-7766** or you may e-mail us at mreed@siumed.edu Our programs fit every age and need. We can't wait to hear from you, Read on and find the program that works for your school!

Presentations available:

- Little Convincer Program—Buckle Up program for ages 3-6 - offered to area day cares and elementary schools.
- Think First for Kids Program - Elementary schools-Grades 2nd – 5th grade
- Bike Rodeo & Bike safety programs - Grades 4,5,6
- Think First for Teens program-Grades 7-12-both classroom and assembly format
- Operation Prom Night—Outdoor Crash Re-enactment pre-prom high school program
- Think First on the Road -The Think First team participates in many safety exhibits, providing information on the "business of taking risks" to all ages!
- Child Safety Seat Education and Checkpoint Events



It's cool to be safe and it's catching on with kids, thanks to Danny Hicks and the "Operation Cool" program. Danny works with ThinkFirst and the Illinois State Police to present the program at high schools throughout the District 14 area, which covers 14 high schools in the district including schools in Fulton, Hancock, McDonough, Henderson, Warren and

Mason counties.

"Operation Cool" is an incentive-based program developed by the Illinois State Police that was designed to increase seat belt usage by teenagers. The project awards promotional prizes to individual students who sign a contract and comply with set rules for seat belt safety. In addition, a car is awarded as the grand prize at the end of each school year.

The overall goal is to save lives by increasing seat belt safety awareness among teenagers in Central Illinois. "Operation Cool" strives to assist local high schools' efforts to increase seat belt usage to at least 70 percent of the student driving population by offering presentations that will grab the student's attention from the very beginning.

Danny Hicks conveys a powerful message as he explains to the students how his life has changed because of a mistake he made at age eighteen while riding in a vehicle with his peers. He provides personal testimony on issues dealing with bowel and bladder functions, dating, personal relationships with friends and life in general. He paints a very vivid picture of how his life will never be the

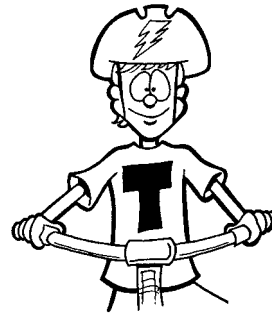


same again because of one mistake.

Danny feels that every life is precious and the changes that occur can last forever. "I have no way of going back to that afternoon 13 years ago, but I can share my message with students. My hope is that they can see what they have to lose in life if something like this were to happen to them."

Since Hicks has been speaking with the "Operation Cool" program, five high school students have been saved due to wearing their safety belts. The information they received during the presentation saved their lives.

So Un-cool...Can be Cool!



Colin Covington 5th grader at Iles Elementary School thought it was very "cool" when Sharon Sander and Danny Hicks presented the Think First For Kids Program (addresses head and spinal cord injuries: safety belt use, bicycle safety, water safety, play ground safety, and violence) to his school. The program was given to 1st through 5th grades.

Colin's mother e-mailed the following message to the principal in appreciation for the program and its message.

"I just wanted to thank you for arranging for yesterday's speaker who spoke on the issue of seat belt and bicycle helmet use. It couldn't have come at a better time because our oldest son rode his bike to school for the very first time ever yesterday. About a block away from our house we saw him stop and take his helmet off and put it in his backpack. (It is SO un-cool for middle schoolers to wear helmets, I guess.) Colin was very enthusiastic about the speaker and told Jamie all about what he had learned about helmet use. This whole subject made great dinnertime conversation and I am sure Jamie will think twice before he takes his helmet off again."

Diane Covington

This is quite a testimonial to the effectiveness of safety education. Cool or un-cool, our main goal is to prevent unnecessary injury or death. Statements such as this are welcomed and appreciated in our injury prevention efforts!

LAWS-WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

ATTENTION EVERYONE IN ILLINOIS! BUCKLE UP! IT'S THE LAW!

Illinois became a primary Seat Belt State with the new law revision passed July 3, 2003.

We should all lead by example and remember to Buckle Up - Every Trip, Every Time ...Seat Belts Save Lives!

As of July 3rd, 2003, Illinois has become a Primary Seat Belt state. The Primary Seat Belt Law says that the driver and front seat passenger of a motor vehicle operated on a street or highway in Illinois shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat safety belt. A law enforcement officer may not search or inspect a motor vehicle, its contents, the driver, or a passenger solely because of a violation of the new law. All law enforcement officials may now stop any vehicle whose driver or front seat passenger is not wearing his/her safety belt.

A violation of this law shall be a petty offense and subject to a fine not to exceed \$25.

GRADUATED LICENSING SYSTEM



Getting a driver's permit or license is one of the most exciting events in a teenager's life. But along with this new privilege comes a lot of responsibility.

Although teenagers make up only six percent

of Illinois drivers, they account for 16 percent of all crash fatalities.

The Graduated Licensing System gets young people who have proven to be poor drivers off the road and into further training and keeps parents more involved in preparing their teens to drive responsibly.

INITIAL LICENSING PHASE DRIVERS AGE 16-17

- Parental consent required to obtain license; parent must verify that a minimum 25 hours of behind-the-wheel practice have taken place
- All occupants under age 18 must wear safety belts

- As of January 1, 2004, limited to one passenger under the age of 20 for the first six months following issuance of the license, or until the driver reaches age 18, whichever occurs first. Siblings, stepsiblings, children and stepchildren of the driver are exempt. Number of passengers limited to one in front seat and to the number of safety belts in back seat.
- 11 p.m. curfew Sunday-Thursday; midnight Friday and Saturday only for 16-year-olds

These laws can also be accessed by going to any of the following websites:

www.dot.state.il.us
Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Traffic Safety

www.cyberdriveillinois.com
Illinois Secretary of State.



CALLING ALL KIDS UNDER EIGHT! IT'S COOL TO BE IN A BOOSTER SEAT... AND NOW IT'S THE LAW!

Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa...reminding everyone that the new year will ring in a new law for child passenger safety.

Public Act #83-8, The Child Passenger Protection Act, has been in effect in Illinois since July 1, 1983. The law, amended effective January 1, 2004 requires anyone who transports children in Illinois in non-commercial vehicles to do so in the following manner:

- Children under the age of eight years must be secured in an appropriate child restraint system; more commonly called a child safety seat. Child safety seats include infant seats, convertible seats (rear-facing for infants and forward-facing for toddlers) and booster seats that are used with the vehicle lap and shoulder belt system.
- Children weighing more than 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat of a motor vehicle while wearing only a lap belt if the back seat is not equipped with a lap and shoulder belt system for booster seat installation.
- Children and young people eight and up to 16 years of age must be secured in a properly adjusted safety belt in any position in the vehicle.
- The parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of eight years is responsible for providing a child safety seat to anyone who transports his or her child.
- Every person under the age of 18 years who transports a child eight years of age or older (up to 18 years) is responsible for securing that child in a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt or child safety seat.

Those found in violation of the law the first time will be fined \$50, which is waived upon proof of possession of an approved safety seat. Subsequent violations are punishable by a \$100 fine.

Children with physical disabilities that prevent the use of standard safety seats are exempt from the provisions of the law if the disability is duly certified by a physician.

Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety
3215 Executive Park Drive, Springfield, IL 62794--217-785-3038.

This law may be found at the Illinois Dept. of Transportation website address: www.dot.state.il.us/trafficsafety/occprot.html



SAVED BY THE BELT!



*J.R. Lauer (middle) and his friends show off their new best friend...a seat belt.
(pictured L-Josh Waggoner, Haley Sharp,
J.R. Lauer, Andrea Rieser, Angela Dudley, and Rick Vaninger)*

When asked, “Did you ever think a seat belt would give you all this great media attention?” J.R. grinned and replied, “No, I sure never dreamed that would happen. I guess I always hoped football would put me in the limelight, but since a seat belt is what saved my life, this is even better!”

As the quarterback for Pleasant Plains varsity football team, J.R. Lauer was trained to set up the right play for his team. On August 28, 2003, just days before the first game was played, he did a maneuver that likely saved his own life—he buckled his seat belt.

Driving his mom’s 2002 Toyota Solara convertible was a special treat on that beautiful fall day. He usually drove a different car. After taking his girlfriend home after school, J.R. was rushing back to football practice and hit a loose patch of gravel on a country road, losing control of the car. Police have reconstructed the crash that left 104 feet of skid marks on the road. The car flipped four times into a bean field, going 177 feet off the road before stopping and sprung the soft top open. He was alone in the car with his seat belt on and was still in the driver’s seat when the rescuers arrived. His injuries included facial & elbow lacerations requiring 300 stitches, a concussion, and a broken left wrist.

State police send out a reminder that driving on oil and pea gravel is much like driving on ice. A driver may be unaware of the risks on these gravel roads and speed can add more danger.

When asked, “So why did you have your seat belt on that day, J.R.”? He replied, “I really do always buckle up—it’s just a habit and I don’t even think about not doing it. When I was growing up my mom always made us wear our seat belts—it’s just a rule with her. I know that if I got a ticket, my mom probably wouldn’t pay it and I don’t want to have to spend money on that. Besides, why not buckle up? It only takes a second”. The reality of crashes is clear to J.R. and his friends—two other students from their school were recently in a crash receiving only minor injuries because they too were wearing their seat belts.

J.R. said he was really in a fog after the crash and doesn’t remember much. He remembers that none of it seemed real until all of a sudden the next day it hit him, “Wow, I was just in a car wreck. I never thought this would be me. I’m lucky to be alive. I’m lucky I had my seat belt on.”

What message does he want to pass on? “Don’t let anything bad happen to you. Look at me and look at what a seat belt can do—it can save your life. Just get in, put your seat belt on and drive.”

J.R. Lauer
Junior, Pleasant Plains High School
(Interview by Mary Kay Reed)

Community Events

Poinsettia Sales

Our first holiday fund raiser was a colorful success! The plants were beautiful with abundant blooms and holiday trim. Special thanks to Springfield Bicycle Club for choosing ThinkFirst to benefit from this holiday Poinsettia sale. Proceeds will be used to help with costs in presenting Pre-prom crash re-enactments in central Illinois high schools. Thanks to everyone who supported our program-teenagers will experience reality because of you.

Christmas Tree Tags

1000 Drive Smart/Drive Sober Christmas Tree Tags were distributed by ThinkFirst staff to the Apple Barn and Greenview Nurseries in Springfield. This is a great way to spread the message about traffic safety for the holidays. Thank you Apple Barn and Greenview Nurseries for your continued support.

Friendly Auto Show

Check out the Friendly Auto Show during January & February. Explanations of booster seat updates and more information about the Red/White/Blue team's upcoming checkpoint events will be featured. Thank you Susan Langheim and Friendly Chevrolet!

Parent Helpline

Thank you to Pat Graham and Parent Helpline for spotlighting ThinkFirst on its Parent Helpline Access 4 TV show on December 11, 2003. Mary Kay Reed, Coordinator, was interviewed about our new program name and safety belt revisions. Thanks for your partnership!

Trauma Conference

ThinkFirst partnered with the Southern Illinois Trauma Center as an exhibitor at the Illinois Trauma Conference on October 25, 2003. The conference was held at the Illinois State Fairgrounds with 375 EMS personnel in attendance



Upcoming Child Passenger Safety Checkpoint Events in Springfield

Friday, January 23, 2004. Springfield Fire Station #12
9:00 am to noon 2925 S. Koke Mill Road

Saturday, February 14, 2004. Friendly Chevrolet
10 am to noon 2540 Prairie Crossing Drive

Friday, March 19, 2004. Springfield Fire Station #10
9:00 am to noon 2401 Peoria Road (Fairgrounds)

Friday, April 23, 2004. Springfield Fire Station #11
9:00 am to noon 1805 Toronto Road

Friday, May 14, 2004. Springfield Fire Station #12
9:00 am to noon 2925 S Koke Mill Road

All checkpoints are appointment only, except for the one in February.

To make an appointment, please call Kim at 698-0022, extension 1233.

If you have questions or need more information, call 217-545-9112

Mark Your Calendars!

February 8-14, 2004 is Child Passenger Safety Week

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

May 17-23, 2004 is National Buckle-Up America Week!

ThinkFirst Reminder

*Call us to schedule your Spring program
(217) 545-9112*



Contributors List

January—December, 2003

Special Activity Grants/Partners
IL Safe Kids--\$1500 grant for Child Passenger Safety training
Community Child Care Connection
St. John's Hospital for Child Passenger Safety trainings
Springfield Fire Department—CPS checkpoint sites
Springfield Urban League
MMC Koke Mill Medical Center
Shop N Save, Dirksen Parkway, Springfield

Donations

Springfield Bicycle Club—December poinsettia sales fundraiser and Holiday Auction profits

Wish List

Child Safety Seats
Bicycle helmets
Monetary donations toward Crash re-enactment events

Help us help others prevent injuries!
Donations to ThinkFirst/SIU School of Medicine can be sent to:

**SIU Foundation
ThinkFirst
P.O. Box 19666
Springfield, IL 62794-9666**



The ThinkFirst Newsletter is published in part with grant funds received from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

ThinkFirst

Southern Illinois University
School of Medicine

Department of Surgery
P.O. Box 19679
Springfield, IL
62794-9679

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 680
Springfield, IL

Join Forces-Let's Connect!
Please note our new
phone and fax numbers

Phone: 217-545-9112
Fax: 217-545-7901

Check out our new website at:
www.siumed.edu/thinkfirst