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Car Enthusiasts Initiate Pediatric Patient Toy Drive with Foundation for Community Health

Missoula, MT- For pediatric patients, health challenges can cloud the hope and wonder of the holiday season. Members of the Missoula Volkswagen Club wanted to brighten the holidays with a toy drive for those children needing extra medical attention in December. Bob Brugge, President of the Missoula Volkswagen Club, reached out to the Foundation for Community Health. Bob shared that "It is hard enough to be a child, much less a sick one, during the holidays. This is our chance to give back to the kids in our community in the spirit of the season." The Foundation’s donors and volunteers work to advance healthy lives in Western Montana and the Foundation leads the Safe Kids Missoula Coalition. Toy safety is a priority of Safe Kids, so the opportunity to team up to share toy safety tips and cheer was fitting. The Foundation reached out to Missoula-area hospitals and clinics, and they will be working with Partnership Health Center, Community Medical Center and Providence Montana Health Foundation to distribute the toys that are donated to the Club.

Donations of unwrapped, new, safe toys for children for ages 6 months through 12 can be dropped off at the Club’s designated collection site of Karl Tyler Missoula Volkswagen, 3665 N. Reserve Street in Missoula, through Friday, December 18. In order to best match up toys with pediatric patients, all toys not able to be distributed during the holidays will continue to benefit patients cared for in the New Year.

“When we are thinking about toys, safety should be top-of-mind,” notes Dannette Fadness, Coordinator for Safe Kids Missoula. In 2011, nearly 190,000 children under the age of 15 years were seen in emergency departments for toy-related injuries, equating to more than 500 kids each and every day. More than a third of those injured were children age 5 and under. “It’s important to make sure toys are appropriate for a child’s age and maturity level, and that we carefully review any warning labels.” If secondhand toys are purchased, or received from friends or relatives, Safe Kids Missoula advises parents to visit www.safekids.org and select Recalls to make sure the toy hasn’t been recalled for safety reasons. Used toys should also be in good condition with all original parts and packaging, if possible. If a new toy comes with a product registration card, it is helpful for parents to mail it in so the manufacturer can contact you if the item is ever recalled.

In addition, Safe Kids Missoula recommends the following five toy safety tips:
1. **Consider a child’s age when purchasing a toy or game.** It’s worth a second to read the instructions and warning labels to make sure it’s just right for the child.

2. **Keep a special eye on small game pieces that may be a choking hazard for young children.** While these kinds of games are great for older kids, they can pose a potential danger for younger, curious siblings.

3. **After play time is over, use a bin or container to store toys for next time.** Make sure there are no holes or hinges that could catch little fingers.

4. **Keep button battery-controlled devices out of sight and reach of children.** These include remote controls, singing greeting cards/talking children’s books, digital scales, watches, hearing aids, thermometers, children’s toys, calculators, key fobs, tea light candles, flashing holiday jewelry or decorations.

5. **Stay informed about harmful products in the marketplace.** Safe Kids will make it easy for you by sending an e-mail alert twice a month. Parents and others can sign up at [www.safekids.org/product-recalls](http://www.safekids.org/product-recalls).

For more information about toy safety, call the Foundation at 406-926-2522 or visit [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org). For questions about the toy drive, contact Bob Brugge at 406-317-1162.

**About the Foundation for Community Health and Safe Kids Missoula Coalition**

The mission of Foundation for Community Health is to provide philanthropic support for the advancement of healthy lives in Western Montana. Foundation for Community Health is the successor organization of Community Medical Center Foundation.

Safe Kids Missoula works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the number one cause of death for children in the United States. Safe Kids Missoula is one of 400 member coalitions of the global network Safe Kids Worldwide. Safe Kids Missoula was founded in 1991 and is has been led by Foundation for Community Health since 2014. For more information and to support Safe Kids’ safety education, visit [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) or [www.fchwmt.org/safe-kids-missoula-coalition/](http://www.fchwmt.org/safe-kids-missoula-coalition/).