AFTER TRAGIC LOSS DUE TO AN UNINTENTIONAL SHOOTING, SAFE KIDS MISSOULA ENCOURAGES PRECAUTION

MISSOULA, MT – Safe Kids Missoula joins the community of Belgrade, Montana in mourning the death of a 9-year-old boy from an unintentional shooting on Thursday, August 18. This was the first unintentional shooting death of a child under 18 reported in Montana this year, according to gunviolencearchive.org, but unfortunately injuries and deaths from gun incidents happen all too often across the United States. More than 2,300 gun-related injuries or deaths in children ages 0-17 in the United States have happened this year. An everytownresearch.org report states more than two-thirds of gun-related tragedies could be avoided if guns were stored properly.

Free gun locks are available to families through the Missoula County Sheriff’s Office in partnership with Project ChildSafe, a national program committed to promoting firearm safety. “Securing your firearms is the best way to prevent accidents and misuse of guns,” said Sheriff T.J. McDermott. “One of our goals is to protect families from preventable tragedies that can easily be avoided with safe gun practices. Remember to treat every gun as if it were loaded, talk to your kids, and if you want more information stop by our office.”

“Our hearts go out to the family and friends of this child,” said Kira Huck, Safe Kids Missoula Coalition Co-Coordinator. “Gun-related tragedies impact entire communities and remind us that we need to take extra precautions when kids are in places where guns are present.”

(Continued)
Safe Kids Missoula and its partners encourage parents and caregivers to keep kids safe with some important tips:

- **Store guns and ammunition safely.** Make sure guns are stored in a locked location, unloaded and out of the reach and sight of children. Store ammunition separately, also out of reach and sight of kids.
- **Make sure all guns are equipped with effective, child-resistant gun locks.** Keep keys and combinations hidden.
- **When a gun is not in its lock box, keep it in your line of sight.** Leaving guns on a nightstand, table or other place where a child can gain access may lead to injuries and fatalities.
- **Talk to your kids.** Explain how a gun your kids might see on television or in a video game is different from a gun in real life. Teach kids not to touch a gun and to immediately tell an adult if they see one.
- **Talk to relatives and friends who may care for a child or have a child visit.** Have a conversation with other family members and the parents of your children’s friends about safe gun storage practices.
- **Dispose of guns safely.** If parents decide that they want to get rid of a gun, they can consult with local law enforcement on how to dispose of it in a safe way.

For more gun safety information, please visit [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org).

###

**About Safe Kids Missoula**

Safe Kids Missoula Coalition, a local partner of Safe Kids Worldwide, is led by Foundation for Community Health. The Coalition includes safety experts from more than 30 nonprofit and government agencies dedicated to protecting kids from preventable injuries—the number one cause of death to children in the United States. The Coalition works together to increase awareness and create safer environments with the goal of preventing traffic injury, concussion, poisoning, child gun access and more. In 2015, more than 7,000 children, parents and caregivers received hands-on education and take-action information through Safe Kids Missoula. For more information, visit [fchwmt.org/safe-kids-missoula](http://fchwmt.org/safe-kids-missoula).