

ThinkFirst Navajo donates 50 car seats to Navajo Nation

Special to the Independent

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — A new injury prevention initiative called “Buckle Up Navajo Newborns” was launched last week by Eve’s Fund for Native American Health Initiatives and their flagship program — ThinkFirst Navajo.

Fifty high-end car seats purchased by Eve’s Fund were delivered to the Navajo Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Division. One of highest child mortality rates in the country is on the Navajo Nation with the leading cause of preventable deaths for children coming from motor vehicle crashes.

Leading cause of preventable deaths

According to the Navajo Nation Department of Transportation, only 27 to 30 percent of children are put in car seats or booster seats. Furthermore, given the large size and rural nature of the Navajo Nation and limited number of police officers, law enforcement is nearly impossible.

“So many deaths and injuries of Navajo infants and young children could be prevented just by buckling them up safely in car seats,” said Eve’s Fund president, Barbara Crowell Roy, “and now there can be no excuse not to do so.

We are committed to trying to raise enough funds so that every Navajo newborn can be put in a sturdy



Photo courtesy Barbara Crowell Roy

Fifty high-end car seats purchased by Eve’s Fund were delivered to the Navajo Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Division.

car seat. The seats we are purchasing will work for newborns up to children weighing 65 pounds, so parents with limited resources and access won’t have to keep buying new seats as their child grows. “

75 percent of car seats are not properly installed

Jodee Dennison, director of ThinkFirst Navajo, empha-

sizes that mothers who receive the car seats must be trained by special trainers and notes statistics, which show that up to 75 percent of car seats, are not properly installed.

Norma Bowman, program manager of the Navajo Department of Highway Safety said, “It is a huge benefit when organizations such as Eve’s Fund reach out to assist our traffic safety efforts on Navajo, and we are grateful for this partnership and collaborative effort. Our

department, with our staff of National Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians, will provide the necessary educational resources to ensure that children are properly restrained and receive hands-on instruction for the various stages of their child restraint use. All expectant mothers and anyone else in need of car seats should contact our office at: 505-371-8326.”

ThinkFirst Navajo

ThinkFirst Navajo is a chapter of ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation and one of the most active in the country. ThinkFirst Navajo is the only one that operates exclusively on a federally recognized Native American Indian reservation, an area where injury rates are three to four times the national average.

In addition to providing culturally sensitive, free education to schools and youth programs on the Navajo Nation, ThinkFirst Navajo also provides additional peer mentoring, support, and training to the program’s VIP speakers.

Eve’s Fund for Native American Health Initiatives is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes hope and wellness for Native American youth. Dr. Robert M. Crowell & Barbara Crowell Roy founded Eve’s Fund in 2005 in memory of their daughter, Eve Erin Crowell, and young adults. For more information, go to <http://www.evecrowellsfund.org>.