

Subject: Great work in April!

Good afternoon! I have taken some time to think about Montana's energizing efforts, and would like to share our experiences. The attached photo essay will build on what I say. I apologize for the delay in getting this month's summary to you. I proceeded directly to projects in other states, from Montana, and I'm finally in my office catching up.

In a nutshell, I think the April week tops the list for the most people reached in a single phase. We shared lifesaving messages about properly protecting children, teens and adults with *nearly 500 professionals!* On top of that, we directly reached families through print media, television and radio. And the best part is that we empowered early childhood professionals, police officers, driving instructors and first responders to use the core information in their professional and personal activities.

This is a great example of agencies and individuals working together toward common goals. HMHB/SKSC team members, the Montana LE Academy, childcare and Head Start leaders, the Montana Traffic Education Association and Montana EMS Symposium organizers were all involved – and Patty Carrell led the coordination from start to finish. The major funding and support for the week came from the Montana Department of Transportation, along with the committed partners that actively work with HMHB. With experience in 44 states, I can assure you that this kind of interagency, public/private and state/local partnership is rare, but *extremely effective!*

The most telling gauge of an effort's effectiveness is measured in results – and the immediate response tells me that the week will be quite fruitful. Early childhood professionals told us that they would be making immediate changes to the way they transport kids, as well as sharing information on protecting children and adults. Some Police officers told us that they will be better equipped to enforce the laws, and to refer citizens to Montana's network of expert resources. Several driving instructors shared that they are now inspired to discuss occupant protection with their students, in more comprehensive and extensive terms. A number of first responders said they plan to spread the message, and to use it personally and professionally. Some from each group even asked for more resources to facilitate education!

Each of the courses we delivered was approved for credit hours in the respective industries, and the attendees seemed to agree that they are valuable. One of the most frequent comments we received was that the training should be *mandated for all personnel*, and even for the families and students they work with! The presentations also provide required continuing education credit and active experience to current CPS technicians, and some folks from each of the specialty areas plan to seek certification training and become community resources. I'm sure these results are only the beginning of what we will see toward the overall goal of *reducing crash injury and saving lives.*

As I mentioned, I have attached photos and captions, for your review. If you want or need higher resolution versions, to help promote your involvement or recruit others, just ask. Feel free to use the handouts we have created, to help carry the core message. The *course handouts* are linked from www.hmhb-mt.org/programs/earlychildhood.php, and current information on *occupant protection legislation* is linked from www.hmhb-mt.org/programs/montanasafekids.php.

Thanks for all of your hard work to keep families safe! I look forward to continuing our work together.

Joe

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