

**Subject: Fwd: A great week for empowering Montanans!**

A very good afternoon to each of you who is working to disarm Montana's Biggest Killer! This past week was the finale for a cutting-edge project that empowered community leaders to protect themselves and their community members. What started out as a limited effort to educate pediatricians about car seats turned into occupant protection programming that reached healthcare providers from many specialties, law enforcement officers, first responders, early childhood professionals, policymakers, interested professionals, parents and caregivers, certified technicians and instructors, and many others.

There is a long way to go before Montana can claim victory, with 217 deaths, 1,300 incapacitating injuries and over 8,000 other injuries in 2007, but now there are thousands more Montanans equipped to help. You should each be proud of your role in making it all happen. We all owe special thanks to Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies - Patty Carrell for her personal commitment and amazing perseverance - and Bette Hall-Munger and Mike Cooney for their undying support! And none of it could have happened without the financial and advocacy backing of many local, state, regional and national organizations. Thank you SO MUCH for the difference you have made, are making, and will continue to make!

We couldn't have planned a better week to end the project. We were able to educate early childhood providers in the Helena, Great Falls and Fort Belknap. We trained law enforcement officers from agencies that had never before participated in Helena. We provided healthcare personnel and first responders in Superior. We honored MSU students for making lifesaving choices that protected them from injury. And we were able to brainstorm with several key leaders about the next steps needed to keep Montanans safe.

The immediate result is more public awareness in the communities we visited. The next result will be the local educational resources that will be enhanced as attendees pursue additional training. And the long-term result will likely be new programming that builds on three years of groundwork.

What a week it has been! I have attached a photo essay to share some of the wonderful people and places it included. It really tells the story well! If you need any higher quality versions of the photos for internal or external promotion, just let me know.

Keep up the GREAT work and PLEASE contact me if I can help you or if you want to share what you are doing.

Joe

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