Mayor, Riley Hospital Spark Community Discussion on Child Pedestrian Safety

INDIANAPOLIS -- Today, Mayor Greg Ballard joined Dr. Jeff Sperring, Riley Hospital for Children’s chief medical officer, community members and Rochelle Clark, the mother of 7 year-old Trevonte Clark, who was critically injured by a passing motorist while attempting to cross the street, in an effort to spark a community discussion about child pedestrian safety.

Although the number of children injured or killed as pedestrians has dropped over the years, more than 42,000 children were injured as pedestrians in the United States in 2007. From 1999-2006, Clarian Hospitals, including Riley Hospital, treated more than 733 children aged 17 and younger for pedestrian injuries.

“Pedestrians need and deserve to share the road with motorists,” said Mayor Ballard. “Now that school is back in session, it’s inevitable that the number of children injured as pedestrians or bicyclists will increase – buses are on the streets, traffic patterns are changing, children are walking to and from school, and drivers are often becoming distracted. We must all work together to keep our children safe.”

“As we encourage children to get out of the house and walk and/or play to combat childhood obesity and promote healthy and active living, we must make sure they have a safe environment in which to do so,” said Dr. Sperring. “The entire community is needed to promote pedestrian and motor vehicle safety.”

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In an effort to reduce child pedestrian injuries, Riley Hospital for Children has been engaging neighborhood, schools, churches, businesses and individuals since 2006 by making ‘Kids dart. Drive smart.’ yard signs available at no cost. This year, over 40,000 yard signs will be distributed throughout the state of Indiana.

“We encourage the Indianapolis community and beyond to join us in this effort to keep our children safe,” continued Dr. Sperring. “These injuries are often preventable so whether you participate in the Kids Dart campaign or work with your local school, neighborhood service center, neighborhood or civic organization to raise awareness and reduce child pedestrian injuries, we encourage the community to get involved.”

With Halloween around the corner, the message of child pedestrian safety is critical. Children will be out walking the streets, so it’s essential that drivers remain alert and stay focused in areas where children trick-or-treat.

“Effective solutions require collaboration and participation and by working together, we can all make a difference,” concluded Mayor Ballard.

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