

BrainWaves

The Official Newsletter of ThinkFirst Canada

Fall 2003 Issue

ThinkFirst Canada - Helmets Save Lives Campaign



Wearing a properly fitted and approved helmet reduces the risk of brain injury by 88% (*Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine*). Despite this statistic, too many children and adults are still not wearing their helmets when cycling.



While mandatory helmet use is not legislated across the country, ThinkFirst Canada strongly believes that **nobody**, especially children and youth, should be riding a bicycle without a helmet. Helmets should also be worn while riding on any wheels - especially in-line skates, skateboards and scooters.

In order to change this statistic, ThinkFirst/Pensez d'Abord is mounting a campaign to educate the public about the fact that helmets save lives and prevent catastrophic injuries. The **ThinkFirst/Pensez D'abord Helmet Give-Away Program** will ask donors to help ThinkFirst/ Pensez d'Abord to purchase helmets for children whose parents cannot afford them.

Our hope is that these helmets will not only keep children safe when riding a bike or rollerblading, but also help inner-city schools across Canada (as identified by our local Chapters) such as Queen Victoria School, restart their skating programs – schools cannot take children skating unless they are wearing helmets.

Providing helmets to children is simply not enough in order to ensure that the public, especially youth understand the importance of wearing helmets in particular when engaging in activities such as rollerblading. In order to change public perception, ThinkFirst will be airing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) developed by McLaren McCann *pro bono*.

The target audience for our PSA is preteen and adolescent boys. This target group was chosen because statistics show that this is the demographic most likely to

rollerblade and take unnecessary risks.

The ThinkFirst PSA will be aired until the end of August 2004. We feel this PSA is vital, because, while fractures are the most common injuries for these activities, the incidence of head injuries is on the rise. Children and youth are engaging in riskier maneuvers, thus increasing their susceptibility to severe injuries. Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) statistics indicate that at most risk are males between the ages of 10-19. 143 television stations and their affiliates have agreed to air the PSA. We are confident that it will help save young people from injury.

A donation of as little as \$10 can help provide a helmet for a child. If you would like to get involved in the "Helmets Save Lives" Campaign, please contact Aruna Ogale at 1-800-335-6076.



ThinkFirst in the Media

In order to ensure that our injury prevention message reaches children, we work closely with teachers to implement our curricula. We work with sports organizations and coaches to support our SportSmart programs.

The missing link has been the lack of means to reach parents in what they need to do to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. This past year we actively approached media to help us promote injury prevention.

Our President, Dr. Charles H. Tator, has appeared on Canada AM, providing vital information regarding helmet safety. The media is very excited about the “melon drop”

and is always happy to have us demonstrate it to their audience.

Balance Television has also featured Dr. Tator discussing helmets. As these are longer segments, we have the opportunity to more comprehensively discuss brain injuries. The Balance Television segment was shown throughout the summer. In the fall, Dr. Tator will be featured discussing water safety and explaining spinal cord injuries.

Please check our website – www.thinkfirst.ca - over the next few weeks for dates and times of when this segment will be airing.

Ontario Trillium Foundation

The ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada has received \$212,000 over the next three years from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). The funding will help us develop the “ThinkFirst, P.A.R.T.Y Later” program in partnership with Sunnybrook & Women’s College Health Sciences Centre. Together we will develop a new initiative aimed at teens that will take the best elements of the “Making Connections” and “Preventing Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth

(P.A.R.T.Y.)” programs. The program will be tested in Greater Toronto Area Hospitals and then rolled-out across the country.

In addition, the Trillium grant will fund a co-coordinator for our Toronto Chapter and a Fundraiser.

Further information about OTF can be found at www.trilliumfoundation.org.

ThinkFirst Annual Awards

Our Annual awards were presented in Quebec City this year at the ThinkFirst Annual General Meeting. The ThinkFirst Award of Excellence is presented annually to our volunteers in recognition of their outstanding dedication to our injury prevention efforts. This year we would like to acknowledge and congratulate Sean Pothier (Quebec), Jodi Dusik-Sharpe (Manitoba) and Missy Mandel (Toronto). These awards were presented at the ThinkFirst – Johnson & Johnson Codman luncheon of the Canadian Association of Neuroscience Nurses. This year the first ever ThinkFirst Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to Jean Pothier (Founding President, ThinkFirst, Quebec) and Dr. Charles H. Tator (President, ThinkFirst Canada) in recognition of their dedication and untiring efforts to make lives of Canadian children and youth safe. These awards were presented at a plenary session of the Canadian Congress of Neurological Sciences.



Jodi Dusik-Sharpe, Sean Pothier & Missy Mandel proudly display their Awards of Excellence

School Bus Safety SmartFacts



Did you know...

School buses transport nearly three million Canadian children a day, traveling to both rural and urban areas.¹ Ministries of Transportation, police departments, local road safety groups, educators, school bus operators and parents continue to cooperate and work together to enhance the safety of children while taking these school bus trips.² Taking the school bus is the safest way for kids to get to and from school; much safer than walking, riding a bicycle or being driven in a car. Where children are at the most risk of getting hurt is when they are getting on or off the bus.

Facts...

Statistics reported by the Canadian Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP)³ indicate that:

- 48.3% of school bus injuries occur among 10-14 year old children;
- 55.9% of those injured are boys;
- school bus injuries occur during the fall season (37.1%) and on weekdays between 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.;
- 37.2% of school bus injuries occur to the head, and 40.9% injuries involve scrapes, bruising and inflammation.

ThinkFirst...ThinkSafety Tips!

A variety of easy-to-remember steps can be taken to help children keep safe while getting on, riding, and getting off the school bus.

Getting to and on the School Bus

When making their way to the school bus, always remind children to:

1. wait for the bus at the designated waiting area, well back from the road.^{4,5}
2. wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before getting on it. The bus driver will make sure that the traffic has stopped, and that the stop arm is out, and the red safety lights are flashing.⁶ Children should never run after the bus to try to catch it if they have missed it.⁷
3. walk on the sidewalk. If there is no side walk, children should walk on the left side of the street that is facing traffic.⁸
4. hold the handrail while getting on the bus.

Riding the School Bus

While riding the school bus, make sure that:

5. children find a seat quickly, sit properly, face forward at all times and place their school bag underneath their seat.
6. no fighting, shouting or horseplay occurs in or around the bus, and that the head and arms of children are kept inside the bus.⁹
7. children follow the bus driver's rules and listen to instructions at all times.¹⁰

Getting off the School Bus

When getting off of the bus, always remind children to:

8. hold the handrail.
9. make eye contact with the bus driver, especially if they must cross the street. While crossing, make sure that children walk three metres away from the bus so the driver can see them.¹¹
10. never pick up something that they've dropped near or under the school bus without telling the bus driver or another adult first.^{12, 13}
11. stay calm, and let people in front of them leave the bus first.¹⁴

With educators and parents helping children to ThinkFirst and follow these safety tips, children can continue to have fun while riding the school bus, and arrive at school and home safely.

References

¹ <http://www.safety-council.org/info/traffic/schbusbelt.htm>

^{2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14} <http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2002/10/14/co684.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html>

³ http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/injury-bles/chirpp/injrep-rapbles/irsbus_e.html

^{4, 7, 8, 13} http://www.tc.gc.ca/radsafety/childsaf/bbtr-speg/en/schoolbus_e.htm



How Does Your Province rate?

Province/ Territory	Bicycle Helmet Legislation
British Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertains to all ages • \$100 fine • effective September 1996
Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pertains to those under 18 • effective May 1, 2002 • \$50 fine
Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no provincial legislation • efforts in Saskatchewan have focused on municipal bylaw • Yorkton has municipal bylaw
Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No provincial legislation
Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertains to those under 18 • \$75 fine • effective October 1, 1995
Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no provincial legislation • some municipal bylaws
New Brunswick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pertains to all ages • \$21 fine • effective December 15, 1995
Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pertains to all ages • \$25 fine • effective July, 1997
Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pertains to all ages • effective December 2002
Newfoundland & Labrador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no provincial legislation • some municipal bylaws (Mount Pearl & St. John's have bike helmet bylaws effective since 1994 for children under the age of 12; Holyrood bylaw – pertains to all ages on bikes, skateboards and rollerblades; \$50 fine; effective December 1, 1994)
Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • territorial legislation permits municipalities to pass helmet bylaws • Inuvik has a bylaw, pertains to all ages, \$25 fine • Yellowknife: legislation was defeated by municipal council Spring 2002
Nunavut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No territorial legislation • Comprehensive review of road safety legislation expected in 2002 – 03
Yukon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No territorial legislation

Your national office

ThinkFirst has been growing. Here are some of the people you might need to contact:

Aruna Ogale, Executive Director, can be contacted at Toronto@thinkfirst.ca.

Christine Provvidenza, the Sports Injury Prevention Coordinator, is at sports@thinkfirst.ca and

Massarrat Bharucha, National Office Administrative Coordinator, is at national@thinkfirst.ca.

Please check our website for your local chapter contact information.

We have moved

Our national office has moved. Our new address is:



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