

Mother goes on crusade after son dies in hot SUV

Tuesday - 7/9/2013, 3:42pm ET By [Nick Iannelli](#)

'I just couldn't believe that I could forget my child'

WTOP's Nick Iannelli talks to Lyn Balfour

[Download](#)

WASHINGTON - The anguish that came in March 2007 was nearly unbearable for Lyn Balfour and her family.

"I just couldn't believe I could forget my child," recalls Balfour. "It was very devastating for me."

It was similar to every other day, but she was tired and working on a different routine. Slight deviations in her morning led to distractions that turned tragic, according to Balfour.

About seven hours after parking and heading to work, she got a phone call that would haunt her. The family babysitter was on the other line, wondering why the 9-month-old boy was never dropped off.

"I raced to the car and found my son in the back seat, not breathing," Balfour explains. "I started CPR on my son and that is probably the worst feeling that I will ever have, trying to breathe for my own child ... You have to live with that for the rest of your life."

Although it was only 66 degrees that day in Greene County, Va., police said the temperature inside the vehicle likely reached around 98 degrees after just 40 minutes.

A jury acquitted Balfour of involuntary manslaughter. Now, she is hoping her story will serve as a cautionary tale, preventing further tragedies.

This summer, there have already been several such deaths nationwide, including at least two in the D.C. region.

"I was one of those parents that had heard stories about how this is possible and I sat there and said to myself, 'There's no way I could forget my child,'" Balfour says. "Then it happened to me."

The group [KidsAndCars.org](#) works alongside her, speaking across the nation.

According to [kidsandcars.org](#), an average of 38 children die in the U.S. each year in hot car incidents. Thirty-two children died last year.

"We can really make sure that no more children are left alone in vehicles," says Janette Fennell, president and founder of the organization. "Put something in the back seat of your vehicle that requires you to open the back door every time you park. You can use your cell, employee badge, a handbag or your lunch. Just put something there in front of your child so when you arrive at your destination, you'll open the back door."

Fennell urges parents to place a stuffed animal in the front seat when their child is in the backseat. That would serve as a constant reminder.

Mothers and fathers should also have a system of safeguards in place with child care providers, according to Fennell. Babysitters should call parents after 10 minutes if the child does not arrive on time. But more importantly, parents should realize that this type of tragedy can occur anywhere.

"Don't think that it could not ever happen to you," warns Balfour.

© 2013 WTOP. All Rights Reserved.

<http://www.wtop.com/41/3383632/Mother-goes-on-crusade-after-son-dies-in-hot-SUV>