

Valley mom warns parents about dangers of kids in hot cars

Posted: Aug 14, 2013 7:54 PM CDT By Jason Barry - [bio](#) | jason.barry@kpho.com



2-year-old Maya Peabody died in 2008

PHOENIX (CBS5) - Dawn Peabody is a happy, loving mom, but deep down there's still a lot of sadness.

It's disturbing to think that a parent could actually forget a child in the car, especially in Arizona's torturous summer heat, but it's happened before, and it'll unfortunately happen again.

But believe it or not, there's now an app that will remind people not to forget their baby in the backseat.

Peabody's 2-year-old daughter Maya died in October 2008, after the child was left in the backseat of a hot car, in front of the family's North Phoenix home.

"She was such a joy," said Peabody. "Her picture is in my car, her picture is in our bathroom, pictures around the house. We talk about her all the time."

Peabody remembers a lot of confusion that morning, with guests in from out of town and everyone going to breakfast in 3 separate cars.

The Valley mom said that when the family came home, dad thought Maya was with mom and didn't realize that Maya was still in the car, until it was too late.

"It just breaks my heart because it wasn't a matter of we forgot her in the car," said Peabody. "It was a matter of, we thought she was someplace else. A miscommunication about where she was at."

Peabody has spent years in grief counseling, trying to cope with what happened.

But instead of just mourning the loss of her daughter, Peabody has decided to take action and be an advocate, to warn other parents about the dangers of leaving a child in a hot vehicle.

"I don't want to see anybody have this heartache that we have," said Peabody. "It's a heavy burden to carry. We really want to educate parents that this could happen to anybody and you need to be attentive."

Peabody is now a volunteer with the non-profit group Kids and Cars, which just relaunched a child safety campaign called, "Look Before You Lock."

The campaign involves a couple of plush stuffed animals called, "Lucky the Cat" and "Chance the Dog."

Parents are supposed to put the stuffed animals in their car seat when they take their kid out, and put the stuffed animal in the front seat when they buckle their child up.

The stuffed animal in the front seat will serve as a reminder to parents, that someone is in the back seat.

So far this year, there have been 26 child heat related deaths, in cars across the country.

In 2012, there were 33.

For more information on protecting children visit www.kidsandcars.org

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