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Leader of KIDS AND CARS recognized by Safe Kids Kansas

For immediate release: December 13, 2006

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(Kansas City, KS) In recognition for her strong dedication and commitment to accidental childhood injury prevention Janette Fennell was presented with **The Outstanding Achievement in Childhood Safety Award** by Safe Kids Kansas on December 5, 2006. This award was presented for her national and state efforts to enact policy change and is given annually to an organization, community, or individual in Kansas who has demonstrated achievement in the field of childhood injury prevention.

“The state of Kansas is very fortunate to have an individual whose tireless work on behalf of children is making a difference here and throughout the nation to protect children from predictable and preventable injuries,” said KIDS AND CARS board member Jim Bartimus, of Bartimus, Frickleton, Robertson & Gorny of Leawood, Kansas. “We are very proud of her achievements,” he added.

Judith Stone, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety in Washington, DC, also a KIDS AND CARS board member, has been following Ms. Fennell’s work for over 7 years. “Janette has brought about significant change to the entire auto safety arena,” Stone said. “Trunk entrapments, dangerous power windows, children being backed over because they cannot be seen in the blind zones behind vehicles, are examples of issues that were not previously on the national agenda until KIDS AND CARS recognized and publicized the need to collect data about these incidents that happen on private property.”

Ms. Fennell began her consumer advocacy work after her family was kidnapped at gunpoint and locked in the trunk of their vehicle in 1995 while living in San Francisco, CA. After being left for dead in the confines of their trunk, the Fennells were able to escape with a little ‘divine intervention’ only to find their 9-month-old son was no longer in the back seat of the vehicle. They were eventually reunited with their young son after he was found alone in front of their home in his carseat. Ms. Fennell went right to work to prevent this from happening to others. She was the driving force behind the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard that now requires all new vehicles sold or leased in the U.S. to have a phosphorescent trunk release inside the trunk compartment.

Pediatrician and KIDS AND CARS board member, Dr. Greg Gulbransen of Oyster Bay, NY, became involved in the campaign to build awareness and improve rear visibility behind vehicles after his own 2-year-old son was killed in a backover incident. “This award means allot to Janette and her board,” Dr. Gulbransen said. “I have been impressed with her close working relationships with Safe Kids coalitions around the country. Just this year, Janette has presented to Safe Kids coalitions in Oklahoma, Indiana, and Missouri in addition to her work in Kansas. Our board is very pleased to see an organization as important as Safe Kids, with coalitions around the country take up these nontraffic initiatives.” Safe Kids now has programs about the dangers of trunk entrapment, leaving children alone in hot vehicles and most recently their “Spot the Tot” program that educates about the large blind zones behind vehicles.

“Each one of these programs helps to spread the KIDS AND CARS’ vision to a wider audience,” he added.

KIDS AND CARS www.KidsAndCars.org is a national 501 (c) (3) nonprofit child safety organization.

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