

# VDH, Division of Injury and Violence Prevention 2008 Preventing Unintentional Injury Community Projects

## Elderly Fall Prevention

*The Virginia Department of Health selected the following projects that seek to reduce the risk of falls for the elderly. In 2005 falls were the leading cause of unintentional injury-related hospitalizations. 68 percent of all unintentional fall injury-related hospitalizations were for elderly adults 65 and over.*

### Agency/Organization:

Project Mend-A-House  
7987 Ashton Avenue, Suite 231  
Manassas, VA 20109  
Telephone: 703.792.7663



### Project Title:

*Neighbors Working with Seniors Helping Them Live Safely and Independently*

Proposal Abstract: Project Mend-A-House's fall prevention project will help the frail, low-income elderly in Prince William County to live safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible. Volunteers will conduct home safety assessments, and based on the assessment, will do what's necessary to reduce the risk of falls for fragile elderly residents. Volunteers will install safety aids, grab bars, interior and exterior hand rails, hand-held showers, transfer benches, night lights, bath mats, and raised toilet seats. Volunteers will also repair or replace carpeting and other flooring deemed tripping hazards. Portable four – six foot ramps will also be made available to residents and their aging caregivers who are most at risk for falls.

This is the second year that Project Mend-A-House was awarded funding for their safety device installation project.

### **Accomplishments**

- **28 seniors received home repairs and safety improvements to prevent falls in their own homes**
- **Organization recruited an additional 140 volunteers were identified to assist with safety inspections or repairs.**
- **300 families received fall prevention services or educational information**

### **Highlights**

- **Relationships established with a construction firm and builder that offered wholesale prices on quality materials**
- **High media exposure in December that showcased volunteers renovating two bathrooms that increased accessibility and reduced fall risk.**

### **Lowlights**

- **Poor attendance during fall prevention group level activities; however those that attended referred clients and provided volunteer hours to the project.**

**Anecdotes**

- **The local Department of Public Works called the organization to remove garbage from floor to ceiling in one of the client’s homes. Volunteers spent the day removing tripping hazards that included dirty clothes and dishes, soda bottles, and pizza boxes. The client had no working toilets and waste was stored in jars. Thanks to the project and hard work of the volunteers, the house is now hazard free with working toilets.**

**Sustainability**

- **The organization will continue the project. They have leveraged the VDH grant in funding with the United Way and others to support small staff, volunteer management, and to purchase building materials.**



Agency/Organization:

Prince William Area Agency on Aging  
 7987 Ashton Avenue, Suite 231  
 Manassas, VA 20109  
 Telephone: 703-792-6400

Project Title:

*Stand Tall Don’t Fall*

Proposal Abstract: The Prince William Area Agency on Aging will implement the *Stand Tall Don’t Fall* group-level intervention project to prevent falls among persons 65 and older. The project design uses a certified senior fitness instructor from George Mason University to train local peer volunteer fitness instructors in specific techniques focused on strength and balance improvement proven to prevent falls among older adults. Trained volunteer instructors will give three months of classes, held twice per week, at two local senior centers, five-jurisdictional owned assisted living facilities, and at senior apartment complexes. 10 volunteer instructors will be trained and 60 persons aged 65+ will participate in the project.

**Accomplishments**

- **10 volunteers participated in 10 hours of training to become peer exercise instructors**
- **93 seniors participated in the project.**
- **53 participants completed 80% or more of the sessions in the twelve week period.**
- **Of the seniors who completed pre and post tests, 62% showed improvement on the physical balance test and 77% showed improvement on the balance efficacy test.**

**Highlights**

- **An additional class was added at one Senior Center in order to accommodate all 93 participants**
- **From the group of initial participants in the program, 7 or more older adults have agreed to participate in a second round of volunteer instructor training**
- **Another Stand Tall, Don’t Fall series was added for July 2008, after the VDH funding period**
- **The Stand Tall, Don’t Fall project was nominated for the Prince William County Government County Executive Award in May 2008 and the project received an Innovative Injury Prevention Award in July 2008 from the Virginia Department of Health and the VAICPG.**

## Lowlights

- **“We initially chose to train the volunteer instructors in two, four hour sessions. We found that the amount of information provided in those sessions proved to be overwhelming and difficult for the volunteers to assimilate. We scheduled an additional tow hour session prior to commencing the program and several one hour sessions throughout the 12-week program to support the senior volunteers.**

## Sustainability

- The Stand Tall, Don’t Fall exercise program has already restarted with a summer session. On class at each senior center began in June and a second class at each center will commence in July.

# Early Childhood Fall Prevention

*The Virginia Department of Health selected the following fall prevention project that seeks to reduce the risk of falls for children ages newborn to 4. In 2005 falls were the leading cause of unintentional injury-related hospitalizations for children in this age group.*

## Agency/Organization:

Virginia Child Care Resource and Referral Network (VACCRRN)  
308 Turner Road, Suite A  
Richmond, VA 23225  
Telephone: 804-285-0846

## Project Title:

*Preventing Falls in the Child Care Setting*

Proposal Abstract: The VACCRRN will collaborate with the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Social Services to develop a training curriculum based on the research and best practices of the University of Washington’s Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, The Injury Prevention Program of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the prevention strategies of California’s Center for Health Improvement. The program will increase the capacity of seven local child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R) to provide training to approximately 265 child care providers in their local service delivery areas through a two-hour train the trainer web-conferencing process. In addition, a total of 21 one to two-hour trainings will be delivered by seven local CCR&Rs within 24 health districts. The goal of the training to child care providers is to improve child care environments by identifying and reducing risk factors that contribute to the incidence of fall-related injuries in child care settings.

## Accomplishments

- **8 CCR&R agencies completed 23 training workshops**
- **471 center and home-based child care providers were trained impacting an estimated 4,386 children ages birth to four years old.**
- **An 84% of participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge of fall and injury prevention as measured by pre and post testing.**

## Highlights

- VACCRRN expanded the scope of the project by adding an 8<sup>th</sup> participating CCR&R member agency.
- The Virginia Department of Health Child Health Team will incorporate the Don't Fall Down curriculum in their training program with local Child Care Health Consultants.
- The safety information provided through the program was integrated into participant child care providers' parent newsletters, new dress code and footwear policies were implemented as a result, and one provider expressed the desire to offer this training to parents.

## Lowlights

- Weather-related problems resulted in postponement or low turn-out. More sessions are planned for the Summer 2008 which will meet or exceed the program goal of 24 training workshops.

## Anecdotes

- Quotes from program participant evaluations included:
  - *This training will stay with me...*
  - *I will never let children ride bikes without helmets*
  - *No more baby walkers!*
  - *I was unaware how hazardous a home can be and the ways to prevent the problems.*
  - *There is always a way to prevent injury.*

## Sustainability

- Several agencies have expressed their intent to continue as part of their regular training.
- Local CCR&R agencies will fund, at their discretion, further workshops and VDH is offering the training program utilizing their resources.



## Drowning Prevention for Children Ages Newborn-14

*The Virginia Department of Health selected the following projects that seek to reduce unintentional drowning among children ages newborn to 14. According to a recent report from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Virginia, between 1997 and 2006, 86.2 percent of drowning deaths in Virginia have been*

*unintentional. Almost 70 percent of unintentional drowning occurred in a natural body of water such as a river or bay while the remaining were some type of man-made structure such as a bathtub. Unintentional bathtub drowning had the highest rate among infants less than 1 year of age. Swimming pools had the highest drowning rates with the younger age ranges of 1-4 and 5-9 years old.*

Agency/Organization:

Newport News Fire Department  
2400 Washington Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup>. Floor  
Newport News, VA 23607  
Telephone: 757-926-8675



Project Title:

*Newport News Fire Department Divers*

Proposal Abstract: The purpose of the Newport News Fire Department Divers drowning prevention for ages 5-9 is to educate children in the Newport News Public School system in grades K-3 on drowning prevention. The project will utilize the expertise of the Newport News Fire Department's Dive Team to educate children and their parents in assemblies and small group presentations on water and boat safety. Parents will be encouraged to take the US Coastguard Safe Boating Course if they own a boat and to implement drowning prevention suggestions provided during the presentations. Over 60 children will be fitted and provided with a life vest as a result of this project.

**Accomplishments**

- **57 elementary school classes participated in water and boat safety programming**
- **300 children were appropriately fitted for life vests**

**Highlights**

- **1100 children and 50 teachers were impacted by the intervention**
- **Able to reach more citizens and to provide information from area experts through community partners (Parks and Recreation, Virginia Marine Police, VDH, Hampton Roads Sail and Power Squadron, Virginia Marine Police and the Coastguard Auxiliary)**
- **Program presented to an additional 1500 persons at two city-wide community events.**

**Lowlights**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> community event held on Mother's Day weekend. Low turnout resulted.**
- **The City of Newport News fiscal year coincided with the deadline of the grant which caused a time crunch; limited preparation occurred early on as they could not access award funds**
- **On-duty fire department personnel assisted with the program; ran the risk of having to interrupt the school and community-based programs to respond to an emergency.**

**Anecdotes**

- **None reported**

## Sustainability

- Will utilize the assembly program format in the future
- Will work with the local cable station to develop a water safety program if on-site assembly programs do not materialize



### Agency/Organization:

Hampton University  
Area of Aquatics  
Holland Hall, Room 170  
Hampton, VA 23668  
Telephone: 757-727-5725

### Project Title:

*Drowning Prevention for Children Ages Newborn - 14*

Proposal Abstract: Hampton University Area of Aquatics will offer a swim program to children enrolled at the University's Child Development Center. The Center serves children between the ages of 2 ½ and 5. 90 percent of the children are African-American, a high-risk population for drowning or near drowning - related injuries. Children will participate in 19 small group-level sessions. Sessions will combine in the water lessons and classroom activities. A water safety educational fair will be held to educate parents about water safety.

**This is the second year that Hampton University was awarded funding for their early childhood swim lesson project.**

### **Accomplishments**

- **66 children ages 2 ½ to 6 received swimming instruction**
- **25 water safety and swimming instruction sessions occurred**
- **On average, 13-15 children attended the water sessions**
- **Based on observation and instructor's feedback, the following was reported:**
  - **An increase in the number of children who were mindful of the safety rules**
  - **Children were able to put their personal flotation devices on and float on their backs with little or no assistance from an instructor**
  - **100% of participants demonstrated an increase in comfort level in the water as they were able to put their face in the water, blow bubbles and to perform basic skills such as front and back floats**

### **Highlights**

- **An additional 14 children participated in the intervention than was originally proposed**
- **Children were grouped by age for each session – four groups operating simultaneously**

### **Lowlights**

- **Due to scheduling conflicts with the Child Development Center, a water safety educational health fair was not conducted; rescheduled for sometime in July.**

### **Anecdotes**

- **None reported**

**Sustainability**

- None reported.

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Agency/Organization:

Virginia Water Safety Coalition  
 303 York Lane  
 Yorktown, VA 23692  
 Telephone: 757-288-7255

Project Title:

*Drowning Prevention for Children Ages Newborn - 14*

Proposal Abstract: The Virginia Water Safety Coalition project will offer two water safety forums, one to be held in the Hampton Roads area and the other in Richmond. The focus of the forums is to offer an educational training opportunity to lifeguards, swim instructors and other aquatic professionals. Typically lifeguard training involves water rescue and medical assistance and not prevention. Lifeguards and others will be trained as water safety educators for their facilities. They will educate patrons on water safety and drowning prevention behaviors.

**Accomplishments**

- **104 lifeguards, swim instructors, and other aquatic professionals attended the Water Safety Paloozas.**
- **Based on pre-posttests,**

**Highlights**

- **Meeting space was donated**
- **This was the first time an affordable water safety training was conducted with life guards and hourly aquatic staff in Virginia.**

**Lowlights**

- **The forecasted 75 participants for each session was not realized; 48 participants attended the March 28 session and 56 attended the May 17 session.**

**Anecdotes**

- **None reported**

**Sustainability**

- **Water Safety Palooza training model created for use in future educational activities supported by the Water Safety Coalition or its partners.**
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YMCA of Greater Richmond  
2 West Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23220  
Telephone: 804-649-9622

Project Title:

*Learn to Swim: A drowning prevention program for ages 7 and 8*

Proposal Abstract: The *Learn to Swim* program will offer 7, 45 minutes-long swimming lessons to 2,450 second grade students in the City of Richmond. Children will learn how to increase their confidence and safety in and around the water using a multi-level aquatic skills-based progression. The students will also receive water safety knowledge such as when it is safe to enter a body of water.

**Accomplishments**

- **2,612 at-risk children were taught basic swim and water safety skills in the greater Richmond area**
- **57 elementary school classes participated in water and boat safety programming**
- **300 children were appropriately fitted for life vests**

**Highlights**

- **1100 children and 50 teachers were impacted by the intervention**
- **Able to reach more citizens and to provide information from area experts through community partners (Parks and Recreation, Virginia Marine Police, VDH, Hampton Roads Sail and Power Squadron, Virginia Marine Police and the Coastguard Auxiliary)**
- **Program presented to an additional 1500 persons at two city-wide community events.**

**Lowlights**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> community event held on Mother's Day weekend. Low turnout resulted.**
- **The City of Newport News fiscal year coincided with the deadline of the grant which caused a time crunch; limited preparation occurred early on as they could not access award funds**
- **On-duty fire department personnel assisted with the program; ran the risk of having to interrupt the school and community-based programs to respond to an emergency.**

**Anecdotes**

- **None reported**

**Sustainability**

- Will utilize the assembly program format in the future
- Will work with the local cable station to develop a water safety program if on-site assembly programs do not materialize



# Childhood Poison Prevention

*The Virginia Department of Health selected the following organizations to provide poison prevention programming that seeks to reduce the risk of unintentional poisoning among children 4 and under. In 2005 poisoning was the second leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations for children ages 1-4. 93 percent of all reported poisonings occurred at a residence. Young children predominantly experienced poisoning related to medications and gas/vapor exposure (e.g. carbon monoxide).*

## Agency/Organization:

Rockingham Memorial Hospital  
Community Health  
235 Cantrell Avenue  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
Telephone: 540-433-4421

## Project Title:

*Children Act Fast – So Do Poisons*

Proposal Abstract: Rockingham Memorial Hospital (RMH) will implement a multi-level approach to poison prevention with children. This includes home visits, information sharing at health fairs, display boards, small group educational presentations, and distribution of safety devices. They will target parents of children ages zero to four years and in multiple locations. RMH will work with the Blue Ridge Poison Center to implement a pre and post test for use during at least 100 home visits. By the end of the project, 750 parents and/or childcare providers will be educated on poison prevention as a result of this initiative.

## **Accomplishments**

- **244 parents conducted a Poison Safe Homes Checklist**
- **62 high risk families participated in two in-home sessions on poison awareness and prevention**
- **Parents reported a 19% increase in keeping poisonous plants out of reach of small children as measured by pre/post testing.**
- **11 percent of parents surveyed reported that they installed child-proof locks as evidenced by pre/post testing.**
- **971 families participated in health communications activities.**

## **Highlights**

- **More families and parents participated in activities than anticipated**

## **Lowlights**

- **Staffing shortages resulted in fewer home visits.**

## **Anecdotes**

- **One known life was saved because of the project. A two year old climbed on top of a computer desk in a house and opened a bottle of blood pressure pills. The mother came in and saw what the toddler had done and looked at the poison prevention tip sheet that she had received from the support worker who shared the information with the parent the day before. The mother had the toddler throw up and then called the Poison Center and received support and**



**instructions. Both mother and child were transported to the hospital where he was observed and then released after a couple of hours.**

**Sustainability**

- Childcare workers will continue poison prevention education with new classes each year. Family support workers will continue poison prevention education in their home visits beyond the funding period.

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Agency/Organization:

Blue Ridge Poison Center  
UVA Health Systems  
PO Box 800774  
Charlottesville, VA 22908  
Telephone: 434-982-3158

Project Title:

*Training Childcare Providers to Perform Poison Prevention Education to Pre-school Students and Their Parents*

Proposal Abstract: The Blue Ridge Poison Center will work with the Virginia Department of Social Services to conduct three regional childcare provider poison prevention train-the-trainer sessions in order to prepare childcare educators to teach pre-school students and their parents about poison prevention and awareness. Trainings will occur in Harrisonburg, Roanoke and Abingdon. The project will train 180 child care providers.

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Agency/Organization:

People Inc of Southwest Virginia  
1173 West Main Street  
Abingdon, VA 24210  
Telephone: 276-623-9000

Project Title:

*Safe at Home in Southwest Virginia*

Proposal Abstract: People Incorporated of Southwest Virginia will provide poison prevention education and information to households served by the People Incorporated Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) that have children under the age of five. Targeted families will receive home and property safety inspections and learn techniques for prevention accidental poisoning. Young children will learn about poison hazards through participate in age-appropriate instructional activities. Parents will also develop leadership skills as they create poison prevention outreach projects that they will implement in their locality. Education and training will be presented via home visits, parent group meetings, and community functions. 171 children and 165 households will be targeted for this project.

**Accomplishments**

- **210 home safety inspections occurred; hazards were identified and removed from over 50 homes**

- 950 children and adults participated in outreach activities
- 24 community partners (area pediatricians, dentists, local clinics, etc.) welcomed poison prevention information in their patient waiting areas
- Articles that featured the project's initiatives and poison safety information were printed in 2 local newspapers reaching a cumulative circulation of 47,400 subscribers during National Poison Prevention Week.

### Highlights

- Parents demonstrated an interest and initiative in promoting the project within their communities.
- Families commented that they did not realize the hazards that were in their homes.

### Lowlights

- Challenge to track all of those reached by the project's activities.

### Anecdotes

- When the initial safety assessment was completed, the parents' medications were kept in a plastic bowl on the family's dining room table. That medication is now in a secure lock box provided by the program.
- Four parents showed leadership by taking an active role in making sure the outreach was a success within their community. They made monthly visits to elementary schools and they also distributed materials in public areas such as grocery stores, convenience stores, shopping malls and restaurants.
- One baby sitter called the Poison Control hotline one day after the phone number was placed on the phone to report a potential poisoning of a child in her care.

### Sustainability

- We have incorporated the home safety assessment, including outside the building, as part of our enrollment process. This assessment helps parents identify potential hazards of which they were not previously aware. The Poison Control number will be provided to all families and when the program participates in outreach activities, poison awareness materials will be distributed to continue increased awareness of this hazard.

## Elderly Poison Prevention

*In 2005, poisoning was the third leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations for seniors 65 and older. Between 1999 and 2004, the elderly predominantly experienced poisonings related to medications and gas/vapor exposure (e.g. carbon monoxide). The following project was selected to reduce the incidence of poisoning among this age group.*



### Agency/Organization:

Blue Ridge Poison Center  
 UVA Health Systems  
 PO Box 800774  
 Charlottesville, VA 22908  
 Telephone: 434-982-3158

### Project Title:

Proposal Abstract: The Blue Ridge Poison Center will conduct three regional poison prevention train-the-trainer sessions for care providers of senior citizens. By attending these training sessions, providers will be prepared to teach seniors about poison prevention and awareness. Trainings will occur in Lynchburg, Martinsville, and Pulaski. 120 caregivers from senior centers, senior day care and senior residential facilities are targeted for this project.

## Suffocation Prevention for Children Ages Newborn - 4

*The Virginia Department of Health selected the following two suffocation prevention projects that seek to reduce the risk of unintentional injury among children ages newborn to 4. According to the Division's 2005 data report, suffocation was the leading cause of injury-related death for children newborn-4 years of age. 46 percent of the deaths were from suffocation and strangulation in bed (bed linens, co-sleeping with a parent, pillows). Injury-related hospitalizations for this age group were from airway obstructions caused by food and small objects (e.g. toys).*

Agency/Organization:

Blue Ridge Perinatal Council  
7 Albemarle Avenue, SW  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
Telephone: 540.985.9990

Project Title:

*Suffocation Prevention for Children Ages Newborn to 4 through an Infant Safety Campaign and Distribution of Sleep Sacks*

Proposal Abstract: The Blue Ridge Perinatal Council's project will promote community awareness and facilitate behavior modification by addressing infant suffocation and sleep safety through a comprehensive design. OB clinic patients at Carillion Roanoke Community Hospital (CRCH) will receive an education on infant sleep recommendations and a safety package that contains a Sleep Sack and culturally competent materials that address infant sleep safety, choking & strangulation prevention, and home safety. Two three-hour group level intervention sessions will focus on choking prevention, sleep safety, nursery safety and on other infant safety topics. To increase awareness in the overall community, an education presentation on infant sleep recommendations will be given to the medical staff that provides care for CRCH's OB clinic patients. A billboard and bus advertising campaign, highlighting infant safety messages, will be launched during the project period. Also, in-kind PSA announcements addressing safe sleeping practices for infants that have been developed by the SIDS Alliance and will be broadcast on two local radio stations.

**This is the third year that the Blue Ridge Perinatal Council received a grant from the Virginia Department of Health to implement their highly successful multi-intervention project.**



Agency/Organization:

SIDS Mid-Atlantic  
PO Box 799  
Haymarket, VA 20168  
Telephone: 703-933-9100

Project Title:

*Cribs for Kids*

Proposal Abstract: SIDS Mid-Atlantic will distribute 300 portable cribs through their *Cribs for Kids* project. *Cribs for Kids* provides disadvantaged families with the most basic of needs for their babies: cribs to help prevent unnecessary and tragic deaths. SIDS Mid-Atlantic will distribute cribs by referral from various Virginia Healthy Families Programs throughout the Commonwealth. SIDS Mid-Atlantic will provide trainings for the Virginia Healthy Families staff at their regularly scheduled staff meetings as to the nature of the project. In addition, the risks of bed-sharing, soft bedding, and the necessity of babies having a safe place to sleep will be emphasized, along with information on how to obtain cribs for their needy families.