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Fourth Annual “Drowning Impact Awareness Month” Begins; Deadly July Highlights Need for Awareness

PHOENIX, Ariz. (August 1, 2007) – A deadly July has resulted in four child drownings in Maricopa County, bringing the total number of children lost to eleven this year. In 2006, there were ten child drownings altogether in Maricopa County.

The sweltering Arizona heat and distractions of back-to-school in August add up to create the highest risk month for child drownings. But Arizona is coming together to prevent these tragedies. Water Watchers at Phoenix Children’s Hospital leads the Fourth Annual “Drowning Impact Awareness Month,” the purple ribbon campaign to increase awareness and education about water safety.

This year’s campaign includes:

- A special kickoff event on August 9th at 10 am, at Phoenix Children’s Hospital.
- More than 50,000 purple ribbons already distributed to supporters.
- Formal proclamations signed by Governor Napolitano and Mayors across the state, many presented at local Council meetings to families touched by drowning.
- More than 800 purple ribbons in the trees in front of Phoenix Children’s Hospital, to remember each of the children involved in water related incidents in Maricopa County since January of 2000.
- More than 150 banners, donated and produced by SRP Safety Connection, hanging in businesses, public safety buildings, libraries, and YMCA’s throughout Maricopa County.
- A special renewal of the “Tubby Tag” bathtub drowning prevention campaign, in conjunction with Phoenix Fire and La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries
- Businesses, schools, and organizations like the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Central Arizona, providing water safety information to employees, clients, and students.

Fire Departments across the state are strong advocates in the campaign, embracing the effort and making it their own with special messages and events. The effort also received strong support last week from 200 volunteers of “Spike’s Super Crew,” the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee, who came to Phoenix Children’s to prepare water safety supplies. For a list of water safety events in August, ribbon pickup locations, water safety tips, or to download the proclamation, visit www.phoenixchildrens.com.

Phoenix Children’s Hospital is Arizona’s leader in pediatric care and is one of the 10 largest free-standing children’s hospitals in the nation. The most comprehensive array of pediatric specialists in the State practice at this one organization. The outstanding clinical expertise, as well as high patient volume, and an unwavering commitment to caring only for children, all contribute to Children’s leadership position. For information about Phoenix Children’s, visit the Hospital’s website at www.phoenixchildrens.com.

-30-

EDITORS NOTE: Media are welcome at the Drowning Impact Awareness Month kick-off on Thursday, August 9th, 10 a.m., at Phoenix Children's Hospital, where fire engines from East, West and Central Maricopa County will be present. The Hospital is located at 1919 E. Thomas Rd., Phoenix, 85016. Media parking is available in the Emergency Department lot (20th St., just South of Thomas Rd.)