



*a public-private partnership established in 1989*

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## **Capital City Kiwanis Club Donates Pack ‘n Plays to Help Homeless Families**

TALLAHASSEE- Unsafe sleep is the leading cause of infant death in Florida. To reduce the number of these tragic, preventable deaths, the Capital City Kiwanis Club, Healthy Families Florida home visiting program and Big Bend Homeless Coalition are working together to provide Pack ‘n Plays to local families who need a safe place for their infants to sleep. For more than three years, the Capital City Kiwanis Club has been partnering with Healthy Families Florida to distribute Pack ‘n Plays to families in need. Today, they presented the Big Bend Homeless Coalition with 10 new Pack ‘n Plays to distribute to homeless families living at Hope Community.

“As part of our partnership with Healthy Families, the Capital City Kiwanis Club has raised thousands of dollars to purchase Pack ‘n Plays for families who don’t have a safe place for their infants to sleep. We felt compelled to get involved because the risk of infant death is 40 times higher for babies who sleep in adult beds than it is for babies who sleep in their own safe space,” said Kiwanis Club President Woody Price.

“Our home visitors are trained to address safe infant sleep with every family we serve; but, some families have very little income and just can’t afford to purchase a safe crib, bassinet or Pack ‘n Play. We are very grateful that the Capital City Kiwanis Club has stepped up to help us meet this need for the families in our community,” said Pam Banks, Program Manager for Healthy Families Gadsden/Leon.

Healthy Families Gadsden/Leon is one of 33 Healthy Families Florida home visiting programs around the state funded by the Florida Legislature and administered by the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida in partnership with the Department of Children and Families. The program provides intensive home visiting services proven to prevent child abuse and neglect in at-risk families.

Dekeisha Whitehead, a Healthy Families participant who received a free Pack ‘n Play when she was living with her children at Hope Community, said, “The services I received from Healthy Families

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and Hope Community really complimented each other and helped strengthen my knowledge and abilities as a parent and provider so my children can have a safe and stable home. I am very thankful for these programs and hope that they will continue to be around to help other families just like mine.”

"On behalf of the Big Bend Homeless Coalition, I would like to thank the Capital City Kiwanis Club and Healthy Families Florida for their donation of Pack 'N Plays. These will provide safe sleep to 10 infants at HOPE Community, our emergency and temporary housing program for families with children. We provide housing to over 300 infants and children a year, and appreciate you partnering with us to help serve our community's kids," said Bret Oglesby, Interim Executive Director Big Bend Homeless Coalition.

This effort is part of the Florida Department of Children and Families Safe Sleep Campaign, which was launched in September 2014 to help local and statewide organizations, first responders, businesses and government officials work together to decrease sleep-related infant deaths. The statewide Safe Sleep Campaign includes online training, free resources, PSAs, events, social media outreach and more. The campaign urges parents and caregivers to place children to sleep alone, on their backs, in a crib, bassinet or Pack 'n Play without any blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, or bumper pads.

“The Safe Sleep campaign is successful because of local partnerships like this – where communities identify and pool their resources to help families in need. We are honored to partner with Capital City Kiwanis Club, Healthy Families Florida and the Big Bend Homeless Coalition to provide much-needed safe sleep resources to local families,” said DCF Community Development Administrator Jeanna Olson.

For more safe sleep information, free resources, video PSAs and an interview with a mother impacted by unsafe sleep, visit [www.MyFLFamilies.com/SafeSleep](http://www.MyFLFamilies.com/SafeSleep).

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