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For Immediate Release

CAROLINAS COLLEGE STUDENT AND MOTHER RECOGNIZED FOR EFFORT TO SAVE BABY

Charlotte, NC – Carolinas College of Health Sciences student Dana McDowell and her mother, Leticia Davis, today were honored for their efforts to remove a six-month-old baby left alone in a hot car, helping avoid a negative situation for the infant.

The women were awarded a Badge of Courage by Safe Kids of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Safe Kids Gaston County, and the College presented McDowell with a Student of the Month award. Safe Kids of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Gaston County are coalitions of local government, health, and safety agencies in their communities. Safe Kids of Charlotte-Mecklenburg is led by the Carolinas Center for Injury Prevention at Carolinas Medical Center.

McDowell and Davis were out shopping in Gastonia last month when they walked by a parked vehicle with an infant in the back seat. They stopped at a local business and asked an owner with a cell phone to call 911 to get the baby out of the vehicle.

“Thanks to these efforts, the infant was rescued, unharmed,” said Jim Landis with the Gastonia Fire Department and member of Safe Kids Gaston County. “Dozens of children in the U.S. die each year from being left alone, or from locking themselves in a hot car. We encourage all community members to be child safety advocates and to call for help whenever they feel a child’s life is in danger.”

Between April 15 and June 10 of this year, there have already been nine children nationwide whom have died being left or locking themselves in a hot car. Temperatures can rise 10 degrees in as little as 20 minutes inside of a vehicle, even when it’s only 77 degrees outside.

“Leaving a child alone in a vehicle for only a few minutes can be deadly,” said Janice Williams, director of Carolinas Center for Injury Prevention and coordinator of Safe Kids of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. “A child’s body heats up three to five times faster than that of an adult. They are more susceptible to heatstroke faster at less severe temperatures.”

Carolinus College faculty and staff also hope to encourage their students and community members to act with the courage McDowell showed.

“We are proud to know one of our students is helping set an example in the community for improving childhood safety and acting without fear,” said Ellen Sheppard, president of the Carolinas College of Health Sciences. “We recognize and applaud these efforts in our communities and must support caring for children and families outside the healthcare setting.”

To help adults remain aware of these dangers, Safe Kids in Charlotte and surrounding areas will distribute reminder window clings to child care centers for parents and caregivers – fifty-two percent of child heatstroke deaths since 1998 have occurred under the supervision of a caregiver who is not usually the transporter of the child. Parents also will be encouraged to lock their cars in their driveways as children can access a hot vehicle and be unable to get out.

[Carolinas College of Health Sciences](http://www.CarolinasCollege.edu) (www.CarolinasCollege.edu), recently ranked the number one two-year college in the nation for two consecutive years, offers programs in many areas of health care. Graduates consistently exceed state and national certification testing benchmarks, demonstrating their exceptional preparedness in careers such as medical laboratory science, nursing, radiation therapy, histology, radiologic technology, and surgical technology. The College also offers individual courses in the sciences and liberal arts as well as continuing education programs in professional skills and integrative medicine. Carolinas College offers student access to the Carolinas Simulation Center, a rich collection of high fidelity human patient simulators and procedural task trainers.

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