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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Snohomish County Life Jacket Loaner Cabinets Open for Memorial Day

Lake Stevens, WA – Drowning is the second highest cause of unintentional death for children ages 1 to 4 and 10 to 19. More people drown between the months of May and June than any other month.

Even a near-drowning can have lifelong consequences. Kids who survive a near-drowning may sustain life altering brain damage. After four to six minutes under water, the damage is usually irreversible. Although 90% of parents say they supervise their children, many acknowledge that they engage in other distracting activities at the same time – talking, eating, reading or taking care of another child.

“Kids drown quickly and quietly,” said Shawneri Guzman, Coordinator of Safe Kids Snohomish County. “A drowning child cannot cry or shout for help. The most important precaution for parents is active supervision. Simply being near your child is not necessarily supervising,” said Guzman.

To help keep kids safe this season, both Safe Kids Snohomish County and Lake Stevens Fire recommend these precautions:

- Actively supervise children in and around water. Don't leave, even for a moment. Stay where you can see, hear and reach kids in water. Avoid talking on the phone, preparing a meal, reading and other distractions.
- Always use a Coast Guard approved life jacket if you will be in a boat or in the water. Life jacket size/weight must be correct and it must fit snugly. When arms are lifted above the head, the life jacket should not lift up to the chin. All jacket straps, zippers and ties must be fastened and working properly.
- Enroll your kids in swimming lessons after age 1, and don't assume swimming lessons make your child immune to drowning. There is no substitute for active supervision, even the strongest swimmer can drown.
- Don't rely on inflatable swim toys such as “water wings”, swim noodles, non-approved life jackets or inner tubes.
- Water can be very cold this time of year. The weather outside might be in the 80's but the water may be 40 degrees or lower, and cold water can lead to hypothermia.
- Rivers are unpredictable and should be avoided. Swim only at designated swim beaches in the county.
- Call 911 for help immediately. Know your location. Start CPR.

Life Jacket Loaner Cabinets

Safe Kids Snohomish County's life jacket loaner program currently consists of FREE day-use life jackets at various locations throughout the county. The cabinets are open and available for both kids and adults from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. The official opening day is Friday, May 25.

Life jackets are checked out and must be returned by the end of each day. Directions on each cabinet explain how to size and fit your child. This service is provided in partnership with Snohomish County Parks, City Parks (Everett & Monroe), Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and participating fire/EMS agencies. For a complete list, including other locations in the state, visit www.seattlechildrens.org.

Locations:

Wyatt Park

10508 Chapel Hill Road Lake Stevens, 98258

Flowing Lake

17900 48TH SE Snohomish, 98290

Martha Lake

16300 E. Shore Drive Lynnwood, 98037

Lake Tye Park

Concession Stand [11a-5p] Monroe, 98272

Lake Goodwin

4620 Lakewood Rd Snohomish, 98290

Silver Lake

11405 Silver Lake Road Everett, 98208

Twin Lakes

16324 Twin Lakes Arlington, 98223

Wenberg

15430 Lake Goodwin Rd Stanwood, 98292

You can donate new or gently used life jackets to your local fire station in care of Safe Kids and help keep kids safe this summer, though life jackets must not be expired. The Life Jacket Loaner Cabinet is a volunteer based community service and the guarantee of life jacket availability varies.

Life jackets do not replace the need for supervision.

It is the direct responsibility of each adult caregiver to ensure the safety of the children in their care. A child should never be unsupervised in or near water.

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For more information about summer safety, visit www.providence.org/nw-safekids.

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Safe Kids Snohomish County works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children ages 0 to 19. Its members include Local Fire & EMS, Snohomish County Sheriff, Local Police agencies, Snohomish County Parks, Everett Parks, Snohomish County VGAL Program and other child related programs. Safe Kids Snohomish County is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing unintentional injury.

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