INTRODUCTION

The New American community in the greater Burlington Area identified a challenge in purchasing and installing safety equipment recommended or mandated in the United States, such as child passenger safety seats. The Pediatric New American Clinic at the University of Vermont Children’s Hospital partnered with University of Vermont Medical Center Injury Prevention, Safe Kids Vermont, and AALV (Association of Africans Living in Vermont) to develop a program specifically designed to meet the needs of the community. The result was the New American Safety Day. Over the past six years, this annual event has grown into the New American Safety Festival.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The event was hosted at free locations in neighborhoods with large New American population. The event was advertised through the Pediatric New American Clinic, schools, and other non-profits by flyers and word of mouth.

Community partners were identified and invited based on their expertise with health and safety topics such as water safety, bike and pedestrian safety, environmental safety, and fire prevention.

Culturally appropriate safety equipment was acquired through grant funding for distribution. All distribution was accompanied by in-person education and materials.

RESULTS

Due to the large community nature of the event, exact attendance could not be tracked. However, the size of the event has increased each year in both the number of community partners participating and the amount of equipment distributed.

The first New American Safety Day in 2014 provided 32 child passenger safety checks, 37.5% of which were new installs of a child passenger safety seat. Of the 62.5% checks of already installed safety seats, 90% were shown to have a misuse error, much higher than expected or seen in the community at large.

By 2019, the number of child passenger safety checks had increased to 96. 75% of these checks were of already installed safety seats and misuse errors were identified in 75% of them.

The volume of safety equipment distributed increased with each event requiring more volunteers to provide education and materials on best practices.

Table 1. Child Passenger Safety Inspection Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Inspections</th>
<th>New Installs</th>
<th>Misuse Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2. Annual markers for event growth

CONCLUSIONS

Creating cultural change around safety is a long term goal that can only be accomplished when you meet the community where they are and build strong community support networks. The annual and festive nature of the New American Safety Festival makes it an event that children and families look forward to attending each year and allows an increasing number of resources to be made available to them.

While short-term outcomes from the event did not show a change in safety behaviors, long-term results are more positive. The drastic decrease in car seat misuse demonstrates that changes in behavior and knowledge can occur with consistent outreach over time.

CONTACT

Abby Beerman MPH CPST
University of Vermont Medical Center
Abby.Beerman@UVMHealth.org