

Child Car Seats Available for Priest River WIC Families

Cynthia Taggart, Panhandle Health District

Priest River – Charleen Lamb smiled broadly Wednesday as Rachael Hicks with Panhandle Health District's WIC program in Priest River handed her a new child safety booster seat for three-year-old Elsie Lamb.

"She'll graduate into this one when she turns four in February," said Charleen. She held baby Amy while Elsie played with her sister, Naia, at their mother's side. "This is a big help to us. We have to have three car seats."

The seat was a present from the Priest River Police Department.

Police spent \$1,400 on 50 child safety car seats that will go to families receiving WIC services in Priest River through Panhandle Health District (PHD). Nineteen seats are for toddlers from 20 pounds to 40 pounds. Thirty-one seats are boosters for children age four to eight.

"We get the money from the Idaho Transportation Department to buy traffic safety equipment," said Priest River Police Sgt. Drew McLain. "Car seats seemed like a good idea."

The WIC program promotes child safety seats with its families, but many families can't afford them.

"These car seats will help so many of our families," said Rachael Hicks, who was providing PHD's WIC services in Priest River when Charleen picked up her voucher.

PHD began providing WIC services at Priest River City Hall nearly two years ago. In October this year, 122 clients used the Priest River service.

WIC is a nationwide, federally-funded program for income-eligible women who are pregnant, breastfeeding for up to 12 months or have had a baby in the last six months. It's also for infants and children up to age 5.

WIC provides vouchers for nutritious food, nutrition counseling, the services of registered dietitians, breastfeeding peer counselors, community resources and more. WIC's goal is to provide children the healthiest start to life possible by educating and encouraging new mothers about good nutrition.

McLain asked PHD's WIC program to handle the car seat distribution. WIC will grant vouchers to clients who need them for as long as they last. The recipients will take the vouchers to the police department to pick up their car seats so they know the car seats are from the police.