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## **76% Increase in Shaken Baby Incidents**

### **Local Teacher and Teens Take Action**

**Milwaukee, May. 6** – Caring for a small child can often be taxing on parents and other care providers. But recently there have been too many instances where the frustration has boiled over and caused harm, often death, to a baby.

In Wisconsin, education of Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is mandated in hospitals and schools for grades five through eight, and ten through twelve, but many schools do not follow through on this. A teacher at Butler Middle School, Sheri Schlitt, has taken a personal interest in SBS and educates her 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on the dangers of shaking a baby.

“It is difficult to watch the news, hearing of injuries and deaths to infants, and not be affected,” said Schlitt. “As a teacher it is my job to educate the adults of tomorrow and it’s also my way of giving back to the community by teaching them you never, ever shake a child.”

Getting the message to the youth in the community is a first, yet long term step. Shaken Baby Association partnered with Serve Marketing and is launching a campaign to reach out to the most likely perpetrators - men. Men often fall into this role because they are not given enough training about care child. Teens from Butler Middle school will place stickers on shakable materials at Tomchek Ace Hardware on Sunset Drive in Waukesha with the goal of catching the attention of their male shoppers. The stickers read “Shake this, but never ever shake a baby”.

“Shaken Baby Syndrome as well as all forms of child abuse, is really all of our problems,” said Gary Mueller, Creative Director, Serve Marketing. “When you have individuals like Sheri Schlitt and Mark, owner of Tomchek Ace hardware stepping up to not only raise awareness on SBS, but discuss prevention, I think we all realize this abuse can and will be prevented.”

The “Shake this, but never ever shake a baby” campaign will launch this week at Tomchek Ace Hardware and end with town hall meetings in Wauwatosa and Waukesha asking for volunteers and funds to help the cause.

#### **Interview/Photo Opportunities**

- Sheri Schlitt – A Teacher who is a passionate advocate for educating teens on Shaken Baby Syndrome
- Gary Mueller – Founder of Serve, who can talk about the ad campaign and tactics
- Mark Tomchek – Owner of Tomchek Ace Hardware

#### **THE NUMBERS**

- 50% - 75% of adults and teens are unaware that it is dangerous to shake a baby.
- In Milwaukee Children’s Hospital saw a 76% increase in shakings from 2007 to 2008
- 60% -75% of perpetrators are men.

#### **Education is Missing its’ Target**

- Most state mandated SBS education is targeted at moms in hospitals during delivery or in day care centers, missing our primary target audience of men.