

Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Kit Project



It's 2AM and the pager goes off. A child is in trouble and you've volunteered to get out of bed and run to the rescue. Just reading this should have raised your blood pressure a little. There are many dedicated volunteers across Iowa that are willing to answer that call. There was a time where these volunteers had to rush to the scene without the proper equipment. They had to just "do their best". You can be sure their stress levels went up on those nights.

Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time. When Kiwanis heard that there was a desperate need for life saving equipment for children this project was born. Kiwanis gives bags of child sized emergency equipment to volunteer first responders across Iowa and Nebraska. These squads are usually running on very limited budgets due to their size and locations. Most of their calls do not include children in trouble. Specialized equipment costing \$400 that rarely gets used is usually not included in the budget.

The Nebraska – Iowa Kiwanis District Foundation started a matching grant program that would provide a dollar for dollar match to any Kiwanis club that wanted to buy kits for their local squads. They also partnered with a state EMS agency to provide a free training class to go with the kits. Within the first six years all the 250 squads in Nebraska and a couple hundred squads in Iowa were given a Pediatric Trauma Kit. Then the Foundation ran out of money and had to suspend the project.

Shortly after the money ran out there was a televised press conference in Solon, Iowa. The Iowa City Kiwanis club gave the Solon first responder squad a kit. This kit was used to save the life of a 7th grade girl whose heart had stopped at track practice. At the press conference the state EMS trainer made the remark to the Iowa Kiwanis project coordinator that this young lady was revived quickly enough to have no lasting brain damage from the episode. She added that an episode like this never turns out this well. NEVER!

With this kind of result the Project Coordinator convinced his own Marion Metro Kiwanis club to keep the project alive. Without the matching funds the progress slowed down dramatically. With patience and tenacity Marion Metro Kiwanis found a generous sponsor to fund the revival of the matching grants. Later the Big K Family Charitable Foundation was formed to handle the revived matching funds available.

The McCausland and Donahue Fire departments in Scott County received kits back in 2008 from the Marion Metro Kiwanis club. But that left 11 squads in the county needing kits. Recently the Kiwanis clubs in the Quad Cities discovered this project and see the importance and the huge impact this project can have on the health of the kids in Scott County. They pooled their money and raised the \$2200 to buy a kit for each of these squads.

It's clear these kits help save kids lives, but there is another benefit that might not be as obvious. The Hiawatha Fire Chief came to a Kiwanis meeting to report on their use of the kit after a few years of service. He told them of three general examples of the many times they've used the kit over the years. The first example was where the kit was the difference between life and death. There would have been a very real danger of the child dying if his squad didn't have a kit. The second was an example of an incident where the kid's life wasn't necessarily in danger but the whole episode was a lot easier for the child because they had the right sized equipment. The final example was a horrible car crash on interstate 380. They helped the kid the best they could but ultimately the child died from his injuries. This is where the other benefit comes to light.

Even though this was a very sad outcome the Chief said his responders KNEW they had done all they could do to prevent it. Sometimes bad things happen but his crew didn't have to second guess their actions. They had the right equipment and training. There was nothing else they could have done to change the outcome. So the tremendous stress the volunteers sometimes encounter is reduced.

These kits are valuable because these volunteers need smaller pieces of equipment when they are helping kids. This can be seen by these examples.



This is a tool used to reach for the back of a person's tongue and pull it forward to facilitate placing an air tube down their throat (quarter shown for size perspective). Squads will have the adult sized hook shown on the right. If they are working on a choking infant and need the hook shown on the left, and don't have it, their job can be very difficult. There are other hooks spanning the sizes between the two shown here. There are also various sized air masks and tubing to make providing oxygen easier by

allowing a tight seal on the child's face. We have been told by the First Responders that most of their pediatrics calls are air way issues and these hooks and masks are life savers.



Here is a blood pressure cuff that most people are familiar with. This one is much smaller (quarter shown for size perspective) and is intended for infants and small children. Just imagine trying to use an adult blood pressure cuff on an infant. The width of the cuff would cover their entire arm from wrist to shoulder.

We are all very fortunate that these volunteers are willing to get up in the middle of the night and rush to our aid. We must never forget that these kits don't save lives. The volunteers are saving the lives, Kiwanis is just helping them help us. **We honor their service as local heroes.**

With the 11 kits that the Scott county Kiwanis clubs are giving out the number of squads in Iowa that need kits has now dropped below 100. The Marion Metro Kiwanis club and the Big K Family Charitable Foundation are still accepting donations from anyone willing to donate to the protection of the children of Iowa. Any amounts are welcome and there are several ways to give. Checks can be written to the Big K Family Foundation and sent to 7471 Commune Ct. Cedar Rapids, IA 52411. The Big K is a 501(c)(3) organization and all donations are tax deductible. There is also a Go Fund Me project for easier donations of smaller amount. It can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/PediatricTraumaKit>.

More information on the project like kit contents and which squads have or need equipment can be found on the Marion Metro Kiwanis website. <http://www.marionmetrokiwanis.org/Page/12274>.

Any other questions can be directed to Byron Tabor at 319-743-7886.

Historical Timeline

- 1999 – Nebraska-Iowa District of Kiwanis Foundation members discover this project being done in Indiana.
- 2000 – Foundation Board decides to fund matching grants for volunteer First Responders in the Nebraska-Iowa Kiwanis district. \$4000 is budgeted to provide 20 kits.
- 2006 – Foundation has to back away from the project after spending over \$100,000 to provide matching funds.
- 2006 – The Marion Metro Kiwanis club takes over the project.
- 2007 – The matching funds availability was restored by a private donation opening up eastern Iowa to the program.
- 2010 – Big K Family Charitable Foundation established to manage the matching funds program.
- 2017 – Scott County presentation takes the total squads needing kits to fewer than 100.