



National Days without Accidents 2004

Fourteen Czech Healthy Cities devoted the first eight days in June to the National Days without Accidents campaign. While last year's campaign focused on prevention of accidents in cyclists and injuries sustained in recreational activities (such as head injuries from diving), safety of children in traffic and on their way to and from school was at the centre of attention this year. The Healthy Cities' city halls and their partners prepared a number of educational and entertainment events to alert children, parents, teachers and the general public to the danger of such accidents and injuries and to teach them about prevention. The partners included organisations involved in various aspects of accidents and injuries, such as medical facilities, schools, police, or non-governmental organisations.

Healthy Cities Were First to Test International Project in Czech Republic

The purpose of the international **Safe Routes to School** project is to make going to and from school easier and safer for pupils and students. Healthy Cities have been offered the project for pilot testing by the Transport Research Centre in Brno. Supported by local city halls, schools and various interest groups in Trebic, Orlova and Kromeriz joined the project as organisers. In the initial phase of the project, children marked their routes to school in the map, noting the risks they encounter, such as damaged railings or pavements. Then the children proposed various ways to eliminate the risks. The project also included various surveys. Children monitored how many pedestrians crossed the street against the red light, how many drivers or passengers travelling with them did not use safety belts, or how many cyclists did not wear a helmet. In Trebic alone, over 200 basic school pupils (third to eighth grades) were involved in the project. The children identified over 60 risk-involving locations all over the city. *"The Student Parliament was a great help in terms of organisational arrangements. Together, we*

want to continue developing the project in the next school year," said local HCP coordinator Jindra Stribrska. In September, a public meeting will be held to discuss the elimination of the identified bottlenecks.



Puppets Taught Children Twelve Rules for Safe Water Activities

The highest accident frequency during the year is in May through August, with August being the most critical month. This is why this year's **National Days without Accidents** in Healthy Cities paid great attention to prevention of injuries during summer recreation. The City of Hodonin, for instance, prepared a program for children focusing on risks involved in water activities.

At the U jezu landing, a Czech Police diving team showed people how to save a drowning person. In addition to the educational part, children saw a magician performance, went for a cruise aboard the Konstancie boat, danced at a discotheque and took part in various contests. They were also given information materials about prevention of injuries, provided to the organisers by Motol

Teaching Hospital in Prague. At the outdoor swimming pool in Chrudim, pre-school children were instructed about **Twelve Rules for Safe Water Activities**. During the morning, students from the Secondary Medical School introduced children to the rules of safe bathing, using puppets, pictures and funny stories. Under the supervision of Czech Red Cross members, children tried attending to various injuries. A water rescue

team then showed children examples of their work. In the afternoon, everybody could come to the Chrudim swimming pool to an event entitled **Help, I'm Drowning!** and try out a diver's suit or see if they were able to rescue a drowning person and give them first aid. Children could play in the water as well as compete for attractive prizes, such as sporting outfits or equipment.

Only Children with Helmets Received Presents

A bicycle is a favourite means of transport for both children and adults; not all of them, however, are quite aware of the injuries they risk when riding a bicycle without a helmet. **"Going Biking? – Don't Forget Your Helmet!"** is the title of a campaign that the Safe Community of Kromeriz organised for the first time last year. This year, the campaign returned to the town, and another Healthy City, Litomerice, liked it to the extent that it asked the organisers to help launch it in their city. The campaign started in mid-April, when nearly 400 children from Litomerice's basic schools had an opportunity to see the work of the Integrated Rescue System team, the traffic and city police, fire brigade and Czech Red Cross medics. They were instructed about how to behave on roads and what to do if they witnessed a traffic accident. *"The major attraction for the children were the vehicles, mainly the ambulance car, where they tried breathing with an oxygen mask. Everyone of them also wanted to try out the hydraulic scissors in the fire brigade car,"* described the atmosphere the HCP coordinator Lenka Prochazkova, who co-organised the event with the Rozmaryn Children and Youth Centre. Throughout May, lectures were given at schools about safety on the roads; children received discount coupons for the purchase of a bicycle helmet.

In June, police patrols and city policemen were checking whether or not children wore helmets when riding a bike. Those who did received bicycle accessories, such as flasher lights, horns, or bottles. The whole campaign culminated at the Traffic Playground in the Jirasek Park, where young cyclists competed in various skill and knowledge tests. The first prize – a brand new bicycle - went to eleven-year-old Michal Bures. As part of National Days without Accidents 2004, rules of safe bicycle riding were instilled into basic school pupils in Vsetin, Mlada Boleslav, Brno and other cities.



A Part of the City Turned into a Playground for a Day

Vsetin Days without Accidents included interesting lectures about rules of giving first aid to children and about injury prevention in senior citizens as well as a presentation of defence against an attacking dog, or the regional contest of young medics. The week-long campaign against accidents and injuries in Vsetin culminated in a full-day program in front of the city hall and in a part of the Smetana Street, which turned into a playground for children. The organisers prepared entertaining contests, practical demonstrations of preventive medicine, self-

defence, the rescuing of people from wreckage and heights, as well as other features, including police and fire brigade cars. Older children competed in roller skating or ball pistol shooting contests. There were also presentations of accident insurance companies for adults. The Vsetin city hall together with the Police of the Czech Republic and the Vsetin City Police launched the traditional BESIP cycling contest for first to fourth grade pupils. The several-day contest included a written test, a practical riding skills test and a ride testing the children's

knowledge of traffic rules. All participants were awarded the Young Cyclist Certificate, and the best ones received presents worth a total of CZK 20 thousand, donated by the city hall. *"There are a number of risks threatening both children and adults, which, however, can be avoided. As part of the Safe Community project, we monitor and repair places where accidents frequently occur. Getting to know the potential dangers is,*

nevertheless, a crucial part of prevention, which is precisely what the Days without Accidents are trying to do," summed up Mayor and HCP politician Jiri Cunek. The activities in Vsetin were co-organised by the Czech Red Cross, the Secondary Medical School, the local hospital for people needing prolonged treatment, the SOS Rescue Service, the Police of the Czech Republic and the Vsetin City Police.

First Project Fighting Dangerous Superstition

On the occasion of the National Days without Accidents and the Year of the Family, Brno introduced an interesting project emphasizing the importance of using safety belts in cars, particularly for pregnant women. Very often, pregnant women refuse to use seat belts, being afraid of hurting the foetus. Dr. Jiri Kepak of the Accident Hospital in Brno, the author of the project entitled **Protect Yourself and Your Child – Always Use Safety Belts**, explains that this opinion is pure superstition. *"The risk of the foetus dying in a car crash is 2.8 times higher in pregnant women who do not use the seat belts compared to those who do. Even the slightest collision can cause the separation of the placenta, with all the fatal consequences for the mother and the foetus. This is the most common cause of losing the foetus in car crashes. However, it is very important to position the safety belts correctly."* The HCP partners in the city prepared a number of interesting "anti-accident" events, with the HCP Office taking care of the overall campaign promotion. The JUNIOR Children and Youth Centre declared June 2 the **Children's Day without Accidents**. Over 300 children and 100 adults attended the full-day event offering a wide range of advice and demonstrations to prevent injuries. Children were asked to identify dangerous objects, tested their knowledge of injury prevention during sporting activities, first aid basics and traffic rules, or tried a practical riding skills test. Parents could draw

inspiration from an exhibition of safety aids for households. Staff members of the Jiri Mahen Library addressed another aspect of accidents and injuries, having prepared a cycle of discussions for basic school pupils, entitled **How to Avoid Getting Hurt and Prevent Others from Hurting You**. The topics included bullying and ways to defend oneself against it, finding one's way in an unfamiliar environment, and molesting by an adult. For older pupils, the program was expanded to include the highly topical food intake disorders. A total of 12 classes (260 pupils) took part in the discussions. The feedback of the schools prompted the organisers to continue in the discussions in the next school year.



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(The photographs were provided by the archives of HCCZ members)
