

# Safe Sitter: Vital lessons for babysitters

By Danielle Sutton

GOOD BABYSITTERS ARE WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD and the peace of mind that comes with knowing that your sitter is trained is priceless. For those not familiar with the program, Safe Sitter is long-time community project of JLNO that provides babysitting training program for boys and girls ages 11-13. The courses are taught in collaboration with the Parenting Center at Children's Hospital.

Safe Sitter provides adolescents with improved childcare skills to reduce the number of accidental and preventable deaths among children by teaching CPR, first aid, choking child and infant rescue breathing, and how to properly secure a home against safety hazards. These are skills that many adults do not have, so the courses



Children listening and learning.



Ann Irwin and students practice infant choking rescue.

Photos by Kellen Pirri

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Photo by Kellen Pirri



Ashley Franks (Chair) and Kim Foote

are a great way of teaching responsibility as well as childcare. Safe Sitter courses are held over the summer and are staffed by trained Junior League volunteers.

The biggest change in the most recent Safe Sitter courses over the summer was the increase in advertising that was done to draw in new participants. Mimi Wilson, the Safe Sitter chair, says that this really gave the program a boost and every session was completely full. They plan on building on this success next summer with heavy marketing activities to get the courses filled.

In addition to basic lifesaving techniques, the following topics are addressed in the Safe Sitter two-day courses:

- safety precautions to prevent accidents,
- how to successfully and safely run a babysitting business,
- how and when to summon help, and
- tips on basic childcare.

“Not only is the Safe Sitter program rewarding for the participants but it also gives the JLNO members invaluable training in CPR and choking rescue skills,” says Mimi.

New to the Safe Sitter program this year is the scholarship course that was held Oct. 16 at the Samuel Green Charter School. The Junior League sponsored students to take the special one-day course at the school to help them learn invaluable life-saving techniques, which will enable them to babysit as well as better care for siblings and family members. The scholarship course at Green also ties in with the JLNO community activities in the Freret Street neighborhood. Participants in the scholarship course were very enthusiastic about acquiring the skills being taught, and they all said they plan to use their skills in their community and with their families. **L**



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