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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Medicine Drop Box Opens in Burlington; Ribbon Cutting August 14, 2014 at 2:00PM**

**BURLINGTON, NC** – The Burlington Police Department will officially open the recently installed Medicine Drop Box at a ribbon cutting event scheduled for Thursday, August 14 at 2 pm at 267 W. Front St. in Burlington. Speakers at the event will include Chief of Police Jeffrey Smythe; a representative from Safe Kids Alamance County; and Richard and Jennifer Kaffenberger, parents of Harry Cohen. Harry Cohen was a Williams High School student and record-setting quarterback on the football team. He passed away in August 2011 after taking pain medication that was prescribed to another family member. The Kaffenbergers ask all families to put medications up and out of reach of children, and to educate youth about the dangers of taking medication not prescribed for you.

The Burlington Police Department Medicine Drop Box offers area residents a permanent site for safe and secure disposal of expired or unused prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications. Residents who use the drop box help to keep medication out of our water supply, out of the hands of abusers who may search the trash seeking drugs, and out of the reach of children and teens.

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, over 60,000 children are treated each year in United States Emergency Departments because of accidental unsupervised ingestion of medication, and annually 56 children under the age of 14 die from unintentional medication overdoses. Chief Smythe states, “The Burlington Police Department is pleased to contribute to this community effort to keep medication out of the wrong hands. This medicine drop box can help save lives, so let’s fill it up.”

Kelley Kimrey, Safe Kids Alamance County Coordinator concurs, “Safe Kids is proud to help celebrate this medicine drop box in Burlington and offer this new resource to help keep kids safe. Parents can do our part to keep medication out of the reach of kids and teens. No more flushing old pills down the toilet or throwing cough syrup in the trashcan.”

The Burlington Police Department Medicine Drop Box is open now and is available Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. People who use the box are asked to remove labels with names or other identifiers and place items in a plastic baggie before disposal. More information on the Drop Box is available at [www.conehealth.com/community](http://www.conehealth.com/community).

This project represents years of work on prescription medication safety led by Safe Kids Alamance County with their Operation Medicine Drop events. Safe Kids Alamance County is a coalition of local health, public safety, and child and youth development professionals and concerned citizens. Safe Kids partnered with the Burlington Police Department and Alamance Citizens for a Drug-Free Community to bring the drop box to Burlington. More information on Operation Medicine Drop and Medication Safety is available at these links: <http://www.safekids.org/medicinesafety> and <http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/SafeKids/Operation%20Medicine%20Drop%20for%20Safety%20Professionals.aspx?sec=omd> .

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