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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Manchester Car Seat Distribution Slated for May 18th at Northwest Park

Gentle Love Connections, in partnership with the Town of Manchester, is thrilled to announce our first car seat distribution event for families in need planned for Sunday, May 18th from 10am-1pm at Northwest Park, located at 448 Tolland Turnpike in Manchester. This event is made possible by a \$25,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Nonprofit Support Grant awarded by the Sustainability Commission for the Town of Manchester.

This event will mark the launch of the Car Seats 4 Kids Program, which aims to prevent fatalities from car accidents, a leading cause of death for children between the ages of 1 and 13 nationwide.¹ Car seats are an expensive safety apparatus for young children, but many families forgo purchasing one to save money for other basic essentials such as food, clothing, rent and utilities.

Additionally, as a part of this event, Child Passenger Safety Technicians from the Manchester Police Department will assist parents in properly installing all car seats distributed. This is critical as 70.7% of all car seats are misused,² underscoring the importance of hands-on education to train parents how to independently install and safely use the car seats for their children.

This program was conceived by Kyle Zingler, Founder and Chief Operating Officer of Gentle Love Connections, who was inspired to take action after identifying a community need. “As a lifelong town resident, I’ve always tried to step in to help Manchester families, and when I heard of the lack of resources for car seats, I decided to take initiative to pursue an ARPA Nonprofit Support Grant,” Zingler said. “I am grateful to the Sustainability Commission for providing my organization this grant, along with Town Manager Stephanou, Mayor Moran and the various town agencies who have mobilized resources to make this event possible. Every Manchester child in need should have access to a car seat, because car seats save lives.”

Mayor Moran expressed his support of the collaborative effort, saying, “I would like to thank Gentle Love Connections as well as the Manchester Police Department and the Manchester Recreation Department for sponsoring this most important event. Keeping our community safe, especially our children, is always our number one priority. A safe ride for our children starts with a correctly secured car seat.”

¹ Watkins, Amy. “Passenger Safety.” *Safe Kids CT*, Connecticut Children’s Office of Child Community Health, 22 Nov. 2024, ctsafekids.org/safety-information/passenger-safety/.

² Staff, NSC. *National Digital Car Seat Check Form 2024*, CPS Board & National Safety Council, 31 Dec. 2024, carseatcheckform.org/national-dashboard.

Families in need of a seat must pre-register at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/carseats4kids>

Only 27 appointments will be available on a first-come basis and families will have a chance to sign up for a time slot once residency documents are verified. Once this cap is reached, families who complete the registration form will be placed on a waitlist based on order of submission and will be contacted in the event of cancellations. For more information, please consult our Instagram @gentleloveconnects or Facebook page Gentle Love Connections.

ABOUT GENTLE LOVE CONNECTIONS

Gentle Love Connections is a youth-led 501(c)(3) organization based in Manchester, CT whose mission is to connect families with some of the essentials to thrive and to improve their quality of life, health and overall wellbeing. Since inception in June 2020, Gentle Love has distributed over 550K diapers, serving approximately 400 children monthly through eight community partners based in East Hartford, South Windsor, Vernon and Manchester. For more information, please visit www.gentlelove.org.