



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **PHAT Ski Helmet Program Partners with Kohl's Cares for Kids to Promote Winter Sport Safety**

BURLINGTON, VT-- The Vermont Snow Sports Research Team has received over \$20,000 from Kohl's Cares for Kids – a philanthropic program run by Kohl's department stores – to expand the PHAT (**P**rotect your **H**ead on **A**ll **T**errain” and “**P**rotect your **H**ead at **A**ll **T**imes) program, aimed at significantly increasing voluntary ski helmet use among children to prevent serious head injuries.

The Kohl's Cares for Kids monies were generated locally, from the sales of specially-marked plush toys at the Kohl's retail store in South Burlington. The donation was presented to the Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen, and will support the PHAT mission by purchasing helmets for Vermont children and youth that will be raffled at eleven participating ski areas this season during “PHAT days” held at each resort. The Kohl's funding will also support the distribution of educational materials in Chittenden county schools about the importance of wearing a helmet when participating in winter sports.

“We are very thankful to local consumers who have purchased toys at the South Burlington Kohl's store to make this generous donation to our program possible,” said Dr. Robert Williams, leader of PHAT's snow sports research team, a partnership between the University of Vermont College of Medicine and the Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care. “This funding will help us continue promoting the positive advantages of wearing a helmet, which should absolutely be part of every skier's and snowboarder's routine gear, by making new, custom-fitted ski helmets available to local children at no cost to them.”

Dr. Williams is a pediatric anesthesiologist and a critical care specialist at Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen. He is also an associate professor at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

A 1999 report by the Consumer Product Safety Commission revealed that 7,700 head injuries could be prevented every year if all skiers and snowboarders wore helmets

on the slopes. Spurred on by this report, in 2002 the Vermont Snow Sports Research Team began researching helmet usage at Smugglers' Notch Resort in Jeffersonville, with some additional data gathered at Bolton Valley and Bromley resorts.

The project has been very successful with nearly 90% of children now in helmets at Smugglers' Notch, up from 60% in the 2002-2003 season. Helmet use for adults has also shown large increases, with over 70% of the program's most targeted adult skiers and riders now using helmets, up from 30% on the 2002-2003 season. The study is based on more than 75,000 observations of skiers and riders over the last six winters.

"We are extremely pleased to partner with the PHAT program in this new venture to promote child safety when skiing and snowboarding," said Gerry Wheeler, manager of Kohl's retail store in South Burlington. "This program has made great strides in increasing the number of skiers and boarders who wear a helmet when skiing, and we are happy to support their efforts through donations from Kohl's Cares for Kids to encourage more Vermont children to wear helmets, and also to understand how helmets keep them safe."

Representatives from the PHAT program, Fletcher Allen and Kohl's of South Burlington will be on hand at "PHAT days" at participating ski resorts this season to raffle off chances for children to win free, custom-fitted helmets as well as distribute free informational brochures, posters, and PHAT stickers. Helmets will be raffled off every half hour at participating resorts on the following days. Please contact Karen Williams, PHAT event coordinator, at [karynwill58@yahoo.com](mailto:karynwill58@yahoo.com) for more details.

January 3: Cochran's Ski Area  
January 10: Smugglers' Notch Resort  
January 11: Stowe Mountain Resort  
January 17: Bromley Mountain Resort  
January 18: Okemo Mountain Resort  
January 24: Stratton Mountain Resort  
January 25: Bolton Valley Resort  
January 31: Mount Snow  
February 1: Mad River Glen  
February 7: Jay Peak  
February 22: Sugarbush Resort  
February 24: Okemo Mountain Resort

#### About PHAT

The Vermont Snow Sports Research Team, a partnership of Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care and the University of Vermont College of Medicine, is actively engaged in increasing voluntary ski helmet use among children and adults to prevent serious head injuries through the PHAT (Protect your Head on All Terrain" and "Protect your Head at All Times) program. The research and marketing project is supported by the Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen, the Vermont Ski Areas Association, the Vermont Health Foundation, The Children's Miracle Network, the UVM

College of Medicine, and the Epilepsy Foundation of Vermont. For more information about PHAT, visit [www.skihelmetssafety.org](http://www.skihelmetssafety.org).

#### About Kohl's Department Stores

Based in Menomonee Falls, WI, Kohl's is a family-focused, value-oriented specialty department store offering moderately priced, exclusive and national brand apparel, shoes, accessories, beauty and home products in an exciting shopping environment. Kohl's operates over 1,000 stores nationwide. A company committed to the communities it serves, Kohl's has raised more than \$102 million for children's initiatives nationwide through its Kohl's Cares for Kids philanthropic program. For a list of locations and information, or for the added convenience of shopping online, visit [www.kohls.com](http://www.kohls.com).