

# Alton Memorial Hospital Safety Festival provides free bicycle helmets, offers other tips

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - Free bicycle helmets were given to every child who wanted one at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual **Alton Memorial Family Safety Festival**.

The festival features a collaboration of community organizations dedicating to educating and promoting safe and proper habits to children as well as their parents. This year's festival featured as many as 230 free bicycle helmets to children across the River Bend in attendance. **Senior Coordinator of Alton Memorial Hospital Public Relations Dave Whaley** said the event happened just in time for the summer months, when children ride their bikes the most.

“Bicycle helmets are big deals,” Whaley said. “We had 150 children register for their free bicycle helmets, but we have enough to give away to walk-ins as well.”

The bicycle helmets were provided to the hospital at a discounted rate from Columbia, Illinois, pediatrician, **Dr. Joseph Cangas**. Cangas has a foundation called “Helmets First,” which provides bicycle helmets to children who need them.

Apart from the helmet giveaway, the festival also featured free lunch from the **Bank of Edwardsville**, who provides hot dogs, refreshments, chips and fruit every year. Families



could also tour an ambulance, the Children's Hospital mobile intensive care unit housed at Alton Memorial Hospital, a helicopter and fire trucks and a fire safety structure from the Alton Fire Department.

Children were also welcomed to share the fun of **balloon artist Jay Almeter**, who created everything from animals to Super Soakers for the delight of youngsters.

The event also featured health and safety-themed booths and vendors from across the community.



