



# News Release

**For immediate release:** April 24, 2014

(14-058)

Contacts: [Kelly Stowe](#), Communications Office 360-236-4022  
[Julie Alonso](#), Director, Safe Kids Washington 360-236-2863

## **Safe Kids to make pitch for injury prevention at Mariners game**

**OLYMPIA** — A Washington boy who recovered from a serious injury will take the mound at a Mariners game Sunday to pitch childhood injury prevention. Each year in the United States, 9,000 families have a child die due to a preventable injury, which is why state health officials are working to share information on how to keep kids safe – especially at home.

April 27 is [Safe Kids Day](#), aimed at encouraging kids to “Be Safe at HOME, at PLAY, and on the GO!” This year, [Safe Kids Washington](#) and Seattle Children’s Hospital are teaming with the Mariners in a Safeco Field event. The Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Program is the lead agency for Safe Kids.

The game is just one way to call attention to the dangers of children falling from windows, and of how to prevent it. In 2012, the most recent year for which figures are available, 147 children under seven fell from buildings in Washington, a 2 percent increase from 2011. The state’s central and western regions had most falls. In general, such falls have been on the rise for a dozen years.

The goal is to get the word out to help prevent incidents like what happened to Thomas Keen Cunningham of Vancouver, WA, from ever occurring. In 2010 at age three, Thomas fell from a second-story bedroom window at his family’s home. His head hit the concrete patio below, giving him a traumatic brain injury and paralyzing his left side. He spent five weeks in a hospital and another year undergoing therapy.

Happily, the story didn’t end there. Thomas, now 7, will step to the mound in Safeco Field to throw out the first pitch before the Seattle Mariners host the Texas Rangers in an American League baseball game April 27. It’s both an encouraging sign of the boy’s recovery and part of a larger effort to prevent similar injuries in other children.

— More —

Child safety takes center field at Ms game

April xx, 2014

Page 2

After Thomas was hurt, preventing similar trauma became a family cause. His parents got involved in a window fall prevention campaign in nearby Portland, where his father works as a firefighter and emergency medical technician. His mother, Becca Keen Cunningham, wrote a children's book, "[If Kids Could Float](#)," aimed at stopping window falls. Proceeds will go toward prevention programs.

Preventing window falls involves attention to detail and following a few simple steps. Installing window guards and stops; opening windows from the top whenever possible and closing them after use; and keeping children from climbing near windows – including moving furniture away from windows are all easy steps that can prevent a tragic fall.

Discounted tickets are available for Safe Kids Day at Safeco Field, with proceeds going toward Safe Kids Washington's injury prevention work. April 25 is the deadline to buy advance tickets. Group benefits are available. Children 14 and under will receive T-shirts bearing the name and uniform number of Mariner second baseman Robinson Cano. Injury prevention information will be available to fans at the game.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

###