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Family Turns Teen's Death Into Drowning Prevention Efforts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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After Dmetri Kennedy-Woody drowned in May 2018, his family channeled their grief into preventing similar tragedies by raising money to buy life jackets to be used in the community. Last month, they donated 50 life jackets to Safe Kids Benton-Franklin to be loaned to the community for free.

Dmetri was a popular high school senior who drowned less than two weeks before he was supposed to graduate from Hanford High School. He was with three other students who jumped into the Yakima River from the railroad bridge that runs parallel with the 240 Overpass – a popular activity with teens in the area. Dmetri's family wants other teens to understand how dangerous the river is.

Dmetri played football and baseball at Hanford and his parents, Cheri Kennedy and Barry Woody, organized a fundraiser at the Hanford-Richland baseball game in April, which raised over \$1,000. They partnered with Safe Kids Benton-Franklin to buy life jackets to be used for Safe Kids' Life Jacket Loan Program. Those life jackets appeared on life jacket loan boards in Richland in August. They bear a small patch that reads "In Memory of Dmetri."

"We are grateful to work with Cheri and Barry to honor their son's memory and help prevent future drownings," said Kathleen Clary-Cooke, Coordinator for Safe Kids Benton-Franklin. "These parents have poured their hearts and souls into making sure that no other family has to endure a similar tragedy."

Safe Kids Benton-Franklin provides life jackets that can be borrowed for free by anyone who needs one. Sizes range from child to XL adult. Life jacket loan boards are set up in parks and at boat ramps around Benton and Franklin Counties and permanent life jacket stations are at Richland Parks & Rec, Benton County Fire District #4 in West Richland, and West Benton Fire & Rescue in Prosser. A list of life jacket loan locations can be found at https://bfhd.wa.gov/programs_services/injury_violence_prevention/drowning_prevention

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