

Are Your Child Car Seats Properly Installed?

by Rick Lipsey

For eons, I'd suspected that our child car seats were not properly installed and that we weren't correctly buckling the straps. But like most parents in America, I did nothing. Then I read an article which explained that 99 percent of child car seats in the U.S. are improperly installed and used, and that unless the child seats are correctly installed and used they are basically useless in the event of a crash. Wake up call!

After some internet research, I ended up at Safety City, a N.Y. City Dept. of Transportation road safety center that offers myriad lessons for adults and schoolchildren, on West 158th Street on a very snowy morning a few weeks ago, to get a child car seat lesson that was shocking -- in a fantastic way.

An instructor named Andrea spent one hour installing the two child seats for our two toddlers (Alex, 1, and Timmy, 2) and teaching my how to install and use them myself. Upon seeing how dramatically ineffective a job I'd done with the seats through four children and nine years, I was horrified. My only solace came after the lesson. "Don't worry, you're like the rest of the parents," Andrea said with a laugh. "You all can't believe you didn't come here sooner."

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PRESIDENT'S POTPOURRI

Dear 336 CPW Friends and Neighbors,

The groundhog said it will be an early spring, and I am optimistically believing him, despite the cold, snow and ice we've endured this winter. Any skeptics certainly have a reasonable basis for disbelief, although this past weekend supported the groundhog. One way or the other we are all fervently hoping for more and stronger intimations of spring in the next 2-3 weeks.

Staying with the hope theme, we are making progress with the Local Law 11 remedial project - albeit more slowly than we have been encouraged to think and much more slowly than all of you would have wished. The famous last three terra cotta stones have been shipped ("the check is in the mail") and should arrive here shortly. Following installation and completion of the sealing of the cornice, that part of the project should be virtually completed. Work on the northeast corner of the building continues slowly - in part because of the weather and in part because we continue to discover additional issues needing attention. The principal uncertainty is repair of the structural steel that must be done before waterproofing and brick restoration can begin. We also may have a new water issue on the roof requiring attention before we can close up that corner.

Now that we are into 2011, we are into the next segment (they run in 5 year cycles) of the Local Law 11 inspection requirement. We will need a new inspection and report completed sometime in the 2011-2012 period. The board is asking Walter Melvin for quotes to complete the survey and inspection early this year. One would hope that with the remedial work we have done, together with the maintenance work done by the staff and the specific capital projects completed in 2009 and 2010, the Local Law 11 punch list will be very short, indeed.

Our financial condition remains healthy, although it is being tested by the additional capital expenditures required by the Local Law 11 remedial work needed these past two years. They have been offset to some extent by the transfer fees generated from apartment sales in those years. As you also know, we have retained David Rubin of the firm Golenbock, Eiseman, Assor, Bell & Peskoe to pursue legal remedies from those responsible for the defective work done in 2005-2007 on the Local Law 11 project. That, too, proceeds slowly, and we have no assurance it will achieve a successful result, save the obvious egregiousness of the errors and omissions identified in the performance of that work. This is another ongoing process to which the Board has been devoting considerable time and attention this year. Its success would contribute significantly to the continued strength of our financial condition.

This year's annual meeting of shareholders will be held Monday, May 9, 2011 - as you may have noted on the building website (www.336cpw.org). We will be distributing a legal notice and other materials for that meeting shortly. We will also distribute an invitation to shareholders to nominate candidates to stand for election. You may wish to know - at present - each incumbent member of the Board has committed to stand for re-election. The Board has a big and challenging agenda for the building over the next 12-18 months. We plan a full discussion of those priorities at the annual meeting, so please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Let me also add there

is a wealth of information about the building and the work of the Board and staff on our building website - to which I commend your attention for more detail on these subjects.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to open a new and important topic of discussion with all residents in the building. The Board has received a resident's suggestion that we consider a ban on smoking throughout the building, including apartments. This was supported by an article citing research showing children residing in apartments have 45 percent more cotinine, a marker of tobacco exposure, in their blood than children living in detached, non-smoking homes. Among other things, the study was not fully conclusive on issues such as whether the second-hand smoke exposure was in the home or outside. We recognize this is a potentially divisive issue. It raises important privacy and individual civil liberty issues as well as the issue of potentially harmful effects on the health of neighbors, especially innocent youngsters. The Board is reluctant to take any action at this time except to encourage and lead a building-wide discussion and to help in the search for a broad and virtually unanimous consensus. I hope you will give it some thought, discuss it with your neighbors and let us know what you are thinking by note, email or word of mouth.

Several years ago - in the 2000-2002 timeframe - we understand there was widespread interest in the availability of the rooms once known as maids' rooms on the first floor in the southwest corner of the building. Over the years they have been variously referred to as work/art-studios, offices and storage rooms. Presently, the occupants are using them as studios, offices and utility rooms. The Board has received advice from an outside expert they could and should be generating higher fees than is presently being received - with one exception of one unit - and we have instituted a program to begin raising the applicable fees toward something closer to a market rate. We expect that at least one of the rooms in question will be available for a new occupant, and, depending upon events, perhaps more than one. These rooms can be extremely convenient and useful for a variety of purposes, and we anticipate considerable interest from the building for this opportunity. After we have gauged that interest, we will devise a process that will be open and fair to all in order to determine how to allocate those rooms that are available, but will also be designed to maximize the interest of the building in achieving higher revenue. Please let Sergio or David Commender at Orsid know if you wish to express an interest in one of the rooms. Sergio is available to show you the rooms if you would like to see any of them.

The building's regular outside legal counsel - Schechter & Brucker - tendered their resignation from our account in December. We are in the process of interviewing, evaluating and selecting a new firm to take up that role. FYI, we have had preliminary interviews with Eric Balber of Balber Pickard, Matthew Leeds of Ganfer & Shore, and Jeffrey Diamond of Marcus Rosenberg & Diamond. We will keep you apprised and will introduce the new firm, as soon as the Board has made a selection.

Very best regards.

Mike Schell

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STAFF PROFILE

Felix Romero Cruz



In May, 336 CPW staff member Felix Romero Cruz will have worked in our building for fourteen years.

Felix was born and raised in Honduras, one of ten brothers and sisters. When he was twenty-one, his mother brought him to the United States. Over time and with a lot of hard work, his mother managed to bring all of his brothers and sisters to this country. Felix's father passed away in 2006, but his mother is still living here, enjoying her grown children and her grandchildren. Once a year, Felix and his family travel back to Honduras for vacation.

Felix started at 336 CPW in 1997 and has held a variety of roles in the building, including porter and front and back elevator operator. When he's not on the job, he enjoys watching soccer games. In Honduras, Felix played a lot of soccer. "I love soccer and played soccer all of my life," he says. Felix doesn't play the game very often now, but he still keeps up with the sport; he also follows baseball and enjoys running to stay in shape.

When he's home, Felix and his partner are busy raising their three children—Stephanie (19); Felix, Jr. (17); and John (15)—and taking care of their four-year-old turtle named Chique. Felix's drink of choice is green tea, which he has started to drink every morning, and his favorite food is rice-and-beans. Surely such a healthy lifestyle contributes to what we've all come to recognize and appreciate in Felix—his high energy level, good nature, and sense of humor.

Recycling Rules

Recycling remains a critical issue at 336. Please be considerate of our staff (and help the building avoid steep fines) by properly separating your recyclables.

- Batteries, old cell phones, PDAs and printing cartridges can be recycled. Just put them separately with the trash, and our staff will recycle. We suggest you put them on the upside-down cover of the trash barrel. Also, metal coat hangers, with paper, can be placed separately in the trash and our staff will take them to the dry cleaners, or you can take them when you go to the cleaners.
- Kitty litter should be deposited in the trashcans in sealed bags (not flushed down toilets).
- Garbage consisting of food and other non-recyclables should be placed in the household can on each floor.

ITEMS FOR RECYCLING

Styrofoam

Glass

Metal

Phone books

Plastic milk/juice jugs

Newspapers/magazines

For more information about recycling please visit the Council on the Environment of New York City web site at <http://www.cenyc.org>