

Children First offers first aid course in Meriden

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MERIDEN — Some families will get to learn basic first aid and CPR in a program offered by Children First Initiative and the city Health Department.

Children First interim director Paul Vivian said the idea came during a meeting of Family Zone participants. The Family Zone provides support and educational opportunities to families in the area of Miller and Twiss streets. During his first community meeting at the end of January, Vivian asked Family Zone members what sort of programs they'd like to see in the coming months.

"One person suggested first aid lessons," Vivian said. "So we asked if anyone else would be interested and hands just shot up."

On Thursday at the Health Department building, 15 Family Zone members will get the chance to learn how to perform CPR on adults and children, choking prevention, poison control and other basic first aid.

The class will be taught by Lea Crown, associate director of health and human services.

"When I heard what Children First was trying to do, I said, 'I can do it,'" Crown said. She explained that Thursday's session is limited to 15 people so that there are enough mannequins to practice CPR and choking prevention.

"I'm really going to let the audience run it, in a sense," Crown said. "We might end up on a different tangent about choking for most of the time, and that's OK, too. It's just whatever people want to learn."

Vivian and Crown said they'll look to offer other sessions if there are other topics residents want to cover or more people would like to participate.

"We'll do it as long as people want it and need it," Vivian said. This is the first time, he added, that Children First has offered first aid lessons, as far as anyone on the organization's Board of Directors can remember.

Crown said she's also catering the lesson in other ways, such as creating a bilingual instruction slide show, to the largely Spanish-speaking class.

"Plus I think that because it's hands-on, it'll be a lot different than just speaking to the crowd," Crown said. mcallahan@record-journal.com (203) 317-2279 Twitter: @MollCal

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