



# Youth engagement!

**Youthcast Media Group's multimedia distracted driving project**

September 26th, 2024

# Overview of project

## Goal:

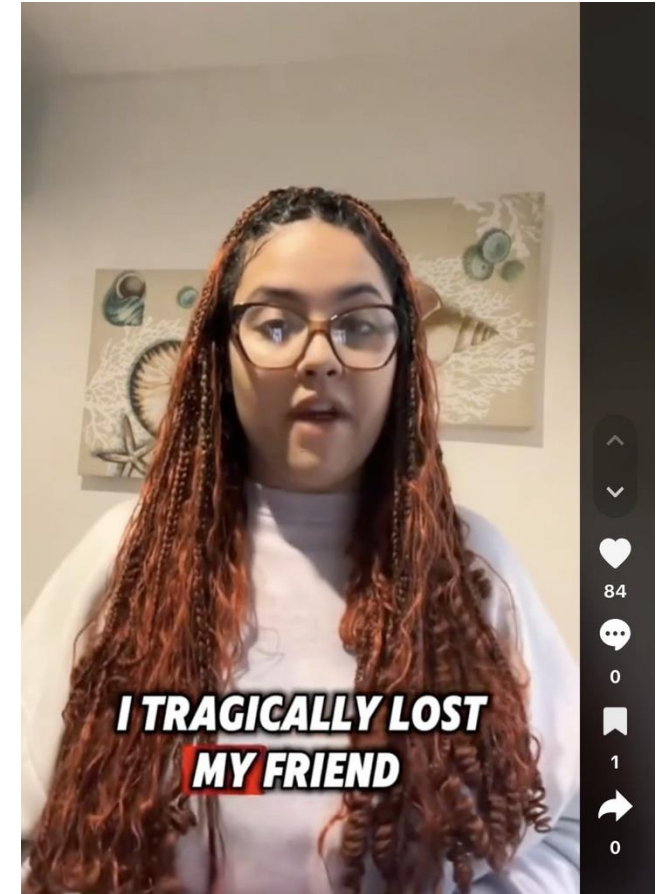
To engage and train high school students and college interns on journalism writing and social media and report on distracted driving content that would reach their peers and community members. They focused on the risks of and solutions for distracted driving.



# Overview of project (cont'd)

Journalism writing and social media content delivered through:

- **Journalism writing workshops** (6 weeks)
- **Journalism instruction** embedded in Annandale High school Journalism class (2 semesters)
- **Social media journalism boot camps** (3 programs)
- **Creator's Club** (virtual student group or one-on-one sessions)



# Project results

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- Engaged **53** students in 11 months on distracted driving coverage
- Received a **100%** “would recommend to a friend” student rating for virtual training
- Got **2** stories published in Route Fifty; **2** about to be published in MindSite News
- Posted **64** social media videos on distracted driving; **18** ready to post
- Had **2** more stories published in Annandale High School’s newspaper and on [our site](#)
- Featured an intern & high school creator as presenters at **2** road safety conferences



# Who we worked with

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YMG's team trained & engaged high school students and college interns from marginalized communities in:

- Herndon, Arlington and Annandale, Virginia
- San Bernardino County, California
- Washington, DC
- Hartford, Connecticut
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Princeton, New Jersey
- Essex, Maryland
- Miami, Florida
- Kalamazoo, Michigan
- Palatine, Illinois



# Who we interviewed

Included state officials, teen drivers, survivors

- **Rick Birt**, Director, DC Highway Safety Office
- **Joel Feldman**, founder of Casey Feldman Foundation/EndDD.org ; victim's father
- **Jesse Cohen**, former distracted driver; convicted of felony after victim's death
- **Fletcher Cleaves**, partially paralyzed from crash involving a distracted driver; public speaker
- **Martha Tessmer**, Impact Teen Drivers
- **Doug Herbert** , B.R.A.K.E.S. founder, lost 2 sons in crash



**Fletcher Cleaves**



**Aabri Spear**



# More on project results from the mouths of...teens!

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*"[I learned] that **teens and young adults** are the **most at risk** from distracted driving based on things that [are] all around us."*

*"[I plan] to start or support a campaign against Distracted Driving through schools."*

Asked what they'd do different after a boot camp, one student said: *"I'll keep in mind to **speak up** if I feel **unsafe in a car** or if the driver is getting distracted and putting our lives in danger."*

*"I plan to **talk to my parents about distracted driving**...There are some things like eating in the car that is considered as distracted driving but many don't seem to know that."*



# Survey says... (We really made a difference!)

After the May CapCut video editing training:

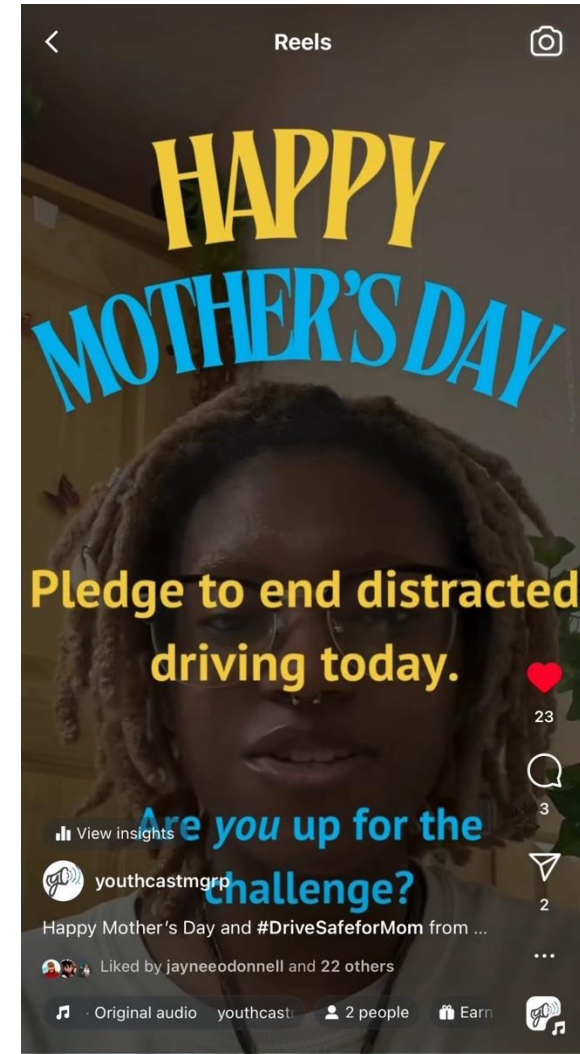
- More than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of students said the class made them want to **learn more** about what's being done to **address distracted driving** in their own community.
- $\frac{1}{3}$  said they were **inspired** to discuss the problem with **people in authority**.
- **12 of 14** students said that the boot camp **changed** what **they plan to do** in their community somewhat or a lot.





# What we've learned - and recommend

- **Teens are really interested in this topic!**
- Most if not all students have distracted driving **“lived experience.”**
- Give students a variety of entry points/ways to **cover road safety to get & keep them engaged.**
- **Cast a wide net** and choose participants wisely.



# What's next?

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- Thanks to a new grant from GHSA and GM, we're continuing work on distracted driving with students in and outside of classrooms.
- We're expanding our road safety work to Bard High School Early College DC, right, thanks to a brand new **DC Highway Safety Office** grant. We're also doing a new **National Road Safety Foundation** passenger empowerment boot camp and receiving financial support from the **Casey Feldman Foundation**.
- We're increasing our outreach to identify additional students and school partners from **new communities** across the US.



# QUESTIONS?

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**THANK YOU for listening!**  
**Want to chat?**  
**Want a copy of the slides?**

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**703-216-4538**

# Addendum references

# Student articles

- [Teens say distracted driving messages need to be catchier, more frequent and blunt - Route Fifty](#)
- [How teens can be safer drivers- Route Fifty](#)
- Other stories on the [impact of ADHD on distracted driving](#) and an updated version of this [first person story](#) will be published soon by MindSite News.

# Distracted Driving

## Avoiding distracted driving is a bigger challenge for people with ADHD

By Zoe Ligairi and Sophia Sewall

Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens, who crash vehicles at a higher rate of any age group. But hidden within the numbers is a critical but often overlooked subgroup: Teens with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are more than twice as likely to be involved in multiple car crashes.



Jeffrey Epstein, a pediatric psychologist and University of Cincinnati professor, reported this higher risk in a National Institutes of Health-funded study in 2022, while noting that 8% of teens have ADHD.

This shows teens with ADHD who have started driving or who are hoping to get their license are faced with far more challenges than teens without the disorder. ADHD can affect and look different in teens, especially while driving.



ROUTE FIFTY

## Teens say distracted driving messages need to be catchier, more frequent and blunt



By D'arin Floyd-Baldwin, Raia Hill, D'Arcy Williams and Grace Wang

JUNE 10, 2024

Young adults typically underestimate the risk of distracted driving, making it difficult for public safety officials to craft effective messaging.

ROUTE FIFTY

CONNECTING STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

## How teens can be safer drivers



By Jessica Chen, Winnie Chan and Daniel Oloju, Youthcast Media Group

APRIL 1, 2024

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the U.S. Will raising the requirements for a driver's license help?

PUBLIC SAFETY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

## Snapchat, texts stole a driver's attention and cost a state trooper his life

By Anthony Chiern and Elyana Rodriguez

Jesse Cohen ended a state trooper's life and nearly ruined his own by reading Snapchats and texting behind the wheel.



A New York state trooper lost his life because of Jesse Cohen's distracted driving.

In December 2017, Cohen was 21 and three days past his college graduation when he hit New York State Trooper Joseph Gallagher, who was on the Long Island Expressway assisting another motorist. Gallagher suffered severe brain injuries and was unable to walk, talk, or eat on his own. He lived another three years before he died from his injuries.

## Driving while ADHD: Medication was the answer for one teen driver

By Hannah Henderson

If you know me as well as I know myself, it is no surprise that I have attention deficit disorder (ADD). Ever since I was little, I've had trouble focusing. Doing little and big things has always been hard.



Like other kids my age, I am beginning to take driver's ed courses and preparing to take my permit test and ultimately drive. But unlike most other kids, I have recently started to take a medication for my illness.

The first time I drove I was 14, which is too young to drive in Virginia but I was in Ashland, Oregon. It was a humbling experience. It was in a cemetery across from my best friend's house at the time. It was me, my best friend who was also learning to drive, and my best friend's older sister in my friend's manual Toyota 4Runner.

I could NOT focus. I would catch

# Student social posts

Instagram posts on distracted driving with the most views:

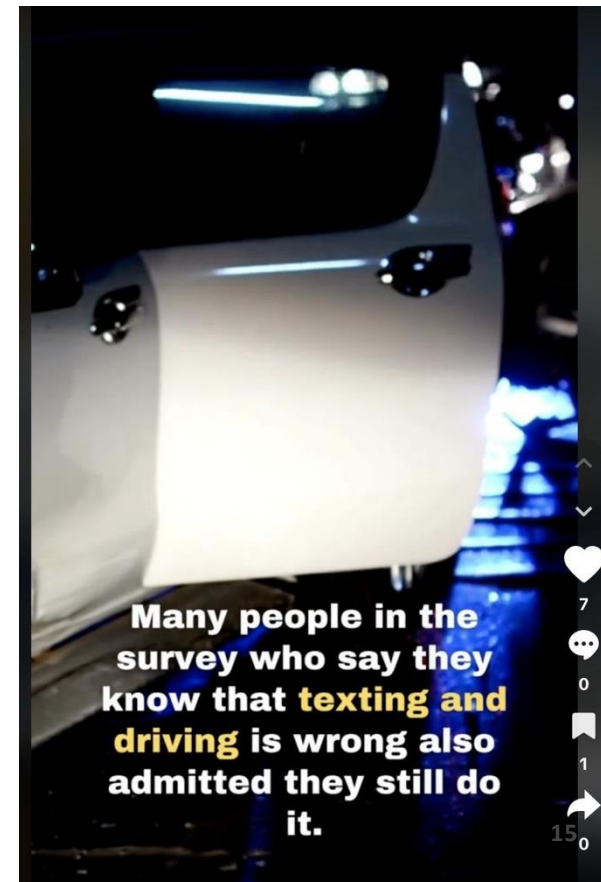
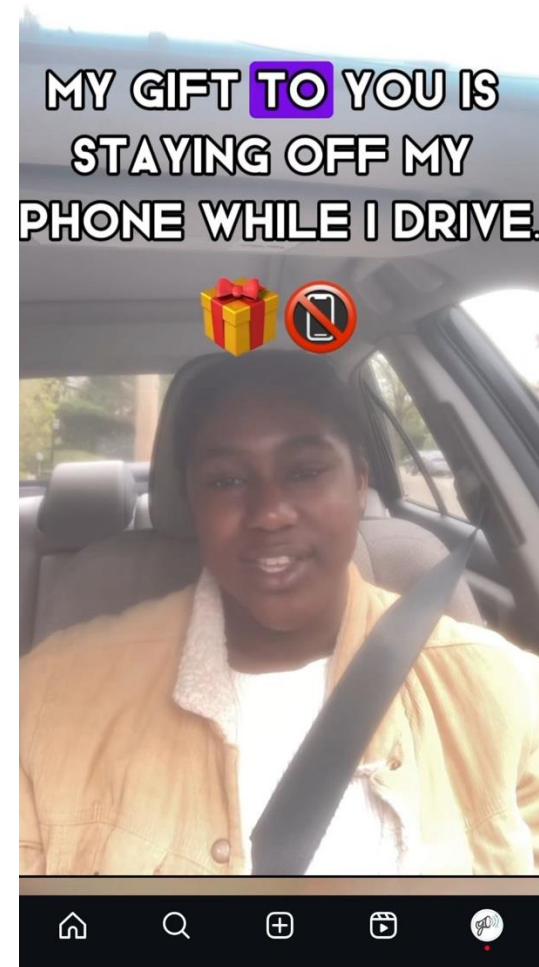
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C64lhHJRlly/>

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6zzoAwt5k4/>

TikTok posts on distracted driving with most views:

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZP8RPHaFf/>

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZP8RPsWmj/>



# Project objectives

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1. Write at least two stories that are accepted for publication in news outlets.
2. Include data to illustrate the problem; and profiles of victims, their families and/or distracted drivers involved in these crashes.
3. Train students creating social media posts to better understand the objective and rigor required to produce content that is free of personal bias and designed to inform - and engage - the consumer.
4. Train students to produce social media content on road safety topics that can be used on the schools' social platforms and republished on YMG and SHSOs' social accounts.
5. Engage high school and college students to develop social media posts conveying the risks of driving distracted to their peers and community members via Canva and CapCut boot camps and our ongoing Creator's Club.
6. Pay students when they complete programs, stories and social posts with \$100-250 for programs, \$50- \$75 stipends per in-school stories and \$45/post in Creator's Club.





# Workshops, events and partners

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1. **Fall 2023 Transportation Equity Workshop** – 12 student participants from the DMV area, Philadelphia and Miami wrote three stories about the impact of transportation on the health of their communities. Two groups worked on distracted driving.
2. **February 2024 ReadyCT Canva Class** – A Canva 101 class that taught students in Hartford, CT how to make fact-based graphic and video social posts on the subject of distracted driving.
3. **January 2024 CapCut pilot program and May 2024 CapCut boot camp** – Students in our pilot class helped us shape our CapCut curriculum, which was delivered (and further refined) with our first full class of 12 students in May. Students in the classes produced more than 30 social media videos based on interviews with people directly impacted by distracted driving, including Fletcher Cleaves, Martha Tessmer, and Joel Feldman.
4. **YMG Monocle fundraiser** - We showcased a [Distracted Driving Poster Board](#) and played a [looping video](#) of a social posts we created of our distracted driving content at our June fundraiser where 80-plus attendees were present.
5. **Ohio State Traffic Safety Summit (May 2024, Columbus)** - Jayne and intern Hermes Falcon spoke on separate panels at Ohio's State Traffic Safety Conference. Hermes was on a teen panel and he presented examples of our distracted driving social media posts to the audience.
6. **Casey Feldman Foundation** - Along with covering some of the intern's print article work this summer, their \$10,000 contribution contributed to our social media - about a third of which is related to road safety, especially distracted driving.
7. **DRIVE SMART Virginia (August 2024, Richmond)**- CEO Jayne O'Donnell and student creator Daisy Garriga presented at DRIVE SMART Virginia's distracted driving summit about our social media work, and we displayed our poster boards of the print articles and images of social posts.

