



Under Their Influence

The New Teen Safe Driving Champions



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Introduction

Fatal motor vehicle crashes involving teen drivers 15 to 20 years of age have decreased dramatically in the United States, from 7,942 in 2004 to 3,966 in 2013 (NHTSA, 2015a). This decline is attributed to strong graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws and programs that encourage parental involvement in monitoring, coaching and supporting their new drivers. While the gains in teen driver safety are significant, too many lives continue to be lost. What else can State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) and the advocacy community do to drive down the numbers, particularly in states where additional legislative improvements to GDL laws are unlikely? To achieve the next level of success, the safety community must continue to not only engage more parents, but also reach other adults who have the opportunity and capacity to positively influence young drivers.

Why other adult influencers? No doubt parents are key. In fact, teens welcome their involvement, citing their parents as the number one influence when it comes to learning to drive (Allstate Foundation, 2015). But what if a teen does not have an engaged, willing or available parent? And even if parents are involved with their novice drivers, teens typically spend more time with other adults—at school, while engaged in athletics or other extracurricular activities, and/or on the job. Using data from the American Time Use Survey, researchers found that teens 15 to 17 years of age spend the bulk of their day sleeping (9.4 hours), in school (5 hours) and watching television (2.38 hours). The

remainder of their time is spent engaging in leisure activities, working, eating, playing sports or exercising, grooming, studying, and using the computer. While teens spend on average 50 minutes a day eating, fewer than half do so with their parents spending just 20 minutes or less together at the dinner table (Price, Hunt, Wight, & Bianchi, 2009).

This separation from parents and the family is part of a teen's normal development process. It begins between the ages of 6 and 12 as a child's need to identify with his or her peer group takes precedence. The process continues through the teen years, ending with complete independence by age 20 or earlier (Focus on the Family, 1999). During this time, experts recommend that parents encourage their teen to identify a trusted adult—someone to turn to or talk with when

The safety community must continue to not only engage more parents, but also reach other adults who have the opportunity and capacity to positively influence young drivers.

they don't want to share something with mom or dad (The Parent Report, 2013). This could be an aunt, an uncle, the parent of a friend, a teacher, a coach.

When it comes to talking about driving, organizations such as [NOYS](#) (National Organizations for Youth Safety), [SADD](#) (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and [FCCLA](#) (Family Career and Community Leaders of America), which are led by adult professionals, are actively involved in facilitating initiatives with a strong peer-to-peer focus. These school-based programs are well received because the emphasis is on teens taking the lead, thereby minimizing the adult fingerprint. But there are other adults and organizations who can guide teens to make smart choices when it comes to their safety on the road.

This publication examines adults—other than parents—who have the opportunity to influence teen decision-making about driving. It showcases safe driving initiatives that were uncovered through discussion with a panel of experts, extensive telephone and online research, and a survey of State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) conducted by the [Governors Highway Safety Association](#) (GHSA) in March 2015. From teachers, coaches and police officers to doctors, lawyers and car and professional truck drivers, these other adult influencers have developed innovative teen safe driving programs and approaches that states and other stakeholders may be able to utilize to expand their reach to novice drivers. The report opens with a primer to help states and practitioners understand why and how to successfully partner with these other adult influencers. It also discusses what potential adult influencers need to know about teen safe driving to ensure they understand the extent and nature of the problem and become champions.

Special thanks to the [Ford Motor Company Fund](#) for providing funding for this report. Working in partnership with GHSA and its members since 2003, the [Ford Driving Skills for Life](#) (DSFL) program is positively influencing thousands of teen drivers throughout the U.S. By the end of 2015, Ford DSFL will have reached more than 150,000 teens and parents through its free, behind-the-wheel ride and drive training program and hundreds of thousands more through online education, school programs and safe driving campaigns in all 50 states and 32 countries. The reach and impact of the Ford DSFL program are included in this report.



Why Partner With Other Adult Influencers?

There is strength in numbers.

Many hands make light work.

Two heads are better than one.

When it comes to partnering, there are clear benefits. From more resources and greater credibility, to access to expertise and wider networks, a partner can bring these things and more to the table. Encouraging others to join in your teen driving effort can heighten its importance and prompt the public and your target audience to take notice. The partnership alone is unlikely to result in a reduction in teen crashes, but it can expand your reach and resources while helping you build a community of allies who are committed to helping teens survive their most dangerous driving years. (Those allies can also take the lead in calling for stronger GDL provisions should the opportunity present itself!)

The key is finding the right partner. Who are these individuals and entities who not only have the opportunity to reach teens, but also can do so in a manner that ensures the message is heard?

When there is a natural affinity between the target audience and the messenger—say a student athlete and his or her coach—what the latter is promoting can be hard to resist or ignore. Compiling a list of potential partners—people and organizations who work or interact with or provide a service or product to teens—is a good place to start.

As part of the GHSA survey conducted for this report, State Highway Safety officials were asked to review a list of adults and organizations that could potentially influence a teen's safe



driving choices and practices and select five that presented the greatest opportunity in their respective state (see the list to the right). Not surprisingly, police officers (84%) followed by driver education teachers (72%) were ranked one and two by the 32 states that responded to the survey. The fact that SHSOs already partner with police officers to address traffic safety issues, which may include teen driving, and driver educators already work directly with teens, make both a natural choice. Coaches came in third at 62%, followed by academic teachers at 40%, and club leaders and teen entertainment venues each at 31%. All have the opportunity to interact with teens on a regular basis.

POTENTIAL TEEN INFLUENCERS

Coaches (sports, dance, cheerleading)
Athletic Directors
Activity Advisors (band/music, speech/debate, theater, student government)
Teachers (academic)
Teachers (driver educators/trainers)
School Administrators
School Counselors
Religious Leaders/Educators
Physicians
Employers of Teens
Law Enforcement
Club Leaders (Scouting, 4-H, FFA, Boys/Girls Clubs, Fellowship of Christian Athletes)
Car Dealerships
Civic Organizations (Rotary, Lions, Jaycees)
Local Businesses
Teen Entertainment Venue (movie theaters, skate parks/rinks, miniature golf)
Media Organizations

How to Reach Out to Potential Partners

Identifying potential partners is easy. Getting them to commit, on the other hand, takes work. Before making contact with a potential partner, it is essential to consider what is in it for them and clearly describe the benefits to them. Will partnering with your state or organization to address teen driving help the individual or entity meet a particular safety, community service or other goal? Be prepared to identify that return on investment so that it is a win not just for your organization, but also for the influencer.

Next, do your homework. Check out the potential partner's website or annual report, talk to others who may know or have worked with the individual or organization to connect the dots between your aims and theirs. Find out if the influencer is a parent—particularly the parent of a teen driver—or employs parents of teens. Another approach to finding adult influencers is to examine related national organizations. Often these entities have state or local chapters that can help you find the contact for your state or community. The American Trauma Association, for example, has divisions in seven states. Getting in touch with one of the state divisions may open the door to developing a program with trauma professionals or leveraging an existing one that you may not know about.

Once you've identified the potential partner, getting your foot in the door can be difficult, but not impossible. If teachers or coaches are your target, identifying their immediate supervisor (a department chair or athletic director) or another entity (i.e., education association, high school sports governing body) that can make the introduction is the best place to start. But be prepared to meet at a time that is convenient for this key contact, since school schedules tend to be rigid.

If you are targeting a business entity, seek out the staff person most likely to share your goals. A safety or security officer, for example, may be more attuned to discussing teen driving than a community relations director. Remember, teen driving is a public health issue, so talking to someone in human resources may be more appropriate than marketing. However, if co-sponsoring advertising is your aim, the marketing manager will recognize the potential more readily than others.

Once you make contact with the potential partner, listen carefully to what is said. Then respond by taking into account the personal and organizational motivations articulated by that contact as well as their daily activities and operations. Matching opportunities to promote teen driving to what a person or organization does

naturally will keep them engaged. Bear in mind that although an organization may not have funds to support a teen driving initiative, it may be able to provide access to communications channels (such as websites, newsletters, or email lists), expertise (such as marketing advice, design services or planning) or other resources (such as an event or product) that can help convey your message. Think creatively about how to align the partner's assets to what you need to carry out your initiative.


Once the partner is on board, monitor what is being done to ensure the initiative or activity is meeting everyone's goals. Communicate regularly, ask for feedback regarding what is and is not working, and share media clips and other examples of how the initiative is creating visibility for them. Be sure to celebrate success and shower your partner with praise and recognition throughout the life of the relationship.

Most importantly, carefully evaluate the intervention that you undertake with your partner. If you are developing a new initiative, determine what you want to evaluate before building it. If, on the other hand, you are looking to support a potential partner's established program, ask not only how it is evaluated but also to see the results. Evaluation should be ongoing and assess whether a program is achieving the desired outcomes so that it can be tweaked or retooled as needed. Many programs fall short when it comes to this critical component because evaluation is not considered on the front end.

A common evaluation approach is a pre-survey or test that gauges the participants' current knowledge or practices prior to the start of the program and then a post-test at the conclusion to determine if their understanding increased and/or intentions

changed. This can be a simple, low-cost way to assess if the information provided is resonating with participants and possibly prompting future actions. It is important to note that a change in knowledge, beliefs and intentions is a helpful metric, but not a guarantee of the desired behavior change. Conducting an experimental study with follow-up surveys three and/or six months after the intervention to help confirm if it was lasting is a better way to gauge program outcome and impact.

Another method for evaluating a program's success is to compare specific program outcomes or data (i.e., crash, violations) for teens who participate in the intervention against teens who do not. Factoring the inclusion of a control group into the program as it is being built reaffirms the importance of thinking about evaluation at the onset, not late in the game, and ensures there is money in the budget for this important metric.



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What Do Adult Influencers Need to Know?

Adult influencers must have the facts about teen driving. They need to know the extent of the problem, who is most at risk, why teens have an increased crash risk, and what works. If they are new to the issue, it is a good bet they have limited knowledge, particularly when it comes to understanding why teens crash and how best to reduce that risk. While graduated driver licensing has been around since the mid-1990s, most adults are unfamiliar with the novice driver licensing system. Even parents with teen drivers admit to not understanding how GDL works (New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition, 2015).

Teen driving is complicated: there is a lot to know. That is why keeping it simple is important, particularly if you are trying to bring a new influencer into the fold. Boiling it down to a handful of **KEY FACTS** will ensure that you do not overwhelm a potential partner, while still giving them sufficient information to understand the problem. Once they are fully on board, sharing the latest data, new research findings and other information is appropriate, but check first before flooding their email inbox. To start, focus on the following:

KEY FACT: Car crashes are the number one killer of teens in the U.S. (and your state, if applicable).

(Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [CDC], 2012)

This fact is an attention grabber and should lead the conversation. However, if you opt to include your state, make sure it is accurate. In some states, car crashes are no longer the number one killer of teens, which is good news. However, it is likely that car crashes remain *one of* the leading causes of death for teens in your state. In 2013, 1,691 teen drivers were killed in the U.S.—that's four every day. Teen drivers account for less than 6% of licensed U.S. drivers, but were involved in 9% of all fatal crashes and 13% of all police reported crashes in 2013 (NHTSA, 2015a). Be armed with the most current numbers and share them with the influencer if they ask or seem reluctant to accept this fact.



KEY FACT: Teen drivers have the highest crash risk of any age group on the road and are three times more likely than drivers 20 and older to be involved in a fatal crash.

(Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 2012)

Many people incorrectly assume that senior drivers have the highest crash risk and rates, so be prepared to dispel that myth. If the influencer needs more information, let them know the risk is particularly high for teens during the first months of licensure and the death rate is nearly two times higher for teen male drivers and passengers than females (McCartt, Shabanova & Leaf, 2003; CDC, 2012). When teen passengers are in the vehicle, the crash risk increases exponentially—just one passenger increases the risk by 50%. Put three or more passengers in the vehicle and the risk is nearly four times greater (National Safety Council [NSC], 2009).

KEY FACT: Teens are not bad drivers, they are just inexperienced, and the part of the brain that controls decision making and judgment is not fully developed until the early to mid-twenties.

(Paus as cited in Shope, 2006)

People commonly point to texting and alcohol as the reason why teens crash. While many teens crash because of risk-taking, most crashes occur because the novice behind the wheel does not have the skills or experience to recognize a hazard and take corrective action. Driver error is the most prevalent reason for teen crashes, with inadequate scanning, driving too fast for conditions and distraction accounting for 50% of these incidents (Curry, Hafetz, Kallan, Winston & Durbin, 2011).

The teen brain is also at play here. As children progress from adolescence to adulthood, their bodies undergo significant physical and emotional change. From raging hormones and boundary pushing to new sleep patterns and expanded social lives, all this is happening when the vast majority of teens are learning to drive. These and other factors impact what happens when a novice gets behind the wheel. That can be problematic since the human brain is not fully developed until the early to mid-twenties, particularly the prefrontal cortex, where impulse inhibition, decision making and judgment are centered (Paus as cited in Shope, 2006).

Other factors that put teen drivers at risk include:

- **Driving at night**—Teens are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash at night, typically between 9 p.m. and midnight (NSC, 2009).
- **Driving drowsy or fatigued**—One in seven 16- to 24-year-olds fell asleep at the wheel at least once during the past year, compared with one in 10 older drivers (Arnold & Tefft, 2012). Teens need at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
- **Driving unbelted**—Teens have the lowest seat belt use rate compared to other age groups. In 2013, only 55% of high school students reported always wearing a seat belt when riding with someone else (CDC, 2014).
- **Driving after drinking**—Teens are less likely to drive after drinking than their parents, but alcohol remains a problem (Nichols, Haire, Solomon, Ellison-Potter & Cosgrove, 2011). In 2013, 24% of teen drivers killed in fatal crashes had blood alcohol content (BAC) levels of .08 or higher (NHTSA, 2015).
- **Driving too fast**—Nearly half of teens report driving much faster than the law allows (The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute [CHOP], 2012). This need for speed may stem from the brain development issue as speeding is a way to address teen thrill seeking.

KEY FACT: Share the percentage reduction in teen crashes attributable to your state's GDL.

If you do not have GDL impact data for your state, lead with this fact instead: ***Graduated driver licensing is a proven tool that is responsible for 20 to 40% reductions in teen crashes*** (Shope as cited in Williams, 2011). Once you share this fact, resist the urge to go through every nuance of your state's GDL law. It is complicated and may confuse the influencer, particularly if this is the first time they are hearing the term. Instead, start by pointing out that graduated driver licensing or GDL (be careful not to lead with the acronym) works because it gets to the heart of why teens crash and die on our roadways. It limits the number of passengers teens may have in their vehicles, prohibits late night driving and cell phone use, and requires everyone to buckle up. Your state's GDL law may have other provisions, but these are the ones that are shown to have a direct impact on reducing teen crash risk, injuries and fatalities.

If the influencer appears interested in learning more, point out that graduated driver licensing is in place in all 50 states and the year it took effect in your state. Next, explain that it's a three-step licensing process that includes a learner's permit or supervised practice stage, during which teens typically drive with their parents or another licensed adult driver; an intermediate license stage, during which teens can drive without supervision but with restrictions that address the key risk factors mentioned previously, including passengers and nighttime driving; and finally a full, unrestricted license stage.

Helping the influencer connect the dots between a particular restriction and the risk it is designed to address is important. But do not despair if the influencer does not have an "aha" moment during the initial conversation. It will likely take further education before they not only understand how it works, but also why. Once they do, identifying opportunities where they can promote GDL's proven value to teens can pay dividends.

► A Note About Driver Education

Once you've walked the potential influencer through these key points, he or she may ask *isn't this covered in driver's ed?* You need to be prepared to point out that completion of driver education and/or behind the wheel training is just the beginning of the learning process. And, depending on your state, formal driver education may no longer be offered or even required (so be sure to know what your state mandates).

Regardless of your state's licensing requirements, letting the influencer know that most driver education programs only cover the basics and that teens need further training, practice and guidance is critical. Researchers point to the need for novices to log at least 1,000 to 1,500 miles of driving, in a variety of conditions and on all types of roadways to experience a significant reduction in crash risk (NSC, 2009). It typically takes a teen three to five years to be exposed to a myriad of driving situations and to accumulate that kind of mileage. During that time, adult influencers can help teens by engaging them in discussion and activities that help them recognize potentially dangerous situations and react in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of key safe driving behaviors and principles (Goodwin, Margolis, Foss & Waller, 2010).

“Sorry, I’m Not Really Interested”— Overcoming Resistance

The GHSA survey also asked State Highway Safety officials to indicate if they have attempted to partner with this same list of potential adults and organizational influencers found on page 4 of this report. Once again, police officers (43%) and driver education (40%) teachers garnered the first and second spots. Academic teachers (28%) followed by media organizations (22%) and teen entertainment venues (19%) rounded out the top five. Fifteen percent of states also said they have attempted to partner with coaches, school counselors, physicians, and/or car dealers, followed by athletic directors, activity advisors, club leaders, and/or local business (all 12.5%).

Finally, the survey asked “if your SHSO attempted to educate and/or partner with any of these adults and/or organizations and was NOT successful, why?” *Lack of time* (44%) or *financial resources* (34%) on the part of the potential partner were the leading reasons followed by *couldn’t find the right person or other* (i.e., lack of time on the part of the SHSO, difficult to get into schools due to their schedule, agency priorities) both 16%. *Lack of interest in teen safe driving* was reported by just four states, which bodes well for the issue.

Overcoming these and other objections can be difficult, but not impossible. When it comes to addressing lack of time or

resources, the key is to help a potential partner identify how to incorporate teen driving into their daily routine without a significant investment of time or money. A car dealer, for example, could provide vehicle safety rating information to parents and teens shopping for their first new or used car. Pointing the dealer to resources like the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s [safety rating system](#) or the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety’s [top cars for teens](#) is a free and easy way to provide safety information while helping to bolster the business’ image. The latter is a “big deal for the industry,” said a state automobile trade group executive who added, “car dealers don’t exactly have the best reputation.”

Encouraging the dealership to host a teen car care clinic after hours in a service bay or offering to have a service or sales person speak to a driver education class about vehicle maintenance or how new vehicle safety features work to protect the driver in the event of a crash are other no or low cost ways to enlist their support. Another option is to ask a local dealer to make showroom or parking lot space available for a teen educational event. “Dealers are all about selling and servicing cars, so they’re looking for opportunities to build relationships and their customer base and get people into their showrooms,” the trade group executive noted.

Tapping Grants to Fund Teen Outreach

Dealers Driving Safety

Partnering with auto dealers to reach teens is a natural since they are looking to sell cars and most teens would love to own one. To sweeten the pot, the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Charitable Foundation will provide up to \$500 toward sponsorship of a safety event held at a dealership. Dubbed [Dealers Driving Road Safety grants](#), they can be used to promote teen safe driving as well as traffic safety programs in four other core areas: child passenger safety, distracted driving, rural road safety, and senior drivers.

“Dealers are very generous,” said a long-time auto dealer executive. “We’ll write a check for local charities and community organizations. But cause marketing, which isn’t charitable giving or advertising, is hard for dealers to grasp. The NADA grant program allows dealers to test drive the concept and do something good for the community while giving their image a shot in the arm. Many dealers, however, have no idea this program exists.”

Incentives for Schools

Are there other grant programs that can be leveraged to engage a potential partner? State Farm® and the Ford Motor Company Fund make grants funds available to address teen driving that can be used to engage other adult influencers. For example, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) has been using grant funds it receives from State Farm to provide \$500, no-strings-attached grants to school groups to encourage teens to tackle distracted and impaired driving. The program has sparked more than 325 high school-based, peer-led educational efforts throughout the state since it began in 2012.

Marijuana Conversations

Building on that success, WTSC is now using a \$25,000 *Ford Driving Skills for Life* grant (one of 46 grants awarded to SHSOs since 2008) to tap into established relationships with **school coaches, teachers, advisors, and parent volunteers** to promote teen/parent conversations about marijuana. (Washington is one of four states, along with the District Columbia, that have legalized marijuana for recreational use.)

Advisors who organize and execute the task of getting at least 30 parents and their 30 teens to have an educated conversation about marijuana will receive a \$300 stipend for their school program. To initiate the conversation, parents have the choice of reading a four-page conversation guide developed with guidance from the Washington Healthy Youth (WHY) Coalition, researchers at Children's Hospital of Seattle and the University of Washington, MADD, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) or watching a video developed with themes from this document. Both teens and parents also complete pre- and post-surveys to determine their baseline levels of awareness about the issue and to gauge their response to participating in the activity. To receive the stipend, the advisor must submit a signed statement to WTSC indicating that the activity has been accomplished, along with the completed surveys.

WTSC is using its network of school-based, teen safe driving champions and its relationship with the high school principals' association as well as word of mouth to promote the initiative. "Our goal is to partner with 66 school groups and reach at least 3,960 teens and their parents," said the WTSC official leading the program. "We need teachers, coaches and activity advisors to be brave and help us start a dialogue about marijuana. One in four high school seniors in our state are using marijuana and they think that, unlike alcohol, it doesn't impair their ability to drive."

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Tapping The Pulse

Like WTSC, the general manager (GM) and lead instructor of The Pulse, the student run, commercial-free radio station at East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) in Mesa, Arizona, is capitalizing on Ford DSFL grant funds to educate his students about teen driving. Members of the Ford DSFL team first toured the school in 2014, when they were interviewed by several media and technology students. Impressed by what they saw, Ford DSFL decided to support a free summer school program that would allow teens to earn half an elective high school credit in radio and multi-media production for creating public service announcements (PSAs) about teen safe driving. One hundred students in grades 9-12 went to work during two, 16-day sessions. The PSAs subsequently aired on The Pulse, which reaches 35,000 teens weekly.

Play PSA

EVIT's next opportunity to leverage Ford funds came later that year when the school captured first and third place in a high school distracted driving PSA contest sponsored by the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety through a Ford DSFL state grant. The awards were announced at a *ride and drive* event held in November in Phoenix, at which EVIT received \$4,000 in prize monies.

Ford DSFL also provided a \$5,000 grant to help defray the cost of airing student-produced teen safe driving PSAs in local movie theaters. The student volunteers worked with EVIT's multi-media and video teachers as well as the marketing director to develop the live action PSAs that began a 4-week, 5-day a week run on 87 theater screens, at a substantially discounted rate, in greater-Phoenix beginning in October 2015.

“Partnering with Ford DSFL allowed us to help our students gain valuable production experience while learning about an issue that directly affects them,” said the GM/instructor. “The added bonus is that we have the means to deliver the safe driving message to thousands of teens through the radio station and local theaters. Most high schools have audio and video production programs, so getting the teachers overseeing these program engaged in an effort like this is a natural.”

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Taking the Lead

The Ford Motor Company Fund also makes grants available for other teen safe driving and traffic safety initiatives. In 2008, it partnered with KDKA-TV, CBS Television in Pittsburgh, and Ohio-based Westfield Insurance to launch *Taking the Lead*. Based on the DSFL program and intended as a one year initiative, the program is still going strong today and has reached more than 22,200 newly licensed teens in Allegheny and surrounding counties in Western Pennsylvania.

During the program’s first year, 600 students were educated through a three day mini-camp. The following year, the partners developed an assembly program that is delivered to one high school a month throughout the school year. Entrée in the schools is facilitated with the help of adult influencers that include nurses, health educators, teachers, and administrators. The 60-minute presentation includes a video highlighting the four key driving

Video also available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLsG8P4ndtA>

skills teens address during a *ride and drive* event along with messaging about distraction. Information about the state’s GDL and other motor vehicle laws, as well as crash data are also discussed. A local mother also participates sharing her story about losing her teenage son in a distracted driving crash.

To further the school-based initiative’s reach, KDKA and sister station WPCW-TV, a CW affiliate, run a 9-month campaign that includes educational vignettes, seasonal messages, partner interviews, and an annual presence at the Pittsburgh International Auto Show. The value of the in-kind contribution is approximately \$175,000. Westfield Insurance, meanwhile, provides financial and informational support, including a \$3,000 grant to one school each year, and participates in every assembly.

“We initiated the program because of the numerous reports of teen crashes in our area,” said KDKA’s senior account executive. “That’s what led us to reach out to Ford Driving Skills for Life.

The partnership has blossomed into a unique, positive approach to reaching our youth. We hope that every teen walks away from the assembly with at least one piece of information that sticks with them...and changes their thinking when they get behind the wheel."

Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, Taking the Lead will launch in Sacramento and Atlanta. The California Office of Traffic Safety is partnering with KQVR-TV CBS and KMAX (CW), while the Georgia Governor's Highway Safety Office is working with WVPA CW69. Like their counterparts in Pittsburgh, these media professionals are working with adult influencers in schools and communities to bring the program to local teens.

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State Funding for Adult Influencers

Would your state make federal grant funds available to help an adult influencer reach teens? In New Jersey, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety (Division) is exploring using Section 402 funds to partner with the New Jersey Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (NJAHPERD) to help both entities reach the state's nearly 3,000 driver education professionals. Currently, NJAHPERD, through grassroots outreach conducted in collaboration with the New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition, regularly communicates with approximately 700 driver education teachers in schools across the state.

Partnering With Driver Education Teachers

"While we need to fulfill a newly enacted legislative mandate requiring the development of curriculum addressing aggressive driving, we want to partner with driver education teachers because they are working with our most at-risk drivers," said a Division official. "Working together, we can facilitate access to new resources and best practices that will enable them to help their students become better and safer drivers." Approximately 100,000 teens enter New Jersey's licensing system each year, and at least 90% or more of public high schools offer classroom driver education, which includes administering the written

licensing exam (B. O'Reilly, New Jersey Department of Education, personal communication, July 2015).

Educators welcome the support. "Driver education teachers want resources they can use to move beyond getting their students to pass the written licensing exam. Our goal is to teach skills—both mental and physical—that help teens make good choices when they're on the road," said a retired educator who is leading NJAHPERD's recently established Driver Education Committee. (To locate a similar organization in your state, contact [SHAPE America](#).) "Teachers need training to fully understand GDL as well as access to data that tells us why teens in our state are crashing. We want curriculum and tools that are meaningful and relevant to today's novice drivers. And we're open to new ways to engage teens in meaningful discussions about the responsibility that comes with licensure."

Currently, 23 states require the completion of driver education by all drivers under 18 years of age, while an additional six states require teens under 18 to complete a pre-licensing course or drug and alcohol awareness program (Thomas, Blomberg & Fisher, 2012). This presents an opportunity for states to partner with educators. States that are not currently doing so are, according to Oregon Division of Transportation Safety officials (ODOT), missing an opportunity to help get to zero fatalities. "We need to change the driving culture and focus on providing a good foundation

to teens so that we're not retraining them when they're in their 30's, 40's or 50's," said the agency's director. "Driver education and training is just as important as the other programs we fund." (It should be noted that driver education in Oregon is subsidized through a constitutionally dedicated transportation fund.)

The investment in Oregon has proved positive as teens that complete an approved Department of Transportation driver education course are found to have fewer crashes, convictions and suspensions compared to their peers who do not opt for training (Raymond, Johns, Golembiewski, Seifer, Nichols, & Knoblauch, 2007). A study of Nebraska teens that completed driver education reveals similar findings that include not only lower crash and violation rates as compared to their peers who did not complete formal training, but also reductions in convictions involving alcohol during the first two years of licensure (Shell, Newman, Cordova-Cazar, & Heese, 2015).

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Extending Driver Education's Reach

What if your state does not require teens to complete driver education as a pre-requisite for licensure or high schools no longer offer a program? Are there other school and community-based educators who can help extend driver education's reach? National 4-H seems to think so. For the first time, the nation's largest youth-based organization with a reach of six million, is empowering middle and high school students to explore the physics of motion and distracted driving in conjunction with its annual National Youth Science Day (NYSD) experiment held annually on the first Wednesday in October. More than 1,000 local events involving 7,000 adult volunteers and more than 70,000 youth are conducted on that day throughout the U.S.

The 2015 NYSD kit, *Motion Commotion*, was developed for 4-H by the Oregon State University Cooperative Extension and features a two-part experiment that tests a youth's knowledge of science, speed and safety. Students construct a simulated

Video also available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3idZLemTqkl>

runway to analyze the speed, momentum and kinetic energy of a car in motion and involved in a collision. They then use the same principles to demonstrate the consequences of distracted driving. Each kit includes all the materials needed to accommodate up to 10 youth. It costs \$21.95 and may be ordered from the 4-H website as long as supplies last.

“We select a new NYSD theme annually,” said 4-H’s national sponsorship manager, “however, we look for evergreen experiments that can be used year-round. How long the experiment is available depends on its popularity. While the 2015 kit engages youth in exploring the science of motion, it also ties in nicely with 4-H’s focus on healthy living, making it an interdisciplinary teaching tool. We expect it to be well-received because of its focus on safety and distracted driving.”



She went on to add that all of the “materials used in the kit can be found in a hardware store for under \$20.” It includes a facilitator guide along with five copies of the youth guide. “While science teachers are heavy users of the NYSD kit, general education teachers as well as YMCA’s, after-school programs, and other groups such as the Boy and Girl Scouts order it as well,” she added.

States interested in partnering with 4-H Clubs can use the locator on the national 4-H website or reach out to their respective state office or county-based Cooperative Extension. “4-H is under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but we’re much more than an Ag organization,” the national sponsorship manager pointed out. “Today’s 4-H focuses on science and math, healthy living, citizenship, and more. We’re interested in learning about other dynamic safety content and effective programs that we can share with youth. 4-H Clubs promote community involvement through experiential learning, so there is an army of kids who can help you champion a message.”

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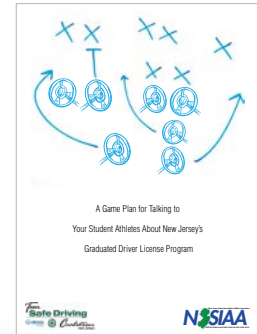
Building a Community of GDL & Teen Safe Driving Champions

GDL is first and foremost a parent program. It provides minimum standards, codified in state law that parents with teen drivers should not only enforce, but also seek to exceed. Research confirms that parents who set, monitor and enforce safe driving practices have teens that are less likely to crash and violate state GDL and other motor vehicle laws (CHOP, 2009). But any adult who comes in contact with a teen (licensed or not) has the opportunity to champion the proven provisions of graduated driver licensing. In fact, an adult working in a supervisory capacity with teens (i.e., coach, extracurricular activity advisor, Scout leader, employer) could potentially be held liable if he or she turns a blind eye when a novice driver fails to comply with the state's GDL requirements and subsequently crashes.



GDL Game Plan for Coaches

Such is the case in Southern New Jersey, where eight high school football players were involved in a single-vehicle, fatal crash at the conclusion of training camp in August 2011. The 17-year-old driver was holding a probationary license when he crashed on the Garden State Parkway, killing himself and three other teens in the vehicle. Four other teen passengers were injured. That prompted the New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition, a partnership of the National Safety Council (NSC) and The Allstate Foundation (TAF), to work with the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) to develop [A Game Plan for Talking to Your Student Athletes About New Jersey's Graduated Driver Licensing Program](#).



Dubbed the *GDL Game Plan* for short, the four-page document is the first in the nation expressly developed to help athletic

directors and coaches educate student-athletes about the proven principals of GDL. Along with information and statistics about how and why GDL works to reduce teen crash risk and a checklist for engaging teens, parents and fans, the document includes sample safe driving and GDL compliance language that can be included in a school's student-athlete code of conduct. In 2013, the nine other NSC/TAF-managed [teen coalitions](#) adopted the *GDL Game Plan* for use in their respective states (CA, FL, MD, MI, NY, OH, PA, TN, TX).

"It's our responsibility to help athletic directors and coaches protect student-athletes," said NJSIAA's long-time executive director who is also a former high school driver education teacher (Fischer, 2011). "When it comes to driving, we have to do everything we can to keep kids out of dangerous situations. Student-athletes have so much respect for their coaches and will listen to what they say and how they say it. That is why it is so important that the coaches are involved in this" (Monaghan, 2012; Fischer, 2011).

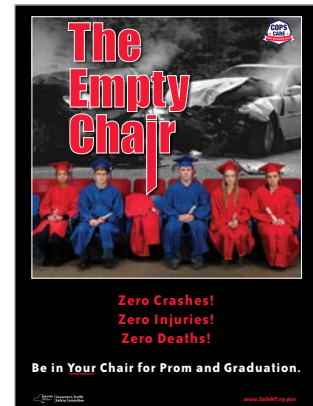
To promote the *GDL Game Plan*, the NJTSDC disseminates copies at state conferences and league meetings, and through outreach to principals and athletic directors. Training that can be adopted to fit a school's needs is also available for delivery at coaches meetings or as part of an in-service training. "Our goal is to reach all teachers with this training, not just coaches," pointed out the NJTSDC Leader. "Regardless of what extracurricular activity a student participates in—band, cheerleading, student government, drama—once that teen is behind the wheel or in the passenger seat, he or she is at risk."

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Coaches Care

Recognizing the influence coaches have on their student-athletes, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) in New York (that state's highway safety office) is developing the *Coaches Care* program for rollout during the 2015-2016 school year. The program builds upon GTSC's *No Empty Chair Cops* Care initiative launched in 2015, which provides police and school resource officers tools (i.e., posters, talking points) to help them educate teens about safe driving during prom and graduation season. *Coaches Care* will include a series of seasonal sports posters with teen safe driving messages. Coaches will be asked to display the posters in locker rooms, classrooms and high traffic areas in their schools. Information to help them understand the extent of the teen driving problem and New York's GDL requirements along with talking points to engage teens are also in development.



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Post-Game & Championship Opportunities

The Maryland and Connecticut Highway Safety Offices are also tapping into the popularity and reach of high school sports to influence teen driving behaviors. The Maryland Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office (MHSO) is using a \$20,000 Ford DSFL grant to host teen driving programs at four, large high schools located in counties in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metro areas. These no-cost events have activities that are directed to new drivers and their parents to educate them about alternatives to drinking and before and after high school football games. The events feature impaired and distracted driving games, a photo booth, simulators, and other fun activities with additional participation by local members of the community. Food, music and incentives are also provided at several of these events to create an exciting atmosphere.

"Each school has worked with us on logistics and outreach," said the MHSO official coordinating the program. "Working with the students and their local communities to identify partners and engage the schools is critical for making these events successful."

MHSO regional traffic safety program managers worked with school leads to identify and invite health departments, local colleges, law enforcement and other adults working in teen driving to join the effort. Extensive social media is used to promote the post-game events.

"We believe these events provide a tremendous opportunity for teens to interact with each other and experience what happens when they engage in high risk behaviors," said the MHSO official. "The difference is that we can help them experience the impact

of poor decision making in a safe environment rather than on the road where these decisions can potentially be deadly. Our mission is to get Maryland Toward Zero deaths; every life counts."

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The Connecticut Highway Safety Office (HSO), meanwhile, is partnering with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), that state's governing body for high school sports, to reach student-athletes as well as their peers and parents with key safe driving messages at state championship events across the state. (To identify the high school sports governing body in your state, contact the [National Federation of State High School Associations](#).)

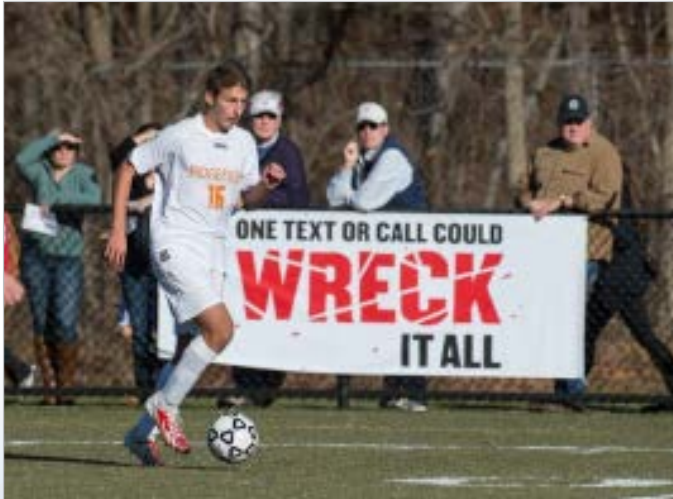
The relationship was not, however, prompted by the desire to be visible at sporting events, but to find a way to get the HSO distracted driving program into every high school in the state starting in 2012.

"We needed a way in and CIAC, which works closely with high school principals and superintendents through the Connecticut Association of Schools, helped make that happen," said the HSO program manager. "While we were talking about how to do that, we learned about this other opportunity to reach teens during the



school year through sports. When a high school team makes it into the state tournament, thousands come out to cheer them on. We're not only reaching the teens on the competing teams, but their friends, family members and the community. Everyone turns out."

For an investment of \$50,000, the HSO conveys distracted driving, seat belt and impaired driving messages at 60 tournament and championship events that reach over 100,000 student-athletes and more than 250,000 fans. The sponsorship includes signage (such as banners, LED boards and Jumbotrons), PA announcements and print ads in the championship program along with the distribution of safety-message t-shirts. The HSO also receives vendor space and the option to do on-site promotions at every event and to participate in pre-championship



press conferences, which include the opportunity to address the student-athletes and coaches. CIAC also gives the HSO additional exposure to athletic directors, coaches and principals through an article in its monthly *News Blast*, school mailings and on its website.

"We're spending less than \$1,000 per event, plus receiving another \$45,000 in bonus exposure," said the CT HSO program manager. "We're getting our message into every community, which is a home-run in our book." CIAC concurs. "We're very careful about who we partner with and this is one of our best relationships," said the non-profit's sponsorship manager. "It's a great message that's not just reaching the team members, but also their friends and families. That's a win-win as far as we're concerned."

CT HSO and CIAC officials are now exploring opportunities to take the partnership to a new level. "Our executive director, who is a former principal, believes you can never push home these safety messages too often," said the CIAC manager. "We want to help CT HSO reach more teens and have the capacity to do that through our relationship with the Athletic Directors Association, our coaching education program and other activities."

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Learning from the Pros

When it comes to reaching teens with a safe driving message, getting access is just one part of the equation. Who delivers the message is even more important.

UPS Road Code

Take the [UPS Road Code](#) program, a partnership between the UPS Foundation and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), which has reached more than 20,000 teens 13-18 years of age in the U.S. (The program is also offered in four other countries but not in partnership with BGCA). Based on the same methods used by UPS drivers who are recognized for their safe driving techniques, the program features a combination of engaging classroom instruction, games, videos, and virtual driving simulation taught by UPS employee volunteers.

“Our drivers are trained from day one to eat, sleep and drink safety,” said the UPS manager overseeing the UPS Road Code program. “Many who lead the program come into a Boys and Girls Club wearing their brown uniform that has the Circle of Honor patch on the sleeve [presented to drivers with 25 years or more of safe driving]. They’re rock stars to these teens and share stories from their experience on the road.”

The volunteers use four interactive modules, two of which focus on helping teens develop safe driving skills that are practiced every day by 102,000 UPS drivers, who log more than 3 billion miles a year and average less than one Department of Transportation recordable crash per million miles traveled. Teens review a 10-point commentary for defensive driving, which includes techniques ranging from constantly scanning the road and maintaining adequate space between your vehicle and others on the road, to making eye contact with drivers and checking your mirrors every 5-8 seconds. The other modules address the CDC’s Eight Danger Zones for teens—driver inexperience, passengers, nighttime driving, seat belts, distraction, drowsy driving, reckless driving, and impaired driving—and graduated driver licensing (BGCA, 2015). The program was reviewed by the CDC and the curriculum was revised to reflect the researchers’ recommendations.

Teens then practice what they learn on driving simulators



“Having simulators at each Club allows teens to continue to practice what they learn after they finish the program.”

that are equipped with a computer screen that serves as the windshield to the program’s interactive animation, a steering wheel, gas pedal, and brake. Each Club has two simulators which were purchased by BCGA through a grant from The UPS Foundation. “Having simulators at each Club allows teens to continue to practice what they learn after they finish the program,” said UPS’ Road Code program manager. “It also helps our volunteers drive home the message about distraction. Teens pride themselves on being able to multitask, but when they use the simulators they see they can’t do it.”

The program is currently available at [52 Boys & Girls Clubs](#) in cities across the U.S. The Clubs were selected based on their ability to support the program and high teen population, as well as their proximity to UPS volunteers. Motor vehicle crash data were also factored into the selection. For example, the program is offered at a Club in Jacksonville, Florida, which has the highest teen fatality rate in the U.S. according to data provided to UPS by the CDC.



The goals of the program are not only to teach teens safe driving techniques, but also to encourage them to drive change. “The majority of the teens in the program are not licensed, giving us a golden opportunity to lay a solid foundation and show them the consequences of adopting bad habits,” said the UPS executive. “It appears to be working. Not only are the pre- and post-assessments showing a change in teen knowledge, but they’re talking to their parents about what they learn and bringing them into the Club to observe the UPS Road Code program.”

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Teens & Trucks

For professional truck drivers, the road is their workplace and safety is priority one. So when the data indicated that teen and young adult drivers 16 to 25 years of age were involved in more than a quarter of the fatal crashes involving cars and large trucks, the commercial vehicle safety community knew it had to act (NHTSA, 2008). Working collaboratively, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, the Arizona Trucking Association and the Arizona Department of Public Safety developed the *Teens & Trucks* program to educate novice drivers about how to share the road with large rigs and buses. The list of partners has since expanded to include the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), FedEx and state trucking associations nationwide. The latest teen/truck crash data suggests progress is being made—the rate of teen involved car/truck fatal crashes has fallen from 26% in 2007 to 17% in 2013 (NHTSA, 2015b; NHTSA, 2008).

The key components of the program are a tool kit designed to help state and local entities organize and promote educational events where teens have the opportunity to interact with and learn from professional drivers and educational materials (lesson plan, student workbook, tip sheet and video) which can be used by teachers and others working with teens in a classroom setting. All are free and may be downloaded from the [CVSA website](#).

In Tennessee, the state's Trucking Foundation is working to conduct *Teens & Trucks* safety presentations across the state. It is a featured program of the *Reduce TN Crashes* campaign, which uses an interactive Web-portal to encourage schools to conduct teen safe driving activities and be rewarded for that effort. During the presentation, novice drivers learn from professional big rig drivers about the importance of staying out of a truck's blind spots and giving them plenty of space when turning. They review

the *No Zones*, safe following distances and how it takes trucks longer to stop due to their size and weight. Several large trucks may be on-site so that teens can climb into the cab to get a trucker's perspective of the road.

Video also available online at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQjVCHm8qWc#t=2>

"Putting a teen behind the wheel of a big rig is very powerful," said CVSA's former Executive Director. "It gives them an entirely new perspective on what it means to share the road with these vehicles. The professional drivers love it because they can engage teens in a conversation about what they're experiencing. They're particularly concerned about distraction and point out that drivers on cell phones are the single most dangerous thing they see on the road every day."

Schools and communities that host a *Teens & Trucks* event are encouraged to integrate a variety of traffic safety issues into the discussion. "We've had events where there are impaired driving demonstrations, seat belt convickers, driving simulators," noted the CVSA Executive. "Engaging many partners makes the program more robust and relevant to teens. Every state has a trucking association and they will help along with state FMCSA representatives and FedEx."

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Ride & Drives

It has been 12 years since the Ford Motor Company Fund and GHSA joined forces to develop the *Driving Skills for Life* (DSFL) program. During that time, the program has grown from a handful of state events to include an interactive online training component, numerous highly successful grant-funded community based initiatives, an expanded curriculum that includes distracted and alcohol and drug impaired driving, and international outreach. The cornerstone of the program, however, remains the signature *ride and drive* events, which provide permitted or licensed teen drivers the opportunity to get free, hands-on training in a safe, controlled environment with professional instructors who have extensive experience as driving coaches, race car owners and/or drivers. Ford Motor Company Fund has invested more than \$30 million in this program to support teen safe driving.

Conducted on a closed course using vehicles provided by Ford, the training focuses on key areas that are critical factors in more than 60% of vehicle crashes: hazard recognition, vehicle handling, and speed and space management. By the end of 2015, Ford DSFL will have offered hands-on training in all 50 states, including its first-ever Summer Driving Camp for teens. The six state tour (ND, IA, NE, SD, WI, WY) gave more than 1,500 teens the opportunity to participate in four, half-day sessions. (The tour is traveling to WV, MA, CT, IN, NJ, AZ and HI in the fall of 2015.) Each event covered the full Ford DSFL curriculum and included an expanded discussion about impaired driving through the use of a special driving suit and goggles that mimic the effects of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs (GHSA, 2015). Teens were also challenged by their professional instructors to try and safely drive and text on the closed course—a feat they discovered is impossible to do.

Video also available online at <https://youtu.be/213GBOW10gM>



The program gets rave reviews from both teens and parents. “My favorite part was the Mustangs of course,” said one teen participant, “but it was...an eye opener to the effects of distractions while driving and driving impairment. Thank you for this awesome experience” (Ford DSFL, 2015). Other teens and their parents, who are also encouraged to attend and participate with their new driver, have voiced similar enthusiasm for the DSFL program. “My daughter...continues to use what she learned [from the program],” wrote one parent. “The weather has been crazy...here and...brought out less skilled drivers. [My daughter] told me of a near accident and then she screamed at the top of her lungs THANK YOU FORD DRIVING SKILLS FOR LIFE” (Ford DSFL, 2015).

Anyone can request that the program come to their area for a stand-alone event or as part of another teen initiative by visiting www.drivingskillsforlife.com and completing the contact form. Teen safe driving stakeholders can also contact their SHSO to discuss partnership opportunities.

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Teaching Street Survival

Like the DSFL program, the nonprofit, Tire Rack *Street Survival* school provides teens the opportunity to obtain hands-on training from professionals and car enthusiasts who have logged countless miles on the road and on the track. However, teens drive their own cars during the day-long training, which is held at community-based sites around the country.

“Our program is unique because of the vehicle requirement and our coaches,” the school’s national program manager. “What a teen learns in one vehicle doesn’t always translate to another, so it’s important that they complete our program in the car they drive the most.”

The coaches, meanwhile, are all volunteers who are either driver training instructors or car enthusiasts that have been exposed to all levels of car control techniques (Street Survival, 2015). “They’re amazing and we wouldn’t be where we are without them,” he pointed out. “But getting them to help isn’t a hard sell. They do this because they’re car people who care and want to pass on their skills and knowledge to help save teens’ lives. Sometimes they have a personal attachment—they may have lost a teen or know someone who did—but most just give of their time because they want to.

“We do ask a lot of them,” he added. “All of our volunteers who are instructing either in the classroom or in-vehicle participate in online training to help them take what they know about driving and convey it in a way that relates to teens. Plus, they may be asked to help coordinate logistics, recruit additional volunteers and bring in other partners (i.e., a semi-tractor to educate teens about driving around big trucks). In return, we give them our thanks and a t-shirt.”



Now in its 13th year, the Street Survival school consists of three classroom components that last approximately 2.5 hours. Teens learn about the basics such as proper seating position, mirror placement and where to grip the wheel (the latter may include exploding an airbag to reinforce the importance of hand placement), as well as the concept of their tires’ contact patch, the theory of weight transfer, using long distance vision, and situational awareness. Distraction is addressed with a focus not only on cell phones, iPods or the radio, but also other teen passengers (Street Survival, 2015). The local host (typically a car club) also reviews the provisions of that state’s graduated driver license program.

The teens spend the remainder of the day in their vehicles working with the coaches (one coach for every two students). They are put through a series of exercises based on real-world driving scenarios that address skid control, lane change/

crash avoidance maneuvers, braking, and weight transfer. Where possible, the teens also do two wheels off and tailgating exercises (Street Survival, 2015). The program is held at a location that has both indoor classroom space (tents have been used) and a large parking lot such as a sports stadium, community college, office complex, abandoned shopping mall, or decommissioned airport runway.



The cost to participate is \$75 and includes all instruction as well as lunch. “We’re grateful for our sponsors (Tire Rack, Michelin, Enterprise, BMW Car Club of America), since we lose money on every school,” the program manager confided. He also indicated that while the program is for teens, parents are welcome and invited to sit in on the classroom component. In fact most teens participate because a parent heard about the program and signed them up.



“We tend to work with teens that have been licensed for a while, but don’t see the point of being there,” he said. (Teens with a permit may attend as long as they have held their permit for at least half of the minimum time required by the state and logged at least 25 hours of practice driving [Street Survival, 2015].) “After the first driving session, however, they figure out it’s not what they thought it would be and really get on board.”

Teens and parents are asked to evaluate the program immediately after its conclusion as well as complete an online survey 10-12 weeks later to gauge the school’s impact on the former’s driving habits and behavior. According to the national program manager, the survey responses indicate that “75% of the graduates haven’t been involved in an incident (i.e., crash) since completing the training, but of those who were, 82% were not at-fault.”

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Cops Influencing Teens



Stopping and citing a teen for a GDL violation sends a strong message to a novice driver, his or her parents and others in the community that police take the law seriously. But law enforcement officials will tell you they would much rather educate a teen than write a ticket. The end game, noted one long-time law enforcement official, is to convey to teens the awesome responsibility that comes with licensure so they think twice before doing something that can endanger themselves, their friends or others on the road. “I educate every chance I get and write a ticket if warranted,” he said. “The last thing I want to do is have to knock on a front door and deliver the news no parent wants to hear.”

Survival 101 & 16 Minutes

From coast to coast, police officers are actively involved in initiatives designed to engage teens in discussions about safe driving. In Pennsylvania, for example, the county-based Community Traffic Safety Programs (CTSPs) are working with local law enforcement officials to present two powerful programs to high school students. *Survival 101: A Student's Guide to Staying Alive*, is designed to engage middle and high school students in a discussion about critical traffic safety topics including seat belt use and impaired, distracted and drowsy driving. A curriculum provides a step-by-step guide that allows officers to draw from

their personal experiences which often include dealing with teen crashes and fatalities. Multi-media tools are also incorporated into the program making for a dynamic, hard-hitting presentation.

The other program, *Sixteen Minutes of Your Life*, involves a one-on-one or small group meeting between a police officer and a student(s) who is turning 16 and soon to be driving. The discussion, which lasts 16 minutes, focuses on the consequences of unsafe behaviors and provides an opportunity for the teen to speak with a police officer in a non-threatening setting.



The impact of both programs is evaluated through the distribution of pre- and post-surveys. Materials are also left behind to promote further discussion among teens and their families.

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In California, the Highway Patrol's (CHP) public information officers receive training from *Impact Teen Drivers* (ITD), an evidence-based program that uses teen-targeted videos, interactive materials, presentations, social media, and other messaging to empower teens to protect themselves and their friends when they are on the road. They annually review the latest teen safe driving research focusing on distracted driving and the state's GDL, the importance of understanding teen culture and trends, how to use ITD's bedrock teen program, *What Do You Consider Lethal (WDYCL)?*, as well as other community and school-based resources including social norming campaigns. CHP receives grant funds from the California Office of Traffic Safety to facilitate the program in high schools and communities across the state.

To date, ITD has reached more than 2 million high school students in California and nationwide. The ITD team has also provided training to police officers, educators, SADD and 4-H Chapter advisors, injury prevention and traffic safety program

representatives, university staff, statewide coalition members, and SHSO officials in 21 other states.

WDYCL has been evaluated by observational surveys, which found improvements in behaviors shown to impact teen crash risk. Additionally, changes in teen attitudes and behaviors are measured through pre- and post-surveys, which consistently show increased knowledge and improved behaviors among program participants.

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StreetSafe

Police officers are also the driving force behind the North Carolina-based *StreetSafe*, a hands-on driving program for teens. While the program got its start in Wilmington in 2006, as a solution to a preventable community problem, it has since expanded to include 24 counties. A cadre of 200 police officers, EMS and firefighters, who know too well the tragic consequences of unsafe driving, are trained to deliver the program through ten regional teams.

"The number one reason for our success is our instructors," said the StreetSafe Director. "We don't just pick anyone. We have first responders who can take off the badge and uniform and are real people who are able to relate to and engage teens. They legitimately care about our students."

Video also available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTiT_JMFSI

Video also available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBndBM2zfrg>

During the 4.5 hour program (one is conducted every Saturday), which includes a combination of hands-on driving exercises and interactive discussions, teens experience what it's like to lose control of a car on wet pavement, how to determine a realistic stopping distance and recognize the hazards of driving near a tractor trailer, the dangers of distraction, and the importance of buckling up while sitting in both the driver and passenger seat. They also engage in an eye-opening conversation with crash investigation and impaired driving experts to get them thinking about the consequences of their decisions and actions when they are behind the wheel (StreetSafe, 2015).

Parents are involved in the program as well and given tools to help them keep their teens safe behind the wheel (teens younger than 18 must be accompanied by a parent). Local judges volunteer their time to explain the critical role parents play in monitoring and fully understanding the risks their new drivers face, while area insurance executives explain the requirements associated with insuring a teen.

Two versions of StreetSafe are provided. One, dubbed the *Traffic Court Driving Program*, is tailored to teens that have received a citation and are given the opportunity by the courts to participate in return for a reduced sentence or dismissal. The other, the *Lifesaving Driving Experience*, is for families seeking additional training for their novice driver. "Ninety percent of the teens we work with come to us through the courts," noted the StreetSafe Director, "But it's not uncommon for a family that's had a teen come through the court program to enroll the teen's younger siblings once they start driving."

The fee to participate is \$110 for the Traffic Court program and \$30 for the Lifesaving Driving Experience. "That fee doesn't begin to cover what it costs to run the program," noted the Director. However, "we never want the fee to be a problem. We're grateful to our sponsors and others in the community who recognize the value of the program and contribute annually."

The program received a FY2015 grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) and also operates a separate high school program with support from State Farm®. "We like the model and think it's a novel approach to addressing teen crashes," said a GHSP official. "When they started the program in Johnston County, they combed through the crash reports and went to the crash sites to identify the root cause of these incidents. That research drives what skills are addressed in the program."

GHSP is also funding an evaluation of the program by the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center (UNC HSRC). The first phase involved observing the intervention at multiple locations coupled with an assessment of the participants' opinions of the program and its influence on their understanding of the potential dangers of risky driving behaviors. Ninety-four percent or more of the teens not only gave the program high marks, but also showed increased understanding of the risks associated with driving after drinking, tailgating, using a cell phone while driving, taking turns too fast, and not using a seat belt. Phase two will include examining program participants' crash records and comparing them to a randomly assigned group of non-participants (UNC HSRC, 2013).

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STOP

Solicitor. Teen. Officer. Parent. (STOP) is an award-winning, free teen safe driving program developed by the Johns Creek (Georgia) Police Department and Municipal Court to reduce the disproportionate number of teen crashes and repeat violators in the community. A suburb of Atlanta, the city was incorporated eight years ago and is the tenth largest in the state. Since it was launched six years ago, the program has reached thousands of teens in Johns Creek and surrounding towns in Fulton and neighboring counties.



The program has both mandatory (driver intervention) and voluntary modules. Teen violators 17 to 20 years of age may be ordered by the city solicitor or municipal judge to participate in the mandatory module as a condition of probation or through an agreement with the prosecutor. (Any individual 20 years of age or younger that receives a traffic citation is required to appear in court.) Participation may result in the teen's offense being reduced to a non-moving violation or fine only. All Johns Creek High School students seeking a parking permit are also required to attend a STOP presentation, which is held in the school auditorium. Parents are encouraged, but not required, to participate.

The 90-minute presentation is conducted at least monthly for an average of 50-100 teens and covers the state's GDL requirements including Joshua's Law (driver education mandate), ways to legally lose your license, the high fatality rates among young drivers and their passengers, why teens crash and Caleb's

Law, which prohibits the use of cell phones while driving. The legal aspects are covered by the town's Chief Judge, while the teens review the remaining information with a police officer, who is there as part of the job.

"This isn't something I have to do; I do it for the betterment of the community," noted the Johns Creek Police Sergeant who developed and regularly facilitates STOP. "That comes through in how I and the other officers relate to the teens. We try to make the program as interactive as possible so they get more out of it. It's not threatening, but more of an emotional roller coaster that's designed to get them thinking about their actions and the consequences. The judge talks about the genesis of Joshua's and Caleb's Laws, pointing out that it's never a good thing to have a law named after you. We also give them scenarios such as a dad with two kids is hit and killed on the side of the road by a teen driver who was texting. How much

prison time would you give him? What if you were the driver? It really gets these kids thinking."

Is it having an impact? "No teens have died in our community since we started the program," said the police sergeant, who added that was not the case prior to STOP's launch. "I keep doing it because I think we're getting results," added the Chief Judge. "Teens come into the program not knowing the law or what could prompt a license suspension. I talk about what I've seen both as a judge and an attorney dealing with teens who have killed their friends or families that have lost a loved one. We're helping them understand the ramifications of their actions and that's resulting in fewer repeat offenders."

Both agree that the program is successful because of broad community support. "It takes work, that's for sure," said the Chief Judge. "You need the clerks, prosecutors and elected officials to be on board." The police sergeant also pointed out that there are no program sponsors nor are they looking to make money or gain recognition for the initiative. "We've had others approach us about sharing our lesson plan, but we're careful who we give it to. If they want to follow our model, we'll work with them. But this isn't a profit-making venture and we won't help turn it into one."



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Attorneys Dedicated to Saving Lives



Joel Feldman and Kurt Larson never expected to be working in teen driving, but these adult influencers are using their respective experience as trial lawyers and parents to reach thousands of young people annually with a lifesaving message. Feldman turned telling the sad story of the loss of his 21-year-old daughter, Casey, to a distracted driver into an interactive, fun and impactful presentation that is changing teens' attitudes and behaviors about distracted driving. Larson, meanwhile, was determined to take the real stories of victims he represented as a result of drunk driving and use them to save his own and other teenagers' lives.

EndDD

Feldman's [End Distracted Driving Awareness Initiative](#) (EndDD) is sponsored by the Casey Feldman Foundation and delivered by a network of more than 700 volunteer speakers, many of whom are trial lawyers, who have collectively volunteered thousands of hours to this cause. "Trial attorneys across the country have enthusiastically endorsed this effort," said Feldman. "They're sympathetic to the cause...and good communicators, and their passion for saving lives comes through clearly to teens. I can't think of any group better suited to deliver safety messages in

communities across the country than trial lawyers. Their volunteer efforts have been praised by educators, law enforcement, safety advocates, and employers." The EndDD.org campaign continues to expand its network of speakers and is now one of the largest volunteer efforts ever conducted by attorneys.

Using a PowerPoint presentation and script that Feldman developed with researchers at the Center for Injury Research & Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), psychologists and teen safe driving experts, attorneys, nurses, physicians, educators, and other adults working with teens use facts, emotion and humor to deliver a powerful message. Teens learn what distraction is and engage in a discussion about its various forms, not all of which are illegal. The presentation is designed not to be confrontational. Teens are surprised when facilitators admit they had often driven distracted themselves and do not lecture or tell them what to do, but rather ask for their help solving what is not just a teen problem.

Humorous and tragic videos are used to convey how lives are impacted by the decision to drive distracted. Teens are asked to reflect on their own driving behaviors and to commit to taking specific steps to drive safer by formulating a distraction-free driving



plan. Role play and interactive exercises are also used to give teens the confidence to intervene with a friend or family member so that they become advocates for changing the driving culture.

The program has reached more than 275,000 teens and adults in 44 states and several Canadian Provinces. It is evaluated through pre- and post-surveys that examine the adoption of key behavioral objectives. Data obtained to date indicates that the program is having an impact. Teens are talking with their parents about distracted driving and agreeing that it is okay to speak up when they observe unsafe actions in the car.

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Oakcrest High School Distracted Driving Presentation
Video also available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeHSLKIFXSI>

Safe and Sober

Kurt Larson's *Missouri Safe and Sober* program got its start in 2004 in five Springfield high schools with 748 participating students and has since expanded to reach more than 127,000 teens in 291 middle and high schools in 2015 (there are approximately 600 public high schools statewide). Borrowing from a safe and sober prom night initiative developed by a North Carolina attorney, Larson adapted the program to give middle and high school students along with their parents and teachers the information they need to prevent underage drinking and drunk driving. By properly educating teens and their parents about the criminal, civil, personal, and emotional consequences of consuming alcohol, the program seeks to encourage safe choices now and as teens transition to adulthood (Missouri Safe and Sober [MS&S], 2015).

The program includes high school, middle school and parent components. The cornerstone of the high school program is a video presentation that discusses the consequences of underage drinking and how it can change a teen's life. Teens view it during a school assembly and are then invited to take a pledge to remain safe and sober until they turn 21. Many of the high schools combine the program with other teen safe driving activities during the school year. Larson, who has practiced law since 1992 and represents families devastated by crashes caused by drivers under the influence, visits many of the schools to talk with students to help them avoid making an irreversible mistake.

The middle school program features a video geared specifically to this age group that addresses the misconceptions many students have about the peer pressure to use alcohol and drugs when they get to high school. The program is often led by older teens who have taken the pledge. They dispel the myth that everyone drinks and reinforce that it is okay not to. The parent video highlights the dangers and consequences of underage drinking with a particular focus on alcohol's effect on brain development. It also includes information to help parents set limits and expectations for their teens about underage drinking. Schools post the video on their website and show it at parent orientation meetings.

To encourage school participation, *Safe and Sober* annually obtains a list of principals from the Department of Education and then contacts them via email and phone. "We literally start at zero every year," said *Safe and Sober's* Director. "We do a Facebook campaign targeting middle and high school counselors and principals, and go to education conferences. We let school officials know the program is turnkey—everything they need to participate comes in a box."



The image shows a 'Take the Pledge' form for the Missouri Safe and Sober program. The form has a header with the title 'MISSOURI SAFE AND SOBER' and a logo. On the left, the words 'TAKE THE PLEDGE' are written vertically in a large, stylized font. The main text reads 'I pledge to be Safe and Sober!' followed by 'This means starting today: (check all that apply to you)'. There are five checkboxes with corresponding text: 'I will not drink until I am at least 21 years old', 'I will not drink throughout high school', 'I will not drink this school year', 'I will never drink and drive', and 'I will not use drugs'. Below these is a line for 'Student Name' with a grid of checkboxes for grade levels: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Sixth Grade, Seventh Grade, and Eighth Grade. There is a line for 'Student Signature' and a 'Like' button. At the bottom, there are two website URLs: 'www.facebook.com/safeandsobermo' and 'www.missourisafeandsobers.com'. The form is decorated with a floral and star pattern on the right side.

MISSOURI SAFE AND SOBER

TAKE THE PLEDGE

I pledge to be Safe and Sober!

This means starting today:
(check all that apply to you)

☐ I will not drink until I am at least 21 years old

☐ I will not drink throughout high school

☐ I will not drink this school year

☐ I will never drink and drive

☐ I will not use drugs

☐ I will encourage my friends to stay Safe and Sober

Student Name

☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior
☐ Sixth Grade ☐ Seventh Grade ☐ Eighth Grade

Student Signature

[Like](#)

www.facebook.com/safeandsobermo
www.missourisafeandsobers.com

Surprisingly, Larson noted that it has not been difficult to get into the schools. “They’ve embraced the program and view what we’re providing as a fun and interactive way to talk to students about alcohol. The pledge makes for healthy competition in and between schools, and prompts dinner table conversation.”

While Larson’s law firm dedicates significant time and resources to further the *Safe and Sober* mission, he admits that he is not able to do it alone. The program has received a grant from the State Highway Safety Office since 2012. It is also funded through community partners, including a local bank and an automotive retailer. “It has been a slow growth process that has taken a good deal of work,” Larson admits. “I worked with the key contacts that monitor the program and regularly update them on our progress. As the program’s outreach and impact have grown, so has the financial support.”

While Safe and Sober is not formally evaluated, Larson indicated that the average pledge rate among teens in the schools where the program is implemented is 62% and 56 schools in 2015 had a 70% or greater pledge rate in 2015. Work is underway to develop a comprehensive evaluation strategy including a pre- and post-survey that would be administered before and after the video presentation to assess the program’s impact on behavior. In the meantime, Larson said that he frequently interacts with college students who tell him that because of the program they made a commitment to stay alcohol-free when they were in 9th grade and have honored their pledge.

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Trauma Professionals Working to Prevent Teen Crashes

RED

Like first responders, trauma doctors and nurses know all too well the tragic consequences of motor vehicle crashes, particularly those involving novice drivers. That prompted medical professionals at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (CHP @ UMPC) to develop the *Reality Education 4 Drivers* (RED) curriculum in 2001. The goal of RED is that no young driver is admitted to an emergency room because of a motor vehicle crash. Now conducted in hospitals across the nation, RED includes facilitated discussion with trauma and injury prevention professionals along with a path of injury tour to drive home to teens the potential consequences of engaging in unsafe behaviors behind the wheel.

RED got its start in Texas at Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Medical Center in 2008 and went statewide with support from the Highway Safety Office in 2011. Today, eight hospitals offer the 6-hour program 42 times a year at no cost to teens and their parents. The program targets three key behaviors: seat belt use, distraction and impairment, with a particular emphasis on marijuana use.

The program begins in a classroom, where an injury prevention specialist talks about the key risk factors for teens, the effects of alcohol and other drugs on the ability to safely operate a vehicle, and crash dynamics. "We employ a public health education model that promotes adoption of safe behaviors," said Baylor Scott & White's injury prevention coordinator. "First, we talk about the unsafe behavior and the consequences associated with doing it. Then we offer an alternate behavior and engage teens in a discussion about their ability and willingness to adopt it."

Teens then tour the trauma center while their parents participate in the *Your Children are Watching You* workshop which emphasizes the critical role parents play in influencing their teen drivers. Parents review Texas' GDL law, parent-teen driving agreements and other strategies proven to reduce teen-involved motor vehicle crashes. "Since 70% of the teens who participate in RED are referred by the courts or a school disciplinary body, many of their parents are exasperated and don't know what to



do,” pointed out the injury prevention coordinator. “Many, quite frankly, haven’t done much. Only about a third know anything about GDL, so we hit that particularly hard.”

For the teens, the second half of the program is designed to give them a dose of reality as they tour the various parts of the hospital likely to treat a motor vehicle crash victim. At CHP @ UPMC, for example, the teens start their tour by visiting the Physical Therapy Department. Each is assigned an injury and instructed to deal with the limitation it imposes during their time in the hospital. Some are fitted with immobilizing devices, while others are confined to wheelchairs or must use crutches. In some cases, the assigned injury prevents a teen from eating or speaking.

Next, teens visit the Emergency Department, where one is chosen to be an arriving crash victim. The staff walks the teens through a level one simulation that includes not only treating the patient, but also notifying family members. In the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), doctors and nurses discuss the care given to motor vehicle crash victims. Since the setting is an active ICU, teens often have the opportunity to interact with parents and patients who candidly share their life-altering stories. The program is also offered in Pennsylvania at the Penn State University Hershey Medical Center.

Both the Pennsylvania and Texas programs conclude with a tour debrief and a presentation by a victim advocate who has either lost a teen or is living with the consequences of being involved in a novice-driver crash. The Texas program is evaluated through a pre- and post-survey, developed by Baylor University, that examines attitudinal and behavior change. Additionally, participants are incentivized to take a follow-up survey 90 days after completing the program. The CHP @ UPMC program was evaluated through an Internal Review Board (IRB) study that

measured knowledge, behavior and recidivism and showed significant improvements. Ongoing evaluation includes a teen survey administered immediately after participating in the program and a parent survey that is mailed home four weeks later.

“RED is making a difference, said CHP @ UPMC’s injury prevention manager and RED coordinator. “Parents are telling us that RED impacts not only their teens’ driving behavior but their own. Teens are acting differently...they’re buckling up and making sure their passengers do too, and not speeding up as they approach intersections. In some cases, teens are talking with their younger siblings and peers about what they learned.”

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Be in the Zone

The Pediatric Trauma Injury Prevention Program at Monroe Carrell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt (Tennessee) expanded a day-long, hospital-based program to include a second component that encourages teens to translate what they learn into a year-long, school-based distracted driving campaign. Established five years ago through a grant from the Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services and The Allstate Foundation, the *Be in the Zone* (BITZ) program aims to prevent injuries and save lives by increasing knowledge about the dangers of distracted driving, especially cell phone use and texting.



While the majority of teens who participate in the TX and PA RED programs do not want to be there (but give the program high marks once they complete it), the teens in *BITZ* are all leaders of student clubs, such as [FCCLA](#), [Key Club](#), [HOSA-Future Health Professionals](#), [DECA](#), who were chosen to participate. (Six are selected per high school and attend with an advisor.) The day-long program begins with a trauma presentation on risky driving behavior. Teens then manage injury assignments given to them by the rehabilitation team, experience a mock simulation in the Emergency Department where the victim does not always survive, and then discuss what they experienced.

“This is the only prevention work that the Emergency Department staff gets to do, and they love it,” said the hospital’s pediatric trauma injury prevention program manager. “They tell teens ‘we don’t want you to be here. The last thing we want to do is tell your mom and dad you’re here or see you get in trouble because you hurt someone due to driving distracted.’”

Next, the students hear from a *Champion of Change* speaker who has personally been affected by distracted driving and then watch the AT&T Video, *From One Second to the Next*. They then debrief about the day and participate in a facilitated discussion designed to get them thinking about what they can do to address distracted driving. Teens take turns spinning a scenario wheel that gives them the opportunity to try out behaviors. The day ends with the teens breaking into groups to share and jot down

ideas for their school-based campaigns that must convey a positive message about the dangers of texting while driving.

The hospital-based program is conducted in August, so that once teens return to their schools they can get to work planning and initiating their multi-faceted, distracted driving campaigns for launch October 1. Using a detailed *BITZ* program manual, a \$400 stipend and other resources from Children’s Hospital, the teens are required to conduct three unannounced observations to determine the baseline rate of motorists texting while driving and the rate of behavior change following the completion of three mandatory activities (completion of The Academy, Ford DSFL’s online driver educational modules; a mock crash; and a community event) and five additional activities of the teens’ choosing.

Teens are encouraged to use social media to engage their peers and the community. They’re also tasked with creating a 60-second PSA that promotes the theme, *Be in the Zone—Turn off Your Phone*. All campaign activities and outcomes must be documented in a campaign book that the student teams submit to Children’s Hospital in late April.



Since it is a year-long program, keeping the teens motivated can be a challenge. Program staff check in with the team leaders on a regular basis and provide feedback. Best Campaign and Best PSA competitions are also used to bolster student creativity and excitement. All campaigns and PSAs are evaluated by a panel of judges, and three are selected. The top three schools (participating club) are awarded a \$10,000, \$5,000 or \$2,500 prize for their winning campaigns, and \$50, \$250 or \$100 for their PSAs (grant funds are used). There is no restriction on how a school club spends the money.

“One of our student teams took their BITZ campaign all the way to DECA’s national competition,” noted the pediatric trauma injury prevention program manager. “We are so impressed by what the teens come up with each and every year.” But what’s even more impressive is the program’s impact. Pre- and post-surveys administered to teens who participated in the in-hospital phase of the program that self-reported texting while driving rates declined significantly. Unannounced driver observations conducted at schools before and after the second phase (the teen-led BITZ campaign) also showed a significant decrease in the percentage of motorists who texted while driving (Unni, Morrow, Shultz & Tian, 2013).

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P.A.R.T.Y. at the P.A.C.

While party may be in its name, the message this long-running program imparts to Wisconsin teens is deadly serious. The *Prevent Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth* program, a Canadian import, is a dynamic, interactive injury prevention and health promotion program that focuses on the dangers of underage drinking, drinking and driving, texting and driving, lack of seat belt use, and other risky behaviors. Coordinated by a coalition of local businesses led by ThedaCare, Wisconsin’s third largest health care system serving communities in the northeast portion of the state, it morphed from a weekly, 6-hour, emergency-room based program that reached 1,000 teens from two high schools to four, 2-hour events held at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center (P.A.C.) that have been attended by more than 5,000 students from 34 schools in seven counties. Since 1998, the program has reached more than 50,000 teens (ThedaCare, 2015).

The award-winning P.A.R.T.Y. at the P.A.C. is a “hybrid of a hospital-based program and *Every 15 Minutes*,” explained ThedaCare’s injury prevention and outreach coordinator. “Acting as the emcee, a trauma surgeon sets the stage for a teen driving crash that is the result of bad decision-making. It’s all depicted on stage using teen actors, a crashed vehicle and video. There are sets along with all of the equipment you’d expect to see when first responders come on scene including the jaws of life and the arrival of a Medevac team (video footage shows the helicopter taking off and landing). Once the crash victims are transported to the hospital, the trauma team goes to work, while a surgeon describes the extent of one of the teen’s injuries to his mom in the waiting room.”

Woven into the re-enactment are presentations from actual crash victims, family members, friends, and health professionals who share powerful and emotional stories designed to engage teens in meaningful discussion. The program uses facts, logic and emotion to affect positive change on the teens' decision-making process. The target audience is sophomores who are either taking driver education, ready to start driving, or riding in vehicles with their peers.

The program appears to be having an impact. Pre- and post-surveys indicate that teen participants are 23% more likely to ask a driver to stop texting or talking on a cell phone and 33% less likely to ride in a vehicle with a driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol after experiencing the program. A trend analysis of the school-based Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2008-2013) from three high schools that consistently attend the P.A.R.T.Y. program show a 35% increase in seatbelt use and a 32% decrease in driving after drinking (ThedaCare, 2015).

Collaboration, according to the ThedaCare staffer, is the key to the program's success. "We couldn't do this without the support of the medical community, law enforcement, health and fire departments, a local theater company, the Bureau of Transportation Safety and many other organizations, including the P.A.C, which gives us a phenomenal deal," stressed the ThedaCare employee who oversees the program. Sponsorships offset all programs (approximately \$67,000 in 2014) ensuring that all schools that want to attend can do so free of charge.

The program continues to evolve. In 2013, parents were invited to attend the P.A.R.T.Y. and provided pre- and post-education that reinforces the importance of having an ongoing dialogue with their teens. It also sparked establishment of the Winnebago County Teen Safety Team that works with school-based groups to support peer-led awareness and safety campaigns. There are also plans to use P.A.R.T.Y. as a springboard for interdisciplinary learning at the participating high schools. Curriculum will be developed to incorporate crash dynamics into physics and math courses and discussion about the social and economic impact of crashes and disability into sociology/psychology and business/math classes (ThedaCare, 2015).

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Video also available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daHh9k0eFb8>

Survivor Advocates Influence Through Their Grief

When a person is involved in a motor vehicle crash, his or her life is forever changed. The same is true for the family of a crash victim. While they may not have been in the car with their loved one, the emotions they feel are very real, particularly if the victim did not survive or was permanently incapacitated as a result of the crash. The stories survivor advocates have to share can be life changing.

In New York, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) has been partnering with the National Safety Council's (NSC) HEARTS Survivor Network since 2011 to help survivor advocate Jacy Goode tell her story to more than 50,000 teens at high schools in 49 counties. Goode and her parents were struck head-on by a tractor trailer driver, who swerved to avoid a distracted driver who ran a red light, as they were driving home from her college graduation. Both of her parents were killed instantly. Jacy, who was given just a 10% chance of survival, spent four months in the hospital recovering from her injuries. She healed, but due to a traumatic brain injury has lingering cognitive issues and no use of her left arm or lower leg.

"Her story is powerful and resonates with teens. While part of it has to do with Jacy—she's a dynamic speaker," said the GTSC Assistant Commissioner, "teens relate to her because she isn't much older than they are and she's telling them about losing her parents on what should have been one of the happiest days of her life, her college graduation."

"One of the biggest impacts New York is having on distracted driving is because of this grant, not just stronger laws, enforcement or signs," he added. "The amount of people Jacy has touched over the past four years has had more impact than any other education program we've done."

Goode's appearances, along with those of four other survivor advocates who began speaking to teens and adults in 2015, are covered through a grant that GTSC provides to NSC. The funds are used to pay each speaker a small stipend as well as cover their travel expenses. "I believe you ought to pay these people,"



said a former NSC senior executive who helped establish the HEARTS network. “While some advocates want to do it as a volunteer, that’s the exception. You are asking them to take time away from their families and jobs.”

To help evaluate the program’s impact, GTSC worked with NSC to develop a pre- and post-survey that is randomly disseminated to students at each school. “We found surveying every student problematic due to school policy and privacy issues,” said the GTSC staff member responsible for coordinating the program. Completed surveys are forwarded to NSC for tabulation and analysis. “What we are seeing is that teens overwhelming admit to using their cell phones while driving [81.8%] before the presentation,” he pointed out. “Afterward, 100% say they won’t continue to do so.”

SHSOs and other organizations interested in working with survivor advocates should consider doing so, but recognize the challenges. “It’s a wonderful approach that can not only benefit the audience you’re trying to reach, but also add meaning to the survivor’s loss,” said the former NSC executive. But he cautions that this effort “takes a lot of care and feeding. Not all survivors can or want to do this. Those who do need training to help them effectively tell their stories and understand the traffic safety issue.”

“When it comes to teen driving, there’s a lot to understand— inexperience, brain development, limiting high risk situations,” he explained. “Helping a survivor focus on one or two things they’re passionate about that relate to their personal loss, such as driving at night and too many passengers, is essential.”

The GTSC Assistant Commissioner concurs, “partnering with survivor advocates is a powerful way to reach young people, but you must be cautious about who your partners are. Vet them carefully and have staff in place to handle scheduling and outreach. Working with NSC has made the program a lot more manageable.”

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Conclusion

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Perhaps the same can be said for helping teens survive their most dangerous driving years. While parents remain their teens' number one influencer when it comes to learning to drive (and teens want them to be), there are many other adults who have the capacity to help.

Adults who regularly spend time with teens—teachers, coaches, club advisors, even employers—have the best opportunity to influence novice drivers. But these adults may not be well versed in the issue or recognize that they can and should use their influence to engage teens in a conversation about what they can do to be safe on the road. Getting them up to speed on the facts and providing tools they can use to facilitate a dialogue can pay dividends.

Besides these adults, there are many others who can lend an authentic voice to the discussion. From police officers and car and truck drivers who are on the road every day to the medical professionals, lawyers, judges, and survivor advocates who witness the devastating impact of unsafe driving decisions, they, too, can be encouraged to share their expertise and experiences with our most at-risk drivers.

State Highway Safety Offices and other organizations working to keep teen drivers and their passengers safe should take advantage of this opportunity to expand their network by identifying, educating and partnering with these other adult influencers. Yes, it is hard work, and not all partnerships pan out. But as the initiatives highlighted in this report illustrate, partnering not only benefits (and is fulfilling to) the sponsoring entities and individuals, it also helps hundreds of thousands of teens—teens who will become the next generation of adult influencers.

**Partnering helps
hundreds of
thousands of teens—
teens who will
become the next
generation of adult
influencers.**

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