

MICHIGAN TEEN WINS "DRIVE2LIFE" PSA CONTEST

18-Year old from Atlantic Mine, Mich., wins \$1,000, Trip to NYC to film her PSA; National Road Safety Foundation contest draws 875 entries

NEW YORK, April 8, 2015 -- A senior at Houghton High School in Houghton, Mich., was named grand prize winner of the 5th annual Drive2Life PSA Contest, sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF) with support from Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education and media company.

Top prize-winner Julia Huuki, 18, submitted an idea for a public service message about distracted walking. Her idea, titled "Don't Be Stupid" was chosen from more than 875 entries received from teens nationwide. Julia won a \$1,000 prize and will travel to New York City in April to spend two days working with the producers of the nationally-syndicated TV series "Teen Kids News" to script, film and edit her winning PSA. The finished spot will debut at the Global Youth Traffic Safety Month kickoff in Washington, D.C. May 1, and it will air later that month on some 225 TV stations nationwide.

This year's contest asked teens to be creative with messages to help prevent walking distracted, especially when using cell phones and other mobile devices.

Julia's winning idea begins with words on screen asking "Would you ever...?" It then shows people looking at their cell phones as they step into an open manhole, walk into another person, trip over a curb, step in dog poop and, finally, cross the street and walk in front of a moving vehicle. As we hear the moving vehicle's horn honk and brakes screech, words on screen say "Smart phones can make you do stupid things." It closes with "Look up! You're the only one responsible for your own safety."

"I wanted to catch people with humor by showing silly things that could happen when you walk distracted," Julia said. "And once we got people's attention, we bring in the serious message that shows what extreme consequences distracted walking could cause, like being hit by a car or truck."

"Julia's entry stood out from many great ideas we received from teens nationwide," said Michelle Anderson of The National Road safety Foundation. "It uses humor and exaggeration to hold the viewer's attention and then communicate a safety message that's important for teens and adults alike."

In addition to being broadcast in May on “Teen Kids News,” Julia’s PSA and story will be featured in fall issues of Scholastic classroom magazines. In late-April, the PSA will be viewable on The National Road Safety Foundation’s websites at www.nrsf.org and www.teenlane.org.

Four runners-up were also selected in the nationwide competition, each winning a \$500 prize. Runners-up in the Grades 6–8 category are Max Abramson, 13, of Wissahickon Middle School in Ambler, Pa., and Divya Sunderam, 14, of Winburn Middle School in Lexington, Ky. Runners-up in the Grades 9–12 group are Elizabeth Westfall, 16, of Cicero-North Syracuse High School in Cicero, N.Y., and Eric Denicola, 18, of West Scranton High School in Scranton, Pa.

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded more than 50 years ago, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It distributes the programs free of charge to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities. For more information or to download free programs, visit www.nrsf.org or www.teenlane.org.

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