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MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL WINS NATIONAL "SEAT BELTS SAVE CHALLENGE"

Contest by National Organizations for Youth Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and The National Road Safety Foundation challenges teens to increase seat belt usage at their schools

ALEXANDRIA, VA, May 12, 2015 -- Rogers High School, in Rogers, Minnesota, has won the first "Seat Belts Save Challenge," a nationwide competition organized by the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) with support from The National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The school, which won for best overall education campaign, receives a \$1,500 prize.

The Seat Belts Save Challenge was initiated to increase seat belt usage among young people who are at particular risk from death or injury in traffic crashes because of their low belt usage rate. Last year, more than half of teen drivers killed in crashes and more than 60% of teen passengers killed were not wearing seat belts.

NOYS and its partners invited high schools throughout the country to develop a local campaign to increase belt usage. The Seat Belts Save Challenge is documented by an unannounced seat belt check before the campaign, followed by another unannounced check after the school's two-week education and awareness campaign.

The Seat Belts Save Challenge has three winning categories: greatest improvement in seat belt usage, highest seat belt use rate and best overall campaign. St. John's High School in St. John's, Michigan won in the best improvement category. Efforts by students led to a 20% increase in seat belt use and achieved a 94% use rate. Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley High School in Gibson City, Illinois, won the prize for the highest usage rate, with 99.2% of the school community observed wearing seat belts.

Rogers High School, with some 1300 students, had a 10 percent increase in seat belt use and a 97.7% observed seat belt use rate. They held a school-wide kick-off campaign to launch the seat belt drive. They also created a series of videos and in-school announcements to promote the campaign among students, along with banners and flyers that included data on deaths and injuries caused because teens weren't wearing seat belts.

The students also partnered with local police for various events and they created an innovative video that featured a rap song about buckling up. "The Rogers Police Department was excited for the

opportunity to partner with NOYS and Rogers High School in such an important campaign. I have no doubt this campaign has increased seat belt use. The students and staff did a great job," said school resource officer Jeff Beck.

"We salute the students at schools across the country for creative and well-executed campaigns that had a measurable impact on teen seat belt usage," said Dr. Mark Rosekind, Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"Getting young people to buckle up consistently is often a challenge, and we are pleased to see that the Seat Belts Save Challenge is making a difference," said Anita Boles, CEO of NOYS.

"Education is a crucial component of teen driver safety," said Michelle Anderson, NRSF Director of Operations. "We are pleased to see students being innovative and enthusiastic about getting the important seat belt message out to their peers, and we thank them for their great work."

A second Seat Belts Save Challenge is in progress for the spring 2015 semester.

More information and contest details are at www.seatbeltssave.org.

***The National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS)** is a coalition of national non-profit and youth serving organizations, government agencies, and for-profit businesses working together toward the common goal of addressing critical safety issues that affect youth in the United States. NOYS builds partnerships to save lives, prevent injuries, and promote safe and healthy lifestyles among all youth while encouraging youth empowerment and leadership. For more information, visit www.noys.org and www.seatbeltssave.org.*

***The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF)**, 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. NRSF 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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