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MASSACHUSETTS POLICE OFFICER WINS NATIONAL "INNOVATION IN THE CLASSROOM" AWARD

Honored by peers at national school resources officers conference

NEW YORK, July 2, 2013 -- Officer Charles Dapolite of the Westborough, Mass. Police Department has been named the winner of the 2013 NASRO/The National Road Safety Foundation "Innovation in the Classroom Award." The award, which was presented at the national meeting of NASRO (National Association of School Resource Officers) in Orlando on July 16, recognizes innovative teaching of traffic safety in schools by a school resource officer (SRO). It carries with it a \$1,000 honorarium for the police department and Westborough High School, where he teaches.

In his five years as a police officer working in the schools, Officer Depolite has worked with young people to teach them about seat belt safety, the dangers of drinking and driving, distracted driving and overall crash prevention training.

Every year since becoming an SRO, he has created a crash simulation for 11th and 12th graders just before prom and graduation season. He scripts the event and gets students and others to play various roles. He got the local fire department to assist, providing emergency equipment and their Life Flight helicopter.

Last year, Officer Dapolite extended his efforts to younger students, getting 5th and 6th graders involved in a national safe driving awareness competition.

"I look at my role as a dynamic educator on safe driving," he said. "I try to start my programs with students before they drive so my lessons will demonstrate and reinforce good driving behavior that will make them better drivers once they begin driving."

For more than 50 years, The National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF), a non-profit organization, has created driver education programs for free distribution to schools, police, traffic safety agencies, youth advocacy groups and others. NRSF has programs on speed and aggression, drinking and driving, and drowsy driving. Its newest programs, "Generation tXt" and "Stay in the Picture", address distracted driving and prom and summer driving safety aimed at young people. NRSF also sponsors two contests for teens on distracted driving and general driving safety. For more information, visit www.nrsf.org.

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