

Media Contact: David Reich
212 573-6000 david@nrsf.org



TEENS NATIONWIDE INVITED TO JOIN "SEAT BELTS SAVE CHALLENGE"

Competition 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 and in their communities

ALEXANDRIA, Va., Sept. 26, 2017 -- Teens nationwide are invited to join the Seat Belts Save Challenge, a competition to encourage seat belt usage by teens and their families. Initiated by the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) with support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), schools can win a \$1,500 prize from The National Road Safety Foundation for executing local campaigns to increase seat belt use.

The Seat Belts Save Challenge was designed to encourage increased seat belt usage among young people who are at heightened risk from death or injury in traffic crashes because of their low belt usage rate. In 2016, more than half of teen drivers killed in crashes and more than 60% of teen passengers killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts.

NOYS and its partners invite 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 a school's 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: best overall campaign, greatest improvement in seat belt usage, and highest seat belt use rate. The deadline for schools to register is Oct 15th, and seat belt checks and local education campaigns must be completed by Nov 15th. Registration information and rules are available at <https://noys.org/about-us/our-programs/seat-belts-save/> Winners will be announced during Global Youth Traffic Safety Month in May of 2018.

"Getting young people to buckle up consistently is an ongoing safety issue," said April Rai, Interim Executive Director of NOYS. "The Seat Belts Save Challenge empowers high school students to share the importance of seat belt use with their peers and in their own community."

"Over the past 4 years, the Seat Belts Save Challenge has encouraged students at schools all over the country to participate enthusiastically in developing creative ways to spread the important seat belt message to their peers," said Michelle Anderson, NRSF Director of Operations.

One of last year's winners was Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Miami, where students created an effective campaign that increased seat belt usage among students by 10 percent, bringing the student body's overall seat belt usage rate to 97.5 percent. The school won a \$1,500 cash prize for hosting the most creative and innovative campaign. Two additional schools also won \$1,500 prizes: the FCCLA Chapter at Lake Geneva – Genoa City Union High in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, which won the highest seat belt rate category, achieving an almost-perfect usage rate of 97.8 percent; and the SADD Chapter at Crisfield Academy and High School in Crisfield, Maryland, which won for the greatest seat belt use increase, jumping by 19.1 percent.

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.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970 and is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of excellence in motor vehicle and highway safety. It works daily to help prevent crashes and their attendant costs, both human and financial. NHTSA's mission is to save lives, prevent injuries and reduce economic costs due to road traffic crashes, through education, research, safety standards and enforcement activity. For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov and www.safercar.gov.

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 free programs 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 their communities. For more information or to download free programs, visit www.nrsf.org or www.teenlane.org.

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