

ROAD BUZZ

NRSF

Spring 2022

Issue 25

It was just about two weeks after his graduation from White Plains (NY) High School when Fred Manocherian learned that two of his classmates had been killed by a hit & run drunk driver. He was understandably upset and wanted to speak up and do whatever he could to prevent such a senseless tragedy from ever happening again.

Young Fred wrote letters to local and state elected officials, urging them to pass laws to make drinking and driving illegal. He even wrote to then-President Eisenhower, who sent a response praising Fred's passion and urging him to continue speaking out to make roads safer.

Fred took the President's words to heart and in 1962 established what is now The National Road Safety Foundation.

The National Road Safety Foundation has created dozens of films and videos that are broadly distributed free of charge, beginning with "The Aftermath," which told the story of a drunk driving crash involving Olympic diving champion Bruce Kimball. The award-winning film, which documented the impact of drunk driving on several families and on the driver himself, is still shown in many schools and is a favorite among driver education teachers. The book "Flesh, Metal & Glass," authored by Fred many years ago, is still popular with driver education instructors. More than a million copies have been distributed, free of charge, and it continues to be available for download on our website.

Following the positive reception for the first film, NRSF created many others dealing with a range of traffic safety

issues including impaired driving, speed and aggressive driving, drowsy driving, and more recently, distraction. NRSF has also produced and distributed dozens of public service announcements for airing on broadcast and cable channels nationwide.

NRSF has collaborated with many like-minded groups over the years, dating back to working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's regional office on buckle-up, DUI and drowsy driving campaigns to more recent partnerships with student advocacy organizations such as SADD and FCCLA, non-profits like We Save Lives and other leading non-profit traffic safety organizations like the Governors Highway Safety Association and the National Safety Council. Over the years, the media format has evolved from film to video cassettes to CD-ROM and DVDs to thumb drives and now, direct download via the internet. Much of the content now is youth-inspired or youth-created, to connect more directly to our key target audience.

Even after 60 years, however, the message remains consistent: Education about safe driving behavior saves lives.

60 YEARS



Passengers Can Stop Dangerous Drivers

By Candace Lightner, Founder and Director, We Save Lives



When Nicole’s friend Sarah was killed in a drunk driving crime, she was devastated. She later learned that Sarah was a passenger in the car and the driver was not only drunk but was driving the wrong way on a one-way street. He was going to hit another vehicle head on but swerved so impact was on the passenger side, which killed Sarah instantly. To this day, Nicole keeps asking herself, “why didn’t she stop him from driving or find another way home.”

Every year, we lose tens of thousands of our loved ones to an ongoing epidemic that is largely preventable – traffic crashes. Even as technology makes our cars safer, the heartbreaking number of traffic fatalities and serious injuries has been going up the past few years. In 2020, 38,680 people died on American roads and highways. Sixty-two percent were passengers.

Of all those fatal crashes, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says about 93 percent were due to driver error. That “error” is often the decision to drive drunk, impaired, distracted or drowsy. Drivers choose to speed, tailgate or cut in and out of lanes. They also choose to blow through a light or stop sign, or to ignore the flashing lights on a stopped school bus. It could be choosing not to buckle your seat belt.

These are choices that drivers make and each could result in tragedy. But there’s a surprisingly simple fix – passengers must have the courage to intervene and speak up.

We Save Lives, a non-profit I founded several years ago, is partnering with The National Road Safety Foundation and more than 50 other advocacy and government groups to make the last week of January an annual **National Passenger Safety Week**, for what will be an ongoing national campaign to empower passengers to speak up when in a vehicle with someone who is driving dangerously.

Speaking up can – and does – save lives. We can change the stigma of the “backseat driver” so drivers will listen and stop reckless behavior behind the

wheel. It will take time, but we have to begin now.

I know, firsthand, how change happens over time. When I founded **Mothers Against Drunk Driving** after my 13-year old daughter Cari was killed by a drunk driver, it was socially acceptable to drink and drive. People did it all the time, and their friends and family often stood by silently. Laws weren’t enforced and drunk drivers were getting away with murder.

But people mobilized and spoke up. It took years, but today attitudes have changed, laws are being enforced, and DUI offenders are seen as social pariahs and thousands of lives have been saved.

That example shows that we can reverse the upward trend of traffic deaths. It starts with the simple act of taking a family pledge to speak up and then having the “courage to intervene” when necessary.

Together, we can save lives if we just speak up!

Candace Lightner, founder of We Save Lives, founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving in 1980 after her daughter was killed by a drunk driver. She has been an outspoken activist for changing laws and social attitudes toward impaired driving and other dangerous driving behavior. She lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

NRSF State Squad Champion

We salute an outstanding SADD State Coordinator every quarter. We’re bending the rules a bit this time, as we name Bailey Bindle as our SADD NRSF State Squad Champ.

Although she’s not a State Coordinator, Bailey, as SADD’s Communications Manager, also oversees SADD activities and growth in several states. We’ve known Bailey since she served on the

SADD Student Leadership Council seven years ago, and we watched with admiration as she remained active in SADD leadership through her years at Peru State College in her home state of Nebraska and, for the past two years, as a member of the SADD National Staff.

Congratulations Bailey. Thanks for all that you do.



National Passenger Safety Campaign Launches Big



The National Road Safety Foundation partnered with Candace Lightner, founder of We Save Lives, for a new campaign to convince passengers to speak up when they're in a vehicle being driven unsafely.

The campaign, which launched with the first-ever **National Passenger Safety Week** last January, was supported by more than 50 organizations including the National Safety Council, the Governors Highway Safety Association, ADTSEA, and student advocacy groups SADD and FCCLA. It also won support with a U.S. Congressional proclamation and proclamations in some state legislatures.

Spearheading the campaign is Candace Lightner, whose daughter, 13, was killed more than 40 years ago by a drunk driver who had previous DUI convictions. Through her relentless advocacy, Candace got laws passed and made it socially unacceptable to drive while impaired.

In her travels on behalf of We Save Lives, she speaks to groups of all ages and learned that people will often ride with someone who is impaired or distracted because they don't know how to

handle the situation or they are afraid of offending the driver. Knowing that passengers comprise more than 60 percent of traffic fatalities nationwide, she set out to empower passengers to speak up for safety – their own as well as the driver's.

It also included the **Courage to Intervene Promise**, a We Save Lives program, that passengers could sign encouraging them to intervene if someone was going to drive drunk, drugged or distracted. The launch was supported by a nationwide virtual media tour, with interviews on TV and radio stations in nearly three dozen cities, including some Top 20 markets. Altogether, the campaign generated more than 110 minutes of airtime, telling viewers about the need and how to speak up.

An informative website was created, with tips on how to speak up when in a dangerous driving situation. The launch was supported by a nationwide virtual media tour, with interviews on TV and radio stations in nearly three dozen cities, including some Top 20 markets. Altogether, the campaign generated more than 110 minutes of airtime, telling viewers about the need and how to speak up.

The “passengers speak-up” messaging will be incorporated into other driver safety campaigns planned throughout the year, including the summertime “100 Deadliest Days” campaign. Plans are in the works for the second annual **National Passenger Safety Week** the last week of January of 2023.

For information about how your organization can join the effort, contact Michelle Anderson at info@nrsf.org

SADD News

One of the major projects NRSF did with SADD over the past few years has been the creation and ongoing updating of the **Passport to Safe Driving**, a comprehensive tool that evolved from our annual **Driving Skills #101** Contest. Created with input from the SADD Student Leadership Council, the Passport contains driving tips for teens, accompanied by talking points for parents to use in an important dialogue with new drivers in their family. It covers speeding, driving at night and in bad weather, blind spots, negotiating left-turns and roundabouts and other driving skills.



The Passport is used and distributed by SADD Chapters throughout the nation. Dozens of states have adopted it for use in schools and distribution at state DMV offices and other venues and ADTSEA has shared it with driver education teachers throughout the nation.

A new partnership between SADD and State Farm Insurance is further expanding the reach of the Passport. State Farm is printing 100,000 copies of the Passport for use by the company's agents working with schools and families in 16 regions nationwide.

The annual **Driving Skills #101** contest has closed for this year and we are in the process of evaluating the entries to select the winning SADD Chapters, whose ideas will be highlighted at the SADD National Conference this summer. At the conference, the theme for next year's **Driving Skills #101** contest will be announced.

Young People Help Spread the Message about Sharing the Road Safely



Pedestrian deaths throughout the U.S. jumped by nearly five percent in 2020 to 6,721, accounting for more than 17 percent of all traffic-related fatalities. In addition, nearly 850 bicyclists were killed on our roads and 4,900 were injured in crashes with motor vehicles. E-scooters, found increasingly in many cities, add to the risk.

In response, the focus of our youth PSA (public service announcement) contests this year has been on safely sharing the road with drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Our **Drive Safe** PSA Contests in Chicago and the Midwest and the Washington D.C. region are complete for this year, and the

winners and runners-up have been announced.

Kaitlyn Miller, 15, of Hamilton, VA won the **Drive Safe D.C.** PSA Contest. Her winning idea shows drivers being distracted as a car, a pedestrian and a bicyclist stop in front of them. In each case, we see a freeze-frame of the driver's scared face as they realize they may hit someone. The slogan "The road is to share; Prevent a scare" them comes onto the screen.

The **Drive Safe Chicago** PSA Contest had three finalists and the public was invited to vote to pick the winner on the Chicago Auto Show's Facebook page. More than 3,000 votes were cast, with the video by Brynn Baker, 17, of Shipman IL winning more than half of the total. Theo Bella, 18, of Chicago and Ransom True, 17, of Ft. Wayne IN were first and second runners-up. Brynn's PSA showed a caped super hero flying over Chicago warning drivers, pedestrians and bicycle riders to be careful as they share the road.

Our national contest, **Drive2Life**, has just come to a close and a winner will be announced later in the spring.

The **Drive Safe** PSA Contests will begin again in the fall. Watch for entry information on our contests page at www.nrsf.org/contests.

NRSF Supports New School Outreach from the Illinois Student Safety Program

The National Road Safety Foundation has awarded a grant to the Illinois Student Safety Program for a new traffic safety initiative being implemented this spring in several high schools in southern Illinois.

Under the direction of Jennifer Brown, ISSP Director who also teaches at Gillespie (IL) High School, the program is a semester-long series of activities that call attention to teen driver safety, with an emphasis on sharing the roads with pedestrians and cyclists. Students at participating high schools will create activities in their schools and in the surrounding communities. (One of

Jennifer's students is our Drive Safe Chicago winner.)

The winning team will travel to Vancouver, WA this summer to present their ideas to driver education teachers attending the ADTSEA national conference.

The program is similar to another we've supported for several years, run by the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey. Their **U Got Brains** program is now in several dozen high schools in the Garden State, and Wendy Berk, the group's vice president of development and communications, and her team have managed to keep it intact during Covid,



**Illinois
Student
Safety
Project**

Promoting Safe Driving Awareness
One Student at a Time

even as many schools went to virtual learning. The program is back in schools this year and NRSF will be part of the team of judges evaluating the creative traffic safety activities of schools throughout New Jersey.

NRSF Funds GHSA Grants to Three States for Youth Mobility Projects



The National Road Safety Foundation provided funding to the Governors Highway Safety Association for grants totaling \$75,000 to State Highway Safety Offices in Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania to work with community-based groups to promote safe youth mobility options like walking, biking or riding a scooter.

The grants will provide resources for community outreach and engagement efforts to make it safer for youth and teens to travel.

In Pennsylvania, the funding will be used to implement and expand local programs that create safe walking routes to schools. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Bureau of Safety Operations will partner with

United Way of Erie County to pilot a Safer Walking Routes to School initiative at Iroquois Elementary School, a community school.

The funding for Connecticut will support Watch for Me CT, a partnership between the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office and the Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center that works to reduce traffic crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. About 1,500 pedestrian and 550 bicyclists in the state are hit by drivers every year. The grant will enable the program to recruit and train youth in the Yard Goats Young Ambassadors Program, an afterschool initiative run by the Hartford Yard Goats, a minor league affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. The teens will be trained to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety to their peers.

In New York, the funds will be used by the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee and the New York City Department of Transportation to conduct multilingual

education and outreach in the Bronx, one of the nation's most diverse communities. Teens will be recruited and trained to serve as peer-to-peer instructors promoting safety on scooters, skateboards and other micro-mobility devices.

"Youth, whether walking, bicycling, or scooting, due to dangerous motorists, are at risk when they share the road with drivers," said Jonathan Adkins, Executive Director of GHSA. "This funding will allow three states to work with local partners to reach more diverse and low-income communities, where walking and biking is more common."

Almost one-third of all pedestrian fatalities and half of cyclists killed in crashes were children under age 15, according to a NYU Langone School of Medicine analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics over a 15-year period.

We're Looking for Great SROs

In partnership with the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), we're looking to recognize school resource officers who are doing innovative things to bring safe driving messages to their students.

Nominations are open through May 31 for the annual Innovation in the Classroom Award.

"**The Innovation in the Classroom** program is a way to identify and reward teaching excellence in traffic safety, as well as share best practices with school resource officers in classrooms nationwide," said Mo Canady, executive director of NASRO.

"The work that school resource officers do in the classroom can have a life-long impact on young people," said NRSF's Michelle



Anderson. "The safe driving behavior that SROs encourage helps keep students safe as they learn to drive or, for the younger ones, as they observe driving behavior."

For info and to nominate an innovative SRO, click on https://www.nasro.org/clientuploads/Innovation_in_the_Classroom_Award_Applicant_Information_Form.pdf.

Look for Us at these Upcoming Events

The National Road Safety Foundation will be participating in several major events and conferences this year. Dates of events are subject to change or cancellation due to the pandemic.

JUN 2022

Jun 29- Jul 3

FCCLA

Family, Career Community Leaders of America

San Diego, CA

JUL 2022

Jul 3-8

NASRO

National Association of School Resource Officers

Aurora, CO

Jul 13-16

SADD

Students Against Destructive Decisions

Orlando, FL

Jul 24-27

ADTSEA

American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Assn

Vancouver, WA

SEP 2022

Sep 15-16

NAWSL

National Assn. of Women Highway Safety Leaders

Louisville, KY

Sep 17-21

GHSA

Governors Highway Safety Association

Louisville, KY

Like us on Facebook...Follow us on Twitter

Like us and follow us for the latest news, contest updates and PSAs.

 facebook.com/NRSForg

 nrsforg

 twitter.com/nrsforg

 youtube.com/nationalroadsafety

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that for 60 years has been dedicated to reducing crashes, deaths and injuries on our nation's highways by promoting safe driving habits through greater public awareness.

NRSF produces educational programs for broadcast and for use in safety, educational and enforcement programs by police, teachers, traffic safety agencies, healthcare professionals, youth advocacy groups and other grass-roots related agencies, as well as federal, state and local government agencies. NRSF programs, which are free, address distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency and pedestrian safety. The Foundation works with youth advocacy groups and sponsors national and regional contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities. For information and to download free programs, visit www.nrsf.org.



18 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022