

DISTRACTED DRIVING SPECIAL EDITION

In previous issues of our ROAD BUZZ Newsletter, we've written about what Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood calls a national epidemic – Distracted Driving.

It's a serious threat to safe roads, and it's bound to get worse as more people – especially young new drivers – rely on mobile technology to stay connected. Having constant and instant access to friends and information is quickly becoming a national addiction, and technology is now being put into new car models to keep us connected even as we drive.

The National Road Safety Foundation agrees with Sec. LaHood and NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration), Administrator David Strickland, who have made awareness and education about the dangers of distracted driving a top priority.

This special issue of ROAD BUZZ tells of efforts we and some of our partners in traffic safety are making to help deal with this important issue.

A NEW FREE PROGRAM FROM NRSF

Generation tXt talks directly to teens



NRSF is pleased to introduce our newest program – our first to deal with Distracted Driving.



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Generation tXt is a program built around a fast-paced new 11-minute film that features teens talking to their peers. The film consists of 3-modules, which are approximately 3 1/2 minutes in length and can be shown individually or in its entirety. The program was shaped by young people from our partners at NOYS (National Organizations for Youth Safety) and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions). Dozens of teens told us what distracted driving means to them and how a program should be built so it would resonate with young people.

We listened... Generation tXt includes many of the comments from the teens we spoke with. The film features teens explaining, in their own words, what distracted driving is.

Next comes the story of Tyler Presnell. He was severely injured with traumatic brain injury when he was riding with a friend who was speeding and was distracted by other teens in the car. The driver lost control and crashed into a telephone pole. Tyler, who was 14 at the time, has spent several years recovering...re-learning how to walk and talk and do the everyday things we take for granted. Tyler now speaks about safe driving to young people at schools nationwide. In Generation tXt, he presents what may be the first "traffic safety rap," telling his story and urging

others to speak up if they are in a car where the driver is speeding, drinking or texting while driving, or other dangerous driving behavior.

The film then tells the story of a young person who died while she was texting at the wheel. Classmates of Ashley, a high school student in Ashville, N.C., remember their friend and explain how the senseless tragedy has changed their lives.

The final module shows teens coming together in their school, Freehold Township High School in Freehold, NJ; and bringing awareness on the dangers of distracted driving while encouraging their peers to make a pledge to not be a distracted driver.

The modules in Generation tXt are punctuated by brief riffs on distracted driving by a teen stand-up comic.

A distracted driving self-assessment quiz which accompanies the new video and is made free by logging on at www.nrsf.org. or by calling toll-free at 866-SAFEPATH (723-3728). We are currently designing a teacher's discussion guide which will also include a perforated teen-friendly information sheet and Power Point Presentation for classroom use.

MISSISSIPPI TEEN WINS JST DRV RADIO PSA CONTEST



A ninth-grader at Sumner Hill Junior High School in Clinton, Mississippi, has been named

the winner of the first JST DRV National Distracted Driving PSA Contest, sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation and NSSP (National Student Safety Program), the youth arm of ADTSEA (American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association).

Avneet Singh, 14, wrote and submitted a 30-second radio public service announcement that will receive nationwide airplay on radio and the internet. The JST DRV PSA Contest invited teens to submit an audio Public Service Announcement that talks to teens about the risks of distracted driving.

Avneet's winning entry begins with the sound of a car engine starting, followed by the sound of fingers texting on a cell phone. The texting continues as we hear the engine revving, until we hear brakes skidding and a crash. The voiceover then reminds us, "Texting is a leading cause of teenage deaths. Dying to text is no LOL (laugh out loud) matter."

Avneet won a \$1,000 prize, a \$100 gift card and an expenses-paid trip to Honolulu to attend the NSSP national conference, where her winning PSA will be presented. Several other teens from her school will be attending as part of her school's NSSP chapter, accompanied by their teacher and advisor Cheri Anglin.

Visit www.nrsf.org to hear Avneet's winning PSA.

NHTSA CHIEF SAYS “A CAR IS NOT A MOBILE DEVICE”



Our friend Administrator David Strickland, who heads the National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration, says: “drivers don’t need to be “connected” at all times.”

Technology is now available that offers almost any high-tech service a driver might want. In-car internet service now enables drivers to have constant access to Twitter and Face book feeds, along with cell phone, email and text updates.

“A car is not a mobile device,” Strickland said recently at an automotive technology conference in Detroit. “I’m not in the business of helping people Tweet better or post on Face book better.”

The downside to the new mobile technology is verified by government statistics showing thousands of motorists and pedestrians are being killed every year due to driver distraction.

Many states have enacted laws banning the use of hand-held cell phones or texting while driving. Some critics feel even hands-free technology should be banned from cars.

“I don’t dispute that people want these services,” Strickland noted. “Especially the younger generation; they’re used to being connected 24 hours a day. But that does not mean drivers should or need to be connected at all times, he added. Safety, not profits or convenience, must be the first priority, he said.”

The NRSF applauds Administrator Strickland for taking a stand on this issue that is critical to making our roads safer.

TEEN FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK WINS OUR 2nd DRIVE2LIFE PSA CONTEST



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Lauren Daniels, a 15-year old high school student from Oswego, N.Y. has won the second annual Drive2Life PSA Contest, sponsored by NRSF and NOYS. The 30-second spot about the dangers of distracted driving was introduced by NHTSA Administrator David Strickland at a news conference in Washington, DC for National Youth Traffic Safety Month which is in May.

Lauren, who just completed her freshman year at Oswego High School, won a \$1,000 prize, a flip-cam and a certificate to the Skip Barber Driving School and worked with a professional film crew to re-shoot her video. She also won a trip to New York City to work with the producer and director of the nationally-syndicated TV series “Teen Kids News,” as her PSA was given sound mixing and editing to make it broadcast-ready.



The spot aired on more than 215 TV stations nationwide on “Teen Kids News,” and it is also being distributed to other stations for additional broadcast.

“Distracted driving is an epidemic on America’s roadways, and young people are among the most at risk,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. “When you’re driving, your attention should always be on the road – not on a phone. I applaud Lauren for creating such an effective video to drive this message home to teens.”

“We were impressed with the excellent ideas we received from so many creative young people,” said Fraydun Manocherian, founder of The National Road Safety Foundation. “The best way to reach young people with traffic safety messages is through their peers, telling the story in their own voice, and we think this PSA will resonate with teens.”

Runners-up in the nationwide competition are Joanna Solis, 15, of Visalia, CA; Paige Creswell, 16, of The Woodlands, TX; Michelle Emanuele, 18, of Greensburg, PA; and William Cherry, 18, of Clayton, DE.

Lauren’s PSA, along with the runners-up, can be viewed on the NRSF website at www.nrsf.org



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