

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teens Speak Out Against Dangerous Driving By Teens

Nicole Stalker, who graduated from Battlefield High School in 2010, was friends with the two 15-year-old girls who died in a car accident in April.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

We devote a lot of time and effort to pointing out the mistakes that teens make in regard to driving; as well we should. But, from time to time, it is important to point out some of the positive things they do as well. Nicole Stalker, a young graduate of Battlefield High School in Haymarket VA, near Washington DC, started

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For Teens and their Parents



a Facebook page called Teens against teen death.

According to the Info page, "[Teens Against Teen Death \(TAT'D\)](#) is a non-profit organization that was created in efforts to help prevent teen death and depression, whether it be from drunk drivers, domestic violence, fatigue, STDs, suicide, bullying, etc."

Her mission is "To severely decrease the number of teen deaths, pregnancy, abuse, and depression in Virginia."

This project didn't come about as a school project or an attempt to do some sort of community service. Unfortunately, the impetus for Ms Stalker to start this project came about as the result of several tragedies that struck her high school. Her alma mater, Battlefield High School, lost five teens to traffic collisions in a single year.

Sadly, sometimes, the only way to get teens to pay attention to the safe driving message is for them to experience the loss of someone close to them. Teens get the message from adults all the time but they are more likely to pay attention when the message starts coming from their peers. However, that doesn't mean they totally ignore the messages from their parents.

The following is from a "Washington Post" article about the Battlefield High teen fatalities: "Driving is a privilege," says Stalker, 19, who is studying psychology and lives with her parents. "My parents have set strict rules about me driving. If I get a ticket for speeding or if I ever text message while driving they will take my car away from me."

This is a very important message for both teens and their parents. Her parents set strict rules regarding her driving and she knows they mean what they say. If she were to violate those rules, she will lose her privilege to drive. Studies consistently show that, when parents set strict guidelines for their teen driver, the chances of that teen being involved in a collision decrease dramatically.

In reading her Facebook page, you can see that Ms Stalker is sometimes frustrated that she isn't doing enough and that her message isn't getting out but, if she can make a difference in the life of just one teen, all of her efforts will be worth it.

Ms Stalker isn't the only teen to start a Facebook group. A search of Facebook shows other teen Facebook groups such as:

[Teens Against Texting and Driving](#)

[Teens Against Drunk Driving](#)

[Teens Against TWD](#) (Texting While Driving)

[Teens Against Texting While Driving](#)

These efforts by teens to get the message out to other teens are a noble effort and should be applauded. Show your support by "Liking" their Facebook page and linking them as a "Likes" to your Facebook page.

Teens Die In Single Vehicle Crashes

One one-car crash has left one teen dead and another uninjured. State Police said a vehicle operated by a 17 year old was traveling on Sprout Brook Road in Garrison at 11:10 Saturday night .

The car ran off the road and overturned, killing his 17 year old passenger, police said. The Driver was able to get out of the car by himself and was uninjured.

A State Police accident reconstruction team investigated possible factors including speeding, driver experience and mechanical issues related to the vehicle. There was no indication of alcohol or drug involvement, troopers said.

Source: <http://www.midhudsonnews.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

This is just one of at least 25 teenage deaths and numerous injuries that have occurred over the past month in single car crashes.

According to a 2009 report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), fifty percent of all crashes involving teens aged 15 to 20 are single vehicle crashes.



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The primary reason for this are:

- Inexperience
- Distracted Driving
- High speed
- Alcohol

Inexperience – Most of these single vehicle crashes occur when the teen driver leaves the road and instinctively jerks the wheel in an attempt to return, resulting in what is known as an over-correction. Over-corrections often lead to loss of control with the car skidding and ultimately flipping over. During their driver training, teens need to be taught how to correctly recover their vehicle if it should leave the road. If they feel their tires leaving the roadway, instead of immediately turning the wheel to get back, they should tighten their grip on the wheel, slow the vehicle to a manageable speed, check their rearview mirrors, and, when the car is totally under control and it is safe to return, steer the vehicle back onto the roadway. This should be practiced under controlled conditions in an empty parking lot or on a deserted road.

Distracted Driving – Usually, the primary reason a vehicle leaves the roadway is that the driver is not paying attention to their driving. Distractions such as other teens in the car, cell phones, texting, fiddling with the radio/CD player, and eating all take the driver's attention from the very important task of concentrating on the road. According to NHTSA, in 2009, 15 percent of teen (15 to 19) drivers who were involved in fatal crashes were distracted at the time of the crash. Teen passengers should be limited to one and cell phone use of any type should be prohibited.

High Speed – Fifty six percent of these crashes take place at night on rural or neighborhood roads. Studies show that crash rates for teens are double in rural areas. Teens who are driving too fast can't react in time when there is an unexpected curve or an obstacle on a narrow, winding rural road. Driving too fast to negotiate a curve sends the vehicle careening into the trees. In 2007, 39 percent of male drivers 15 to 20 years old who were involved in fatal crashes

were speeding at the time of the crashes.

Alcohol – According to a Center for Disease Control (CDC) survey in 2007, 29 percent of students rode one or more times during the 30 days before the survey in cars or other vehicles driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. Eleven percent of students drove cars or other vehicles one or more times during the 30 days before the survey when they had been drinking alcohol. NHTSA figures show that, in 2009, 33 percent of the young drivers (15 to 20 years old) who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 or higher.

Tips for Parents: Survivor's Guilt

A single car crash in North Carolina last month led to the death of the driver's twin sister.

Another news report from the past month regarding a teen who had been killed in a single vehicle car crash the teen's girl friend was quoted as saying:

"Cameron was drinking and we got into a fight. I told him to find another ride home. I said, 'Get out of this car, you're being disrespectful,'" Talia said, gasping between tears and raising her arms to the sky. "Why didn't I drive him home?"

Survivor's guilt, which is most often associated with victims of combat, can occur in anyone who has survived any type of trauma whether they were directly involved or not. The guilt from wishing they had done something different that may have averted

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the event can lead to long-lasting psychological problems. The most common form of psychological

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memorial to the victim are all positive expressions of grief. Getting involved in programs to prevent future

