



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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#1 Killer of Teens is No LOL Matter: Drivers Need to TTYL

COLUMBUS, OH. - *What Do You Consider Lethal?* For most of us, the first things that come to mind are diseases, natural disasters, or weapon-wielding criminals. During National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April, however, State Farm®, Impact Teen Drivers, and FCCLA teen leaders will work together to emphasize what is most deadly to teen drivers —reckless and distracted driving. Moreover, teens will learn that their number one killer is 100% preventable, if drivers and passengers make good decisions.

“People are starting to understand that everyday behaviors, such as texting, eating, applying make-up, or reaching for something, can be lethal when done behind the wheel,” said Dr. Kelly Browning, Executive Director of Impact Teen Drivers. “In a recent study, over 98 percent of people reported that texting behind the wheel is dangerous, but 75 percent still report doing it. The propensity for people to rationalize distracted driving behavior—the ‘not me’ mentality—is a big part of the problem.”

“The most devastating experience a parent can face is the loss of a child, especially in a 100% preventable car crash,” said Brock Dietrich, father to Sydnee, a young woman who lost her life in a texting and driving crash. “Parents don’t realize we are the number one influencer of our child’s driving attitudes and behaviors. ‘Do as I say not as I do’ didn’t work for us and it doesn’t work for our kids. As parents we need to role model the behaviors we want our kids to have behind the wheel—buckle up, put the phones away, and drive the speed limit. No family wants to be part of the club that my family and I are now part of—we lost our daughter and there is a permanent hole in our hearts.”

Research clearly shows that it is the cognitive distraction, not the manual distraction that presents the greatest risk behind the wheel. “We overestimate our abilities to multitask behind the wheel—the reality is our brain is not set up to do multiple tasks at once and do them well,” said Kim Lust, State Farm Public Affairs Community Specialist. “A moment of distraction behind the wheel—even one time—can have devastating consequences. At State Farm it is our goal to make our kids and communities safer, we are proud to support this very important event today. Teen leaders speaking up are a significant part of the key to making our roads and communities safer.”

Teen safe driving is a top priority for State Farm. State Farm is dedicated to supporting community and school based programs throughout Ohio. “State Farm is proud to work with Impact Teen Drivers and the FCCLA to bring youth leaders from across the state together working to stop the number one killer of teens in Ohio—reckless and distracted driving. State Farm’s website has comprehensive free tools, tips, and resources designed to help teens and their parents throughout the learning-to-drive process,” said Kim Lust.

Impact Teen Drivers uses a multifaceted approach to educate teens and communities about the dangers of reckless and distracted driving. Through the *What Do You Consider Lethal?* program, teens are engaged and empowered to make good decisions behind the wheel and spread the safe driving message to their peers. In Parent-Teen Workshops, parents are taught that they are the primary influencer of their teen’s driving attitudes and behaviors—and that “Do as I say, not as I do” doesn’t work. Using a Train-the-Trainers approach, Impact Teen Drivers educates first responders, the consequences of distracted driving, but also empowers them to lead by example and spread the safe driving message.

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

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ABOUT IMPACT TEEN DRIVERS

Impact Teen Drivers is dedicated to stopping the number one killer of teens in America—car crashes—particularly those cause by reckless and distracted driving. ITD provides education and empowerment programs to teens, parents, and communities about the dangers of reckless and distracted driving. For more information about Impact Teen Drivers, or to set up a presentation in your area, please e-mail info@impactteendrivers.org or call 916-733-7432.

About State Farm®:

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