

## NATIONAL PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK

### Passengers Can Play a Major Role in Reducing Crashes



The National Road Safety Foundation is partnering with Candace Lightner, Founder of We Save Lives and Founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), for the second annual National Passenger Safety Week, Jan. 22-29, 2023.

The campaign is to encourage and empower passengers to SPEAK UP when in a vehicle that’s being driven unsafely or even before getting into a vehicle if unsafe driver behavior is displayed.

Last January, more than 50 groups including GHSA, NSC and SADD partnered in the effort, and more are being invited to join the campaign. NHTSA has put it on the 2023 Traffic Communications Calendar, making it

now “official.”

You can find the campaign’s website with many resources at [www.nationalpassengersafety.org](http://www.nationalpassengersafety.org) and it will be translated into several other languages.

NRSF invites organizations who haven’t yet done so to join our campaign to empower passengers to SPEAK UP. It can save lives. For additional information, contact Michelle at [info@nrsf.org](mailto:info@nrsf.org)

## Las Vegas Teen Wins Drive2Life PSA Contest



A teen from North Las Vegas, NV, has won the grand prize in the 12th annual Drive2Life PSA Contest, sponsored by NRSF in partnership with Young Minds Inspired, the nation’s leading provider of free educational outreach programs that reach more than 2 million teachers in virtually every school in the nation.

An idea from Sydney Apperson, 17, was selected from nearly 400 entries from teens nationwide. Her script for a public service announcement about the importance of drivers sharing the road

with pedestrians, bicyclists and other forms of micro-mobility won her \$2,000 and the chance to work remotely with a New York-based Emmy Award-winning production crew to shoot and edit her script into a 30-second PSA that will air on hundreds of TV stations.

Sydney’s winning script is a throwback to the era of arcades and silent movies, using titles on the screen to show the dialogue. In the PSA, two friends are rushing to a high school football game when they see a Charlie Chaplin-like man slowly crossing the street ahead of them, twirling his cane. The driver begins to speed up, to try beat the man across, but his friend tells him to slow down and let the man finish crossing. “If we have a crash, we won’t get to the game at all,” he says. “Pedestrian, bike or scooter...whatever it is, we need to share the road.”

“We liked Sydney’s idea for its humor

and its simplicity in communicating an important message about being aware of others who share the road with drivers,” said NRSF Operations Director Michelle Anderson.

Four runners-up were also selected, each winning a \$500 prize. Runners-up in the Grades 6–8 category are Christina Estrada, 13, of Corpus Christi School in Landsdale, PA, and Jeremiah Harmon, 13, of Pennsylvania Leadership High School in West Chester, PA. Runners-up in grades 9–12 are Emily Jade Louscher, 14, of North Creek High School in Bothell, WA, and Sam Robin, 17, a student at Myers Park High School in Charlotte, NC.

our next annual Drive2Life PSA contest will open for entries in January 2023, with the theme of empowering passengers to speak up for vehicle safety. To see past winning entries, contest updates and entry information, visit [www.nrsf.org/contests/drive2life](http://www.nrsf.org/contests/drive2life)

## GUEST COLUMN

# Until We Confront Our Hypocrisy About Distracted Driving, We Will Continue to Kill Thousands of Us Each Year

By Joel Feldman, Founder EndDD.org (End Distracted Driving)



During the pandemic, I was working with a parent to help him tell the story of a horrific distracted driving crash he had been involved in. The facts were simple. A distracted driver, looking at his phone, went through a red light and struck his car on the passenger side, killing his child. After telling his story several times he told me that the police officer who had investigated the crash told him that there was nothing he could have done to avoid the crash as he had the right of way. He said the police officer was wrong. He had also been looking at his phone at the

time of the crash and, had he not been, he could have avoided the crash and his child would still be alive.

It would be impossible to fully describe the regret, pain, and anguish that this parent feels, and likely will feel for the rest of his life. Having had the right of way will not be much consolation, knowing that your child, or someone you care about, is dead, and it didn't have to be that way. Today, we need to be defensive drivers more than ever and distracted drivers can't be defensive drivers.

The distracted driving epidemic has not significantly improved over the last 10 years. We keep killing about 3,000 of us every year and injuring close to 400,000. What will it take for us to change the way we drive?

Studies confirm that the leading highway concern for drivers is distracted driving. Yet, depending on the study, between 40-55% of us drive distracted. Parents tell me they constantly tell their kids not to drive distracted, yet more than 75% of the teens I speak with tell me that mom

and dad drive distracted "all the time." Why do parents believe that a critical safety message for our teens to drive without distraction, will be effective when so tainted with hypocrisy?

I have been a personal injury lawyer for nearly 40 years and, despite representing those whose lives were forever altered by distracted driving crashes, I regularly drove distracted. I changed the way I drive after my 21-year-old daughter Casey was killed by a distracted driver.

Distracted driving is a story of hypocrisy. Until we confront our hypocrisy, thousands will continue to be killed and hundreds of thousands will be injured each year.

*Joel Feldman is a partner in the Philadelphia law firm of Anapol Weiss and founded EndDD.org (End Distracted Driving) after his 21-year-old daughter Casey was killed by a distracted driver. To learn more about educational programs and initiatives to reduce distracted driving crashes e-mail [info@EndDD.org](mailto:info@EndDD.org)*

## FCCLA – Safe Rides, Saves Lives

As part of the FACTS (Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety) Program for student members of FCCLA, the National Road Safety Foundation sponsors the Safe Rides Save Lives PSA Contest.

This year's winner is Kierstin Trueblood, who won the \$3,500 top prize for her FCCLA Chapter at Northeast Vernon H.S. in Walker, MO.

The PSA, titled 'Stay Alive,' shows visuals describing the aftermath of a real-life crash caused by speeding – two months in a hospital and ten surgeries. Words on the screen say "I was lucky. I survived. But 43,000 others weren't. They died."

The PSA can be seen at [www.nrsf.org/contests/safe-rides-save-lives](http://www.nrsf.org/contests/safe-rides-save-lives).



**But I was lucky**

**Almost 43,000  
others weren't...**



# SADD News

## #DrivingSkills101



Jaylen Marrero, a student at Florida's Cape Coral High School, won the \$2,750 top prize for her school's SADD chapter in **#DrivingSkills101 – Weed Out Impaired Driving**, a nationwide Public Service Announcement challenge for SADD students sponsored by NRSF.

The winning concept mimics a horror movie, describing the narrator's dream of going through a haunted house as various "monsters" explain how cannabis slows reaction time.

The winner was announced at the SADD National Conference in Orlando this summer, where the PSA had its debut before hundreds of SADD attendees. It will be featured this fall on the nationally-syndicated show "Teen Kids News." It can be seen online at [www.nrsf.org/contests/driving-skills-101](http://www.nrsf.org/contests/driving-skills-101).

The theme for next year's #DrivingSkills101 Contest will be speak up for Safe Driving

## NRSF State Squad Champion

Every quarter we salute an outstanding SADD State Coordinator and this time we've picked someone who is long overdue for recognition and thanks...Felicity DeBacco-Erni.

Felicity has been working with young

people in Pennsylvania for 24 years, and she's been SADD's State Coordinator for 18 years. She began her work with young people as the director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Underage Drinking, where she inspired and trained young people to be advocates against underage drinking, reaching out to lawmakers and the public to bring about awareness and change.

Felicity's work with SADD includes overseeing and coordinating activities for hundreds of SADD chapters throughout the Commonwealth.



She told us recently that one of her greatest joys is when she meets adults who had been SADD students and they tell her what a lasting impact SADD has had on their lives. She also said she's grateful for so many partnerships at the local, state and national levels that help provide resources for the work she does.

We are grateful to you Felicity, for your tireless passion, compassion and dedication to our young people and all you come in contact with. **YOU ARE A CHAMPION!**

# Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest Launches



The 8th annual Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest is open. NRSF and the Chicago Auto Show invite entries from teens in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa, with ideas for a public service announcement encouraging people to speak up if they're passengers in a vehicle being driven unsafely and to recognize and speak up against unsafe behaviors before getting into a vehicle.

Three finalists will be picked to work with our Emmy-winning production crew to turn their scripts into finished 30-second spots. The public will then vote for their favorite on the Chicago Auto Show's Facebook page.

The winner, who will get \$2,000, will be announced at the Chicago Auto Shows media day in February. The runners-up will get \$1,000 and \$500.

For additional information, entry form and past winners, [www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago](http://www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago). Entry deadline is Dec. 16, 2022.



# NRSF HONORS FIVE TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE AT ADTSEA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

NRSF honored five driver education teachers from Minnesota, Missouri, Vermont, Virginia and Washington who were selected by their peers nationwide as Teachers of Excellence. The honors, with a cash stipend from the National Road Safety Foundation, were presented at the annual conference of the American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA) in Vancouver, WA.

The Teachers of Excellence for 2022 are Jennifer Sletten, who teaches in the Rothsay, MN public schools; Thomas Iffrig, a teacher in the Pattonville School District in Saint Ann, MO; Richard Kearney, who teaches at Woodstock Union High School in Woodstock, VT; JoEllen Suter, an online teacher for the Virginia Department of Education; and Alexander Hansen, who teaches in the Eatonville School District in Eatonville, WA.

“These outstanding teachers we are recognizing represent our best, and they inspire their peers to be passionate and effective teachers of this important life skill,” said Harold Fleming, a past ADTSEA president who heads the selection committee.

“Driver education teachers are dedicated to the young people they serve and often serve as role models in ways that go far beyond driver training,” said David Reich of NRSF and a member of the ADTSEA Board of Directors. “



Honorees from top left top right: Richard Kearney, Jennifer Sletten, Harold Fleming (TEA selection committee chair). From bottom left to right, Thomas Iffrig, JoEllen Suter, and Alexander Hansen.

ADTSEA is the professional association that represents traffic safety educators throughout the United States. As a national advocate for quality traffic safety education, the group creates and publishes policies and guidelines for driver ed and conducts conferences and workshops for teachers. It was instrumental in creating the new driver education curriculum standard issued recently by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

## NRSF Presents NASRO Innovation in the Classroom Award to Illinois Deputy Sheriff



NASRO winner Dep. Sheriff John Shallenberger with David Reich of NRSF

Deputy Sheriff John Shallenberger, who serves as a school resource officer in Tazewell County, IL, has been named the recipient of the 2022 “Innovation in the

Classroom Award,” given by The National Road Safety Foundation and NASRO, the National Association of School Resource Officers. Deputy Shallenberger was selected by a panel of his peers and received the award at the annual NASRO Conference in Aurora, CO this past July.

Dep. Shallenberger, who has been a Deputy Sheriff for 20 years, is a founding member and currently chairs the Tazewell Teen Initiative. The Initiative was instituted in 2006, after 15 teens had been killed in traffic crashes throughout the county over a 15-month period. The Initiative helped kick off Operation Teen Safe Driving, a multifaceted safety education program in all seven county high schools. Within two years, the peer-to-peer safe driving initiative was expanded statewide and 105 schools

received financial assistance to develop programs emphasizing seat belt use, distracted driving, impaired driving and speeding. As a result, the county had no fatal teen crashes for five years.

Mo Canady, Executive Director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, said, “Deputy Shallenberger has demonstrated great creativity and his leadership has helped expand good programming into many more schools.”

NASRO, the world’s leader in school-based policing, is a not-for-profit organization for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and school security and/or safety professionals who work as partners to protect schools and their students, faculty and staff members.



# Multipronged anti-speeding effort, funded in part by NRSF, succeeds in slowing traffic



A combination of enforcement, engineering and public outreach successfully reduced speeding during a demonstration project aimed at testing solutions to one of the most persistent road safety issues. The pilot project, funded in part by NRSF in partnership with the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), was done on a rural road in Maryland, where average speeds fell 9 percent and the odds that a vehicle on the road was speeding dropped by three-quarters.

The multipronged effort, supported by a \$100,000 grant from NRSF and its partners, will evaluate comprehensive speed management pilot programs in one rural and one urban location. The urban project, planned for Virginia, is expected to begin later this year.

“Road deaths have been climbing, and more than a quarter of them are connected to speeding,” says IIHS President David Harkey. “This study shows a practical, comprehensive approach to the problem can slow drivers down.”

The effort in Bishopville, MD, focused on a 2.4-mile section of road that is a popular route for beachgoers in the summer months and is known for speeding. In July 2021, the lanes were narrowed by doubling the width of the painted edge and center lines to 10 inches to help slow traffic. In addition, speed feedback signs, which show drivers how fast they are going as they pass, were installed in two locations. State highway officials also began public outreach, with flyers highlighting the lane narrowing, planned speed enforcement and messaging distributed to local residents and businesses and signs announcing the enforcement and encouraging drivers to slow down went up along the corridor.

A month later, four five-day waves of high-visibility enforcement which resulted in more than 120 speeding citations. The effort was accompanied by paid advertising that included social

media messages, billboards and ads in a local weekly and on the navigation app Waze.

IIHS researchers found that average speeds fell 9 percent during the campaign. They also found a 78 percent reduction in the odds that a vehicle exceeded the speed limit by any amount and an 80 percent reduction in the odds of a driver going more than 10 mph over the limit.

“Speeding is dangerous and deadly, and no one solution will solve the challenge,” said GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins. “The Maryland project shows that a holistic approach can get drivers to slow down. When they do, it has a positive impact on their safety and that of everyone else on the road.”

The pilot project was temporary and so were the effects. “The effects appear to have lingered for many drivers, but not the most aggressive speeders,” says IIHS Senior Research Transportation Engineer Wen Hu, the lead author of the study. “We believe efforts must be sustained in order to succeed over the long term and reduce speed-related crashes and fatalities.”

## A Special Birthday for a Traffic Safety Pioneer

We wish a happy 80th to our good friend Dr. Allen Robinson, who led ADTSEA for an unprecedented 24 years until his retirement in 2018.

Before becoming CEO of ADTSEA, Allen worked at the Highway Safety Center at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. At ADTSEA, he quickly turned around the group’s troubled finances and brought his traffic safety education skills to the forefront to obtain new funding resources for ADTSEA.

Allen’s tenure as CEO proved to be a critical time for ADTSEA and driver education. When driver education was an agenda topic in Washington D.C., especially the introduction of GDL programs in combination with driver education, Allen took the lead on the national front, bringing recognition and respect for ADTSEA.



Allen Robinson (front center) is surrounded by family on his 80th.

Allen was and continues to be a friend of NRSF, shepherding ADTSEA’s Teacher of Excellence program under NRSF sponsorship.

Happy birthday, Allen.

# 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.

## JAN 2023

Jan 22-29 **National Passenger Safety Week – SPEAK UP**

## FEB 2023

Feb 9-10 **Chicago Auto Show** Chicago, IL  
*Drive Safe Chicago*

## APR 2023

April 2-4 **Lifesavers Conference** Seattle, WA

## JUN 2023

Jun 28-Jul 3 **NASRO** Indianapolis, IN  
*National Assn. of School Resource Officers*

## JUL 2023

Jul 2-6 **FCCLA** Denver, CO  
*Family, Career & Community Leaders of America*

Jul 4-7 **SADD** Washington DC  
*Students Against Destructive Decisions*

Jul 16-19 **ADTSEA** Wichita, KS  
*American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Assn*

Aug 10-12 **NAWHSL** New York, NY  
*National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders*

Aug 12-16 **GHSA** New York, NY  
*Governors Highway Safety Association*

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*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](http://www.nrsf.org).*



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