



Impact
Teen Drivers



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We Save Lives, National Road Safety Foundation and Impact Teen Drivers Launch '100 Safest Days of Summer' Campaign to Save Teen Lives

*Advocates want to transform the '100 Deadliest Days of Summer for Teens' into
the '100 Safest Days'*

Washington, D.C., May 23, 2024 — For the first time, a dynamic group of nonprofits wants to drive attention to how everyone can encourage teen and parents to make the period from Memorial Day through Labor Day, what's traditionally known as the "100 Deadliest Days," into the "100 Safest Days." The initiative emphasizes the critical role parents play, as they are the number one influencer of their teens' driving attitudes and behaviors. By changing the culture and activating parents, this effort aims to significantly reduce the number of teen driving crashes and fatalities.

Organizers point to data, such as:

- Nationwide, 7,316 people died in teen driver-related summertime crashes (average of 812 deaths per year), based on 2012–2021 statistics. This was nearly half of the total number of those killed in teen driver crashes for the entire rest of the year.
- In comparison with adult drivers, young drivers are substantially over-involved in crashes. In 2021 drivers 20 and under made up 5.1% of licensed drivers in the United States, yet they made up 8.5% of total drivers in all fatal crashes and 12.6% of drivers in all crashes, according to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation.
- 60% of teen crashes today are caused by distracted driving.

The lead organizers of the initiative are:

- We Save Lives strives to change dangerous driving choices and save lives by promoting realistic solutions and programs through education, advocacy and partnerships. They focus on the 3 D's, drunk, drugged and distracted driving.
- National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF) has been dedicated for more than 60 years to reducing crashes, deaths and injuries on our nation's highways by promoting safe driving behavior through greater public awareness.
- Impact Teen Drivers develops, promotes, and facilitates evidence-based education to stop the number one killer of teens—car crashes, particularly those caused by reckless and distracted driving.

The other coalition members are:

- Brain Injury Alliance-New Jersey was founded in 1981 by a small group of concerned parents of children who had sustained brain injury, and now provides education, advocacy, support, and hope for people with brain injury and their families in New Jersey.
- Florida Teen Safe Driving Coalition is comprised of more than 47 organizations, teens, parents and crash victims, committed to equipping teens with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to make informed decisions and develop responsible driving behaviors.
- Gweedo Memorial Foundation was founded after the death of Joseph Conner Williams Guido, who died tragically at age 16 in an automobile crash. Their mission is to raise awareness among new teenage drivers and their parents about the dangers of destructive driving decisions.
- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) empowers and mobilizes students and adult allies to engage in positive change through leadership and smart decision-making.
- Teens in the Driver Seat started in 2002 and is a peer-to-peer safety program that educates teens about the top five dangers of teen driving to help teens develop safer driving habits and avoid crashes. TDS is a recognized peer-to-peer teen traffic safety program by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO) engages, educates, and empowers youth to influence a safe driving culture through leadership development and innovative outreach programs.
- Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) works to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy.

Candace Lightner, the founder and president of We Save Lives and a longtime activist, says, “I’m impressed by the reach and influence of this coalition. We’ve agreed that we can harness positive messages and communication to help teens turn the 100 deadliest days into the 100 safest days of summer. Our teens have their whole lives in front of them — we need to keep motivating them and their parents throughout the whole summer and not just at the beginning of the campaign. We also need to emphasize the life-saving importance of speaking up and intervening when they see anyone, including their parents, engage in unsafe driving. We encourage everyone to sign The Courage to Intervene promise as just one of the many solutions we’ll be highlighting.”

The Courage to Intervene promise is:

“I will stop my friends and loved ones from driving buzzed, drunk, or drugged.
 I will not ride with them if they are under any kind of influence and will encourage others to do the same.
 I will stop my friends from using their cell phones while driving.
 I will not risk my life to keep others from killing themselves or someone else.
 I will have the Courage to Intervene
 Because I care . . .”

The pledge is available at <https://wesavelives.org/courage-to-intervenesm-promise/>.

Michelle Anderson, director of operations for The National Road Safety Foundation, says, “It takes a little extra courage to remind our independence-seeking teens that too many passengers are dangerous, that their cell phones should be turned off while driving and that

other distractions can be just as deadly. We need to explain that impaired driving is not only dangerous, but also a crime that can result in truly life-altering consequences. That's why we've joined together for this important work."

Kelly K. Browning, Ph.D., executive director of Impact Teen Drivers, says, "For generations, car crashes have been the leading cause of death for American teens. We are proud to join this campaign, which complements our ongoing efforts to address this entirely preventable crisis. Our ultimate vision is to transform the driving culture, thereby saving lives not only in this generation but in all future generations. As summer begins, the urgency to act is greater than ever."

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