

Safety Center's Teen Safe Driving Campaign Receives Funding from The Allstate Foundation Good Starts Young program

Youth Take Action to End Distractions by Empowering Students throughout California to Create Real Change

Safety Center received funding for the sixth consecutive year from The Allstate Foundation Good Starts Young Program to raise awareness around teen safe driving issues for the California Teen-to-Teen Safe Driving Campaigns. Distracted driving issues are believed under-reported and this dangerous behavior will continue to increase with new in-vehicle technology and the prevalent use of personal electronic devices. The grant will support high school contests for the 2017/2018 school year, where student leaders create a positive teen safe driving message and activities to engage their peers, parents, guardians, and the community in a month-long teen safe driving campaign.

"Distracted driving continues to be the biggest traffic issue and cause of accidents, yet many drivers are not changing their behaviors to be more focused on the road while driving," Mary Ward, Corporate Relations California Region, Allstate Insurance said. "Partnering with the Safety Center's Teen- to-Teen Campaign, young drivers are becoming educated on how to avoid distractions, before these habits begin. Empowering the youth to take action that results in change continues to be a rewarding opportunity. Allstate believes the good starts young and we are excited to partner with the Teen-to-Teen campaign and see how the youth are inspired to make a difference on our roads and their futures."

The Allstate Foundation funding continues to grow Safety Center's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) which is now in its second year. Participants all over California use technology to join in meetings learning the core competencies of Social and Emotional Learning skills including educational curriculums and volunteer experiences to increase the capacity of individual members to develop, lead, and participate in youth empowerment projects. Last year's YAC member Camilla Patterson, who is now a Junior Board Member of the Safety Center, has said. "My experiences from the YAC have allowed me to further my leadership skills, allowing me to feel more confident to utilize them in my everyday life, and grow in my knowledge of safe driving. I have been given many wonderful opportunities that I am deeply grateful for."

During the 2016/2017 school year the Safety Center opened the Teen-To-Teen, Teen Safe Driving Campaign contest to all California schools where 58 schools entered, 75,290 students heard the message through our peer-led activities, and 3,179 students in elementary and middle schools heard the message from contest participants leading those activities. Student leaders rallied their peers to get the message of teen safe driving issues out not only to their schools, but to adults and their communities as well; reminding everyone involved that this is not just a teen issue. All drivers need to be aware of distractions and what changes can be made to save lives.

Distracted driving is reaching epidemic proportions in the US and the goal of this project is to empower youth to launch a movement where they are taking action to prevent pedestrian, bicyclist, passenger and driver distractions. In 2015 alone, 3,477 people were killed, and 391,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. (Distraction.gov). During daylight hours, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones while driving. That creates enormous potential for deaths and injuries on U.S. roads. Teens were the largest age group reported as distracted at the time of fatal crashes according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Young people use electronic devices more frequently than other age groups and ten percent of all drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported to be distracted at the time of the crash (NHTSA). The focus of this project is to make use of technology and other distractions socially unacceptable when driving motor vehicles. Perceptions about traffic safety are developed by observing the driving behavior of parents, peers and their communities. Using the strong influence of youth to reinforce lessons about focusing attention on the roadway will help to build a foundation of lifelong safe driving skills, attitudes, and behavior.

For More Information, Contact: Gail Kelly, Safety Center Incorporated at 916-438-3381 or gail@safetycenter.org, www.safetycenter.org

About Safety Center

Safety Center Incorporated is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization founded in 1934 whose mission is to reduce injuries and save lives by empowering our community to make positive life changing decisions. For more information, visit www.safetycenter.org.

About The Allstate Foundation

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