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NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY FOUNDATION AND CHICAGO AUTO SHOW INVITE MIDWEST TEENS TO ALERT DRIVERS, PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS TO DANGER ON THE ROAD

Pedestrian deaths account for 17 percent of all traffic fatalities nationwide

CHICAGO, Sept. 23, 2021 – Teens from Chicagoland and throughout Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa are invited to help educate drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists about risks on the road, which resulted in more than 7,500 pedestrian and bicyclist deaths nationwide last year, an increase of nearly 5 percent. In Illinois last year, 155 pedestrians died in traffic crashes. In Indiana, 105 were killed, 52 in Wisconsin and 27 in Iowa.

The 6,721 pedestrian deaths nationwide account for more than 17 percent of all traffic-related fatalities, with about 70 percent occurring after dark. In addition, nearly 850 bicyclists were killed on U.S. roads and 4,900 were injured in crashes with motor vehicles.

In response to this ongoing tragedy, caused largely by distraction of road users, The National Road Safety Foundation and the Chicago Auto Show are again hosting the Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest. Teens ages 13-19 attending school in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Wisconsin are invited to enter by sending a script or written description of a 30-second television ad that warns drivers, pedestrians and cyclists to be careful when sharing the road. Entries must be received by mail or email by Dec. 17, 2021. All contest entrants will receive a complimentary ticket, subject to possible Covid restrictions, to attend the Chicago Auto Show, courtesy of Chicago Automobile Trade Association (CATA), the new-car dealer association for the Chicagoland area and producers of the Chicago Auto Show, which is being planned for Feb. 12-21, 2022 at McCormick Place.

Three student finalists will be selected to work virtually with an Emmy Award-winning director to transform their ideas into finished TV public service spots. The public will then be invited to cast votes via the Chicago Auto Show Facebook page to select the winner, who will receive a \$2,000 prize. The winning spot will debut at the Chicago Auto Show, Covid-permitting, and will air on the nationally-syndicated TV show "Teen Kids News" on more than 160 TV stations nationwide. The first runner-up will receive \$1,000 and the second runner-up gets \$500. The teachers or school advisors of the winner and runners-up will each receive a \$100 gift card.

“Drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists have a responsibility to always be aware of their surroundings and not be distracted as they travel,” said Michelle Anderson of The National Road Safety Foundation, a non-profit organization that promotes safe driving behavior. “Cell phones and earbuds have contributed to the increase in pedestrian and bicyclist casualties, so it’s important that all road and byway users must not be distracted. That’s the message we want teens to help us communicate through the Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest.”

“Today’s cars are safer than ever, with technological advances that are proven to help avoid crashes,” said CATA Chairman Kevin Keefe. “But drivers, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists, must do their part as well.”

Information about speeding and the *Drive Safe Chicago* Contest, including contest rules and entry form, can be accessed at <https://www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago>.

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit charitable organization that for nearly 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 programs deal with distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency and pedestrian safety. The Foundation also works with key youth advocacy groups and sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities. For more information or to download free programs, visit www.nrsf.org.

About the Chicago Auto Show

First staged in 1901, the Chicago Auto Show is the nation’s longest running auto exposition in North America. The show is produced by the Chicagoland’s new-car dealer association, the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, which has staged the show since 1935. The 2022 public show is Feb. 12-21, 2022, at McCormick Place. For more information and the latest updates, visit ChicagoAutoShow.com or Facebook.com/ChicagoAutoShow.com.