

# Building Safe Communities

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## Youth Programs

As motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Americans between 6 and 20 years of age, traffic safety programs must address the needs of children and adolescents. But children and adolescents can also be valuable partners for Safe Communities programs, bringing their own perspectives and assets to prevention activities. This issue of *Building Safe Communities* focuses on programs that target youth as a group at-risk for traffic injuries and involve youth in traffic safety activities. ■

## Project Extra Mile

The National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives (NAGHSR), with funding from NHTSA, is sponsoring two initiatives to prevent underage drinking. The first initiative funded demonstration projects that use an approach similar to that of Safe Communities to address underage drinking. (The second initiative is described under "Jump-Starting a Community Program" on page 5.) Each demonstration project organized a community-based coalition that  
*(continued on page 2)*

In December 1999, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will announce the You Drink & Drive. You Lose. (YD&DYL) impaired driving public education campaign, which will provide a common identity to a number of Federal efforts to prevent drinking and driving. YD&DYL will target high-risk populations, such as persons 21–34 years of age, repeat offenders, and underage drinkers through public education, public-private partnerships, legislation, and high-visibility enforcement. The campaign will include two national enforcement mobilizations each year (in December and July). Each Spring, new materials on youth initiatives will be released. The next issue of BSC will include more information on this campaign. *Safe & Sober Planner 20*, which contains materials on YD&DYL (as well as the November mobilization periods and National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month), can be obtained by faxing a request to (202) 493-2062 or ordered on the web at <[www.safeandsober.org/](http://www.safeandsober.org/)>. ■

## Project Extra Mile

(continued from page 1)

Used local data to identify the underage drinking problem, design and implement a comprehensive prevention program, and evaluate the program's impact.

Project Extra Mile, one of the demonstration projects, is located in Omaha, Nebraska. Extra Mile includes participants from law enforcement agencies, schools, health care, media, business, and the faith community. One early activity was a needs assessment, which included a review of the crash data for Sarpy and Douglas

explained that "The needs assessment was an extremely important part of the process. It allowed us to identify our community's needs and was critical in helping us develop our mission statement and set our goals."

The focus groups identified three key motives that deter young people from drinking: the knowledge that they could injure or kill themselves or others in a crash, the fear of being arrested, and the loss of driving privileges. Armed with this knowledge, Extra Mile established five working groups: (1) Public Information and Education, (2) Access and Availability, (3) Enforcement and Adjudication, (4) Youth, and (5) Policy. These groups organized and implemented a number of complementary activities to reduce underage drinking.

Several of the activities involved youth as participants, not just targets. For example, Youth in Action is a group of young people trained by Project Extra Mile to focus on advocacy and the media. Toward this end they met with the governor in support of a state task force whose job would be to examine the problem of underage drinking and develop action plans for each school year.

The young people also par-



*This powerful image is used in Project Extra Mile materials.*

ticipate in law enforcement compliance checks (or "stings") to identify retailers willing to sell alcohol to minors. Materials are distributed, reminding liquor retailers of their responsibility to check identification. Saturation enforcement demonstrates that young people will also be held responsible for their actions. Media partners ensure that each campaign is publicized to drive home the message that underage alcohol use is "illegal, unhealthy, and unacceptable." Riibe reports, "There has been a steady, significant decline in the number of businesses selling to kids. When we started the

compliance campaigns in 1997, we had a 41

percent noncompliance rate.

During the most recent campaign, the noncompliance rate was 21 percent."

Project Extra Mile achieved self-sustainability by incorporating as a nonprofit organization and obtaining local funding. The project is hiring a youth coordinator and, with the help of graduate students from a local university, will conduct a second needs assessment to assess its impact. ■

*For more information, contact Project Extra Mile, 302 South 36th Street, Suite 214, Omaha, NE 68131. Telephone: (402) 231-4305.*

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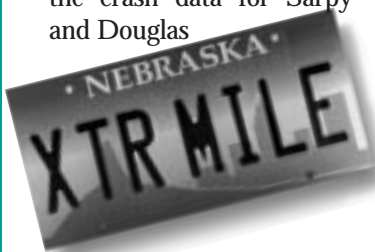
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Counties, a survey of youth and adults, and several focus groups (representing youth, prosecutors, liquor store clerks, law enforcement officers, and parents). The results were discouraging. Forty-seven percent of youth had their first drink before the age of 14. Sixty-one percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 17, and 75 percent of those between 18 and 20, currently drank alcohol. State data revealed that 42 percent of Nebraska's young people had consumed five or more drinks at a sitting during the past 30 days. Executive Director Diane Riibe

# National Organizations for Youth Safety



National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) is a coalition of more than 40 groups whose goal is to reduce injuries and death among America's youth. NOYS activities include "Speak Out and Make NOYS," which supports initiatives to reduce alcohol consumption and traffic injuries among young people;

New Year's Eve NOYS 2000, a campaign to demonstrate that New Year's Eve (and other occasions) can be celebrated without alcohol; and the Call-Me Card campaign, which encourages youth to provide support to friends in situations where there is a risk of drinking and driving.

Florida NOYS is the first state NOYS chapter. Along with the Governor's Council of Young Adult Drivers, Think First, Safe Communities of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, and other partners, Florida NOYS is

creating a model for youth participation that includes a training program in which young people learn to teach their peers how to become traffic safety advocates. Coordinator Terry Henry explains the rationale behind state chapters:

*NOYS is designed to bring traffic safety professionals together with young people to give them the assistance they need in reaching their peers. Youth know how to reach other youth better than we do. We may think we know how to reach young people, but unless we actually work with them and become aware of how they obtain information, we are not going to be effective.*

Two *Speak Out and Make NOYS* manuals (one for adults and one for students) are available to assist youth groups and coalitions in designing and implementing safety activities. Both are available from Cheryl Neverman, NOYS Program Manager, who can be reached by telephone at (202) 366-2696 or e-mail at <cneverman@nhtsa.dot.gov>. Further information on NOYS can be found at <www.noys.com>. ■

## Involving Teens in Safe Communities

Sarah Futrell of the Safety for All Kern Families through Empowerment (SAFE) Coalition in Kern County, California, describes what SAFE learned from involving young people in its activities:

*Safety for Life—Mission Possible is composed of Stockdale High School students who created a traffic safety drama. They've performed at elementary schools and at the county fair, which attracts thousands of children. When kids talk to kids, it makes an impact. We also use teens as advocates on television. The kids are great, and the media is more likely to feature a teenager than an adult.*



*The teens have taken over this program. They own it. If the SAFE Coalition disappeared, Stockdale High School would maintain the program. In fact, all the schools have been very cooperative. They understand how this program can be integrated into the classroom. It can be used in public speaking classes; crash dynamics can be used in math class . . . The kids love it. It spices up their education.*

*Next, we are going to bring elementary school students to the high school. The high school kids will present a drama. Then they will break up into small groups in which the high school students will help the elementary school kids create their own dramas around traffic safety issues. The teenagers become the teachers, the elementary school kids become the writers—and all the children become advocates. It's a great project.*

*Young people bring an enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm to a Safe Communities program. When you take young adults and make them advocates for traffic safety, you've made a difference. ■*



## Responding to Changing Neighborhood Concerns

The Safe Communities Committee that serves Alisal, a primarily Hispanic neighborhood in Salinas, California, demonstrated how programs can respond to changing conditions and concerns. In 1991, Alisal residents and representatives of more than 50 government agencies and community groups formed the Violent Injury Prevention Coalition (VIPC). VIPC's two major initiatives were PeaceBuilders, a violence prevention program in the local elementary school, and the Vecinos/Neighbors Safe Community Committee, which organized violence prevention activities via a network of block captains.

As the VIPC initiatives reduced the level of violence in Alisal, parents began to allow their children to play outside and walk to school. As more children began to use the streets, pedestrian injuries increased. The Monterey County Department of Health, a primary partner in VIPC, found that the neighborhood's pedestrian injury rate was twice that of the entire state as well as the highest in Monterey County. The Department of Health created a pin-map that identified the locations at which injuries occurred. A door-to-door survey conducted in conjunction with the Safe Communities Committee revealed that pedestrian safety and speeding were major neighborhood concerns.

Armed with this information, the Department of Health and its partners in the Safe Communities Committee used the existing neighborhood injury prevention infrastructure to take action. With a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, an action plan that focused on Del Monte Avenue (a major street running through the neighborhood identified as a site of many pedestrian injuries) and the area around the Alisal Community School was developed. The grant allowed the Salinas Department of Public Works to hire a pedestrian safety expert to examine the neighborhood and suggest how pedestrian safety could be improved. Based on this report, the city improved the crosswalks, "No Parking" zones, and signage near the school and is experimenting with changes to the school's drop-off loop.

The Safe Communities Committee also used the familiar vocabulary and symbols of the PeaceBuilders vio-

lence prevention program to help children walk to and from the school safely. A series of safe routes to school, including safe places to cross Del Monte Avenue and other streets, were created and marked with colorful Peace Feet painted on neighborhood sidewalks. Maps of these safe routes will be distributed to elementary school children and their parents. Contributions from the Bank of Salinas and the Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital allowed the printing of 8,000 copies of a bilingual *Peace Feet Are Safe Feet* coloring book. Media events and neighborhood outreach efforts by the Safe Communities Committee, the VIPC block captains, and the school

Parent Patrol remind parents to reinforce safe walking lessons at home and urge drivers to be especially careful in areas around the school.

The Safe Communities Committee hopes to expand its work through involvement with another Salinas Safe Communities project sponsored by the Department of Health and SAFE KIDS, which focuses on preventing alcohol-related trauma and promotes child safety seat activities.



The Safe Communities Committee is encouraging others to reprint the *Peace Feet Are Safe Feet* coloring book, which provides pedestrian safety messages in English and Spanish to young children. For more information, contact Diana Jacobson, Monterey County Department of Health, 1200 Aguajito Road, #103, Monterey County, CA 93940. Telephone: (831) 647-7949. ■

## Helping the Novice Driver

Helping novice drivers become safe drivers is the theme of two new booklets available from the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS). *The Novice Driver's Road Map* helps adult coaches guide novice drivers through eight practice sessions, from an empty parking lot to inclement weather. *A Coach's Game Book* focuses on role modeling, anticipating driving mistakes, selecting a driving school, and using a teen/parent contract. For more information, contact NETS at (888) 221-0045, visit their website at <[www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org)>, or call your state NETS coordinator. ■

## Jump-Starting a Community Program

The Rapid Response Team project is designed to help communities initiate underage drinking prevention programs with an assessment and implementation process that “jump starts” local activities. This collaborative venture of the National Association of Governors’ Highway Safety Representatives and NHTSA chose six communities based on their readiness to develop or strengthen a comprehensive program to prevent underage drinking. Each community received a visit from a team of experts in coalition building, needs assessment, strategic planning, enforcement and adjudication, community development, and school-based prevention, and received follow-up technical assistance by telephone and e-mail.

Participants credit the project for initiating activities that would not have taken place without its help. Sally McIntire, coordinator of the Coalition for a Drug-Free Tippecanoe County and its Task Force on Underage Drinking, reports, “Every year we have to create a comprehensive plan that is approved locally and by the Governor’s Commission for a

Drug-Free Indiana. We’ve had the reduction of underage drinking in our plan for several years, but, realistically, because of a shortage of money and personnel, we have not done much to address it. The problem seemed overwhelming, but the Rapid Response Team showed us how to break down the problem into smaller pieces and take action.” These “small steps” include working with local judges, holding public awareness events during the “Red Ribbon” national alcohol and drug awareness week, and assisting liquor retailers in preventing underage youth from buying alcohol.

David Thompson, coordinator of the Youth Alcohol-Free Alliance (YAFA) of Hermantown, Minnesota, agreed that the Rapid Response Team was essential to his community’s action. He says, “YAFA would not exist without the recommendations of the Rapid Response Team. Not just what to do about underage drinking, but how to organize—how to approach the community and get people involved.” As in Tippecanoe County, the Herman-

town effort involves representatives from the schools, law enforcement agencies, the faith community, and businesses, and has received positive press. One of YAFA’s first initiatives was to develop a system for parents to register their intention to ban alcohol at parties hosted by their children. Other parents can access this database to ensure that the parties their children attend will be alcohol and drug free.

The experience of the Rapid Response Team project is being summarized into a series of manuals that will lead communities through the assessment, coalition-building, strategic planning, and evaluation activities necessary for effective prevention projects. NHTSA Youth DWI Program Coordinator Jim

Wright points out, “While underage drinking is a problem in every community and a good issue to tackle, topics such as coalition building, self-sufficiency, and media advocacy are foundation elements for any Safe Community and can be applied to any traffic safety issue.” These materials will be available from NHTSA sometime next year. ■



## Resources

Achievements in Public Health, 1900–1999 Motor-Vehicle Safety: A 20th Century Public Health Achievement (Bruce Jones et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* May 14, 1999; 48(18); 369–374.) Available on the WWW at <[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/mvemmw.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/mvemmw.htm)>.

*The Art of Appropriate Evaluation for Highway Safety Program Managers:* Available from the Office of Research and Traffic Records, NHTSA, NTS-31, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, or on the WWW at <[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research)>.

*Matching Traffic Safety Strategies to Youth Characteristics: A Literature Review of Cognitive Development:* Available from the Office of Research and Traffic Records at NHTSA (see above).

*Safe Communities: Year in Review: Taking It to the Street:* Available from the Safe Communities Service Center whose address can be found on page 6, or on the WWW at <[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/streets/index.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/streets/index.html)>.

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## Safe Communities



734

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September 1999



NHTSA maintains a  
database of Safe  
Communities programs.

If you have not registered  
your program with NHTSA,  
please contact:

Safe Communities  
Service Center

NHTSA Region VI—Room 8A38  
819 Taylor Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102  
Telephone: (817) 978-3653  
Fax: (817) 978-8339

E-mail:

Safe.Communities@nhtsa.dot.gov

### Safe Communities Calendar

November 22–28, 1999: *Buckle Up America* and *Operation ABC Mobilizations*

November 30–December 1, 1999: *Driving America: A National Conference on Mobility*; for more information, contact the American Highway Users Alliance at (202) 857-1200

December 1, 1999: *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month Press Event* and *Announcement of You Drink & Drive. You Lose. Campaign*

December 1999: *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3-D) Prevention Month*

December 17–19, 1999: *National Holiday Lifesavers Weekend* and *Impaired Driving Mobilization*

February 13–19, 2000: *Child Passenger Safety Week*

March 12–14, 2000: *Lifesavers 18 (Atlanta)*; for more information, write to Lifesavers, P.O. Box 30045, Alexandria, VA 22310

March 27–29, 2000: *National Congress on Childhood Emergencies (Baltimore)*; for more information, contact the EMSC National Resource Center at (202) 884-4927 or visit their website at [www.emsc-c.org](http://www.emsc-c.org).

May 15–16, 2000: *Measuring the Burden of Injury Conference (Baltimore)*; for more information, mail a request to Measuring the Burden of Injury, NPP-12, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th St. SW, Washington, DC 20590