

Ad Council Launches New PSAs and Social Media Tools to Prevent Youth Reckless Driving

Campaign empowers teens to 'Say Something'

For more than two decades, car crashes have been the number one killer of teens in the United States, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The Advertising Council joined today with a coalition of state Attorneys General and consumer protection agencies to launch a new series of public service advertisements (PSAs) designed to save lives by reducing youth reckless driving.

NHTSA data shows that, on average, more than 300,000 teens are injured in car crashes each year, nearly 8,000 are involved in fatal crashes and more than 3,500 are killed. Research also shows that teen drivers are involved in more than five times as many fatal crashes as adults. Young drivers are more likely to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns and die in an SUV rollover.

First launched in January 2007, the *Youth Reckless Driving Prevention* campaign targets teens and young adults between the ages of 15 and 21 and encourages them to speak up when they are in the car with friends who are driving recklessly and they don't feel safe. The campaign also seeks to increase awareness about the dangers of reckless driving and educate teens on how to be safe drivers by focusing on safe speeds, avoiding distractions, wearing seat belts, and the differences associated with driving SUVs.

"This PSA campaign has a real opportunity to reach teens around the country," said Thurbert Baker, Attorney General of Georgia. "By speaking up about reckless driving, young people can save lives, both their own and those of their friends."

Research conducted by the Ad Council shows that teen drivers are more likely to listen to their friends than the adults in their lives. In a survey conducted in 2007, 8 in 10 teens said that when a friend speaks up, they will listen because they don't want to damage the friendship, be labeled a bad driver or cause harm to their friends.

Created *pro bono* by ad agency Y&R New York, the new television, radio, outdoor and interactive elements continue the peer-to-peer intervention strategy utilized in the first round of creative and communicate to teens "If your friend is driving recklessly, say something." The television spots feature comedians Rachel Harris, Fred Willard and Rob Riggle acting as teen passengers who humorously "speak up" to prevent a car crash.

"According to our research, since the launch of the campaign two years ago there has been a significant increase in the proportion of young adults that said they spoke up every time a friend was driving recklessly," said Peggy Conlon, President and CEO of the Ad Council. "I'm confident that this new round of PSAs, featuring comedians that appeal to our target audiences, will continue to raise awareness and inspire teens to 'speak up' when they're in a car and don't feel safe."

The PSAs direct audiences to visit www.SpeakUpOrElse.com, where they can find the motivation and tools to help them speak up. The newly redesigned site houses the PSAs and teaches teens the importance of driving safely. Additional elements to be added to the site soon include a free iPhone and iPod Touch application that turns the device into a bullhorn with flashing lights that can be used to inform a friend of his or her reckless driving. The site will also let the user send instant message videos, starring the comedians, to friends. The recipient, expecting a friend to chat, will receive a reckless driving video instead. All of these tools are designed to get the point across with humor rather than a heavy hand.

A social media program kicking off this week will help promote the campaign and website on social networking sites and blogs targeted to teens. Additionally, non-profit partners such as SADD (Students

Against Destructive Decisions) will be helping to spread the message by reaching out to its 350,000 student members.

The Ad Council is distributing the new PSAs to media outlets nationwide this week. Per the Ad Council's model, the ads will run and air in time and space donated by the media. Since its launch, the campaign has received more than \$44.5 million in donated support.