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ATLANTA TEEN WINS "DRIVE2LIFE" PSA CONTEST

13-year old tops 1,500 entries to win \$1,000 and trip to NYC to film his PSA; National Road Safety Foundation will air spot on 220 TV stations nationwide

NEW YORK, May 3, 2017 -- An eighth-grade student at the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School has won the grand prize in the 7th annual Drive2Life PSA Contest, sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF) and distributed nationwide to grades 6 through 12 by Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education and media company.

Max Finch, 13, submitted a script for a public service message about the dangers of distracted walking, winning the top honor out of more than 1,500 entries from throughout the nation. For his idea, titled "Just Look Up," Finch won a \$1,000 prize and a trip to New York City to spend two days working with the Emmy Award-winning producers of the nationally-syndicated TV series "Teen Kids News" to script, film and edit his winning PSA. The finished spot will air during Global Youth Traffic Safety Month in May on 220 TV stations nationwide.

This year's contest asked teens to be creative with messages to help prevent walking while distracted, especially when using cell phones and other mobile devices. Distraction is one of the leading causes of traffic crashes involving pedestrians.

Finch's winning idea shows an egg rolling in slow-motion along the edge of a counter. It then cuts to a teen walking near a crosswalk, wearing headphones and texting. It then cuts back and forth between the two scenes, as the egg gets closer to the edge and the teen enters the crosswalk. We hear someone shout "Hey" as we see a crossing guard pull the teen back onto the sidewalk, narrowly missing being hit by a car as we hear screeching tires. The shot goes back to the egg, as it stops just short of the counter's edge. The screen fades to black as the narrator says, "It's not worth it. Just look up." We hear the sound of an egg cracking as words come on the screen telling us, "Thousands of people die every year. Don't add another number to that statistic."

“Max’s entry stood out from so many great ideas we received from young people throughout the country,” said Michelle Anderson of The National Road Safety Foundation. “His message uses drama and an interesting comparison to hold the viewer’s attention and communicate a message that’s important for teens and adults alike.”

In addition to being broadcast in May on “Teen Kids News,” Finch’s PSA and story will be featured in select fall issues of Scholastic Classroom Magazines, which reach nearly 25 million students nationwide. The PSA will be viewable on The National Road Safety Foundation’s websites at www.nrsf.org and www.teenlane.org.

Finch’s entry was part of class project assigned by Aaron Goodson, communications teacher at Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School. Students were given a choice of contests to enter, and another was Drive Safe Atlanta, a regional PSA contest about distracted driving, also sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation with the Atlanta International Auto Show. One of Finch’s classmates, Gabriel Howland, won the top prize in that contest in March.

Four runners-up were also selected in the nationwide Drive2Life competition, each winning a \$500 prize. Runners-up in the Grades 6–8 category are Abby Williams, 12, of Holy Comforter Episcopal School in Tallahassee, Fla., and Ava Cochran, 13, of Timberline Middle School in Alpine, Utah. Runners-up in grades 9–12 are Luis Pereira, 19, of Wiregrass Ranch High School in Wesley Chapel, Fla., and Marcus Burgos, 18, of Robert E. Lee High School in San Antonio, Tex.

To learn more, visit www.teenlane.org or <http://www.scholastic.com/Drive2Life>.

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and other safety issues. It distributes the programs free of charge to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. It also 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 or www.teenlane.org.

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