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## MICHIGAN TEEN WINS NATIONAL "DRIVE2LIFE" CONTEST

**TV ad conceived by Rebecca Rapin, 17, shows risks of distracted driving;  
Spot will air nationally during National Youth Traffic Safety Month**

**NEW YORK, April 20, 2012** -- A 17-year old high school student from Hudsonville, Mich. has won the third annual Drive2Life PSA Competition, sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. and Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education and media company. The 30-second spot, by 11th-grader Rebecca Rapin, uses humor to show the dangers of distracted driving. The ad will air nationwide during National Youth Traffic Safety Month in May.

The idea by Rapin, a student in Sally Salkowski's class in printing & visual communications at Careerline Tech Center in Holland, Mich., was chosen from more than 700 entries from 41 states. She will receive a \$1,000 prize and a trip to New York City to spend two days working with the producers of the nationally-syndicated TV series "Teen Kids News" to film and edit her winning concept, which was submitted as a storyboard.

The ad, shot from the driver's point-of-view, shows in an exaggerated way a variety of things that take the driver's hands and eyes off the road. The driver is shown trying to steer with his elbows while holding a soda and fries, sending an email, checking a map, texting and making a call using an old rotary dial phone placed on the steering wheel. The screen fades to white as we hear the sound of tires squealing and a crash. A message appears that reminds drivers to keep "hands on the wheel and eyes on the road."

"Rebecca's idea was chosen because it clearly communicates a very simple yet important message that all young people and everyone who drives must understand," said David Reich of The National Road Safety Foundation, which produces films and teaching materials that help young people understand the dangers of distraction behind the wheel.

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, who has been supportive of the Drive2Life Contest, said, "Driving requires our full attention. When you're behind the wheel, that is not the time to try to multi-task by texting, using your cellphone, changing your iPod or anything else that takes your eyes and mind off the road."

Sec. LaHood noted that traffic crashes are the number one killer of teens, with more than 5,000 young people dying every year and tens of thousands injured. "Every tragic crash caused by distracted driving is 100 percent preventable," he said. "If we're serious about changing people's behavior behind the wheel, then we need motivated young people like Rebecca to get involved and spread the word on film, at school, and in their community."

Francie Alexander, Chief Academic Officer at Scholastic, said, "We know from our years of working with teachers and listening to kids that they thrive when given projects connected to solving real-world problems. Bringing this conversation into the classroom is just another way to get students to talk about it and share ways to make a positive change in their community and country."

Rapin and the making of her winning PSA will be profiled in upcoming Scholastic classroom magazines, to be used by more than 800,000 students and more than 50,000 teachers.

Four runners-up were also selected in the nationwide competition, each winning a \$500 prize. Runners-up in the 6th – 8th Grade category are Conor Joyce, 13, a 7th-grader at Hartford Middle School in White River Junction, VT, and Christopher Litrenta, 11, a 6th-grader at Neshannock Middle School in New Castle, PA. Runners-up in 8th – 12th Grade category are Michelle Tansey, 18, a senior at Bishop Denis O'Connell School in Arlington, VA and Stephanie Miller, 18, a senior at Careerline Tech Center in Holland, MI, the same school that the grand prize-winner attends.

Founded nearly 50 years ago, the non-profit group produces traffic safety programs on speed and aggressive driving, drinking and driving, drowsy, senior driving and distracted driving. It distributes the programs, free of charge, to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. For more information and to download free programs, visit [www.nrsf.org](http://www.nrsf.org).

For more information about Scholastic, visit <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com>.