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MIAMI HIGH SCHOOL WINS NATIONAL "SEAT BELTS SAVE CHALLENGE"

**Campaign by Our Lady of Lourdes H.S. Students Spurs 10% Jump in Belt Usage;
Schools in Maryland and Wisconsin Also Honored in for Big Gains in Belt Usage**

ALEXANDRIA, Va., March 20, 2017 -- Students at Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Miami created a prize-winning campaign that increased seat belt usage among students by 10 percent, bringing the student body's overall seat belt usage rate to 97.5 percent. As the winner for best overall campaign in the "Seat Belts Save Challenge," a nationwide competition organized by the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) and co-sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the SADD Chapter at the 837-student school in Florida receives a \$1,500 prize from The National Road Safety Foundation, a co-sponsor.

The Our Lady of Lourdes SADD Chapter, with advisor Elena Arteaga-Diaz, organized a wide range of activities to communicate messages about the importance of buckling up, starting with a kick-off event featuring a seat belt pledge-signing party. Students also decorated seat belt covers which they later donated to an area chemotherapy center, so patients could use their seat belts comfortably. As a STEM school, they also held a competition for new ideas in seat belt engineering and design.

The Seat Belts Save Challenge was initiated by NHTSA and NOYS to increase seat belt usage among young people who are at heightened risk from death or injury in traffic crashes because of their low belt usage rate. In 2015, more than half of teen drivers killed in crashes and more than 60% of teen passengers killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts.

NOYS and its partners invited high schools throughout the country to develop a local campaign to increase belt usage. The Seat Belts Save Challenge is documented by an unannounced seat belt check before a school's campaign, followed by another unannounced check after a two-week education and awareness campaign conducted by students.

Prizes of \$1,500 were also awarded in two other categories -- greatest improvement in seat belt usage, and highest seat belt use rate. The FCCLA Chapter at Lake Geneva – Genoa City Union High in Lake Geneva, Wisc., won for the highest seat belt rate, achieving an almost-perfect usage rate of 97.8 percent. The SADD Chapter at Crisfield High School and Academy in Crisfield, Maryland, won for the greatest seat belt use increase, jumping by 19.1 percent.

"We are pleased to see students at schools across the country use their creativity and enthusiasm to develop effective campaigns that have shown a measurable impact on teen seat belt usage," said Anita Boles, CEO of NOYS. "Getting young people to buckle up consistently is an ongoing safety issue, and we are pleased to see that the Seat Belts Save Challenge is making a difference, one school at a time."

"The Seat Belts Save Challenge continues to be a great program that gets students to spread the important seat belt message to their peers," said Michelle Anderson, The National Road Safety Foundation's Director of Operations.

More information and future contest details are at www.seatbeltssave.org

The National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) is a coalition of national non-profit and youth serving organizations, government agencies, and for-profit businesses working together toward the common goal of addressing critical safety issues that affect youth in the United States. NOYS builds partnerships to save lives, prevent injuries, and promote safe and healthy lifestyles among all youth while encouraging youth empowerment and leadership. For more information, visit www.noys.org.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970 and is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of excellence in motor vehicle and highway safety. It works daily to help prevent crashes and their attendant costs, both human and financial. NHTSA's mission is to save lives, prevent injuries and reduce economic costs due to road traffic crashes, through education, research, safety standards and enforcement activity. For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov and www.safercar.gov.

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded more than 50 years ago, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety, and a host of other safety issues. It distributes the programs free of charge to schools, police, and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. NRSF 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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