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## **NEW JERSEY GIRL, 9, WINS NATIONAL WALK SAFE, DRIVE SAFE POSTER CONTEST**

**Winning poster shows dangers of distracted walking and driving;  
Contest sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation drew 1,763 entries**

NEW YORK, May 31, 2017 -- A poster using the slogan "Don't finish that sentence with a jail sentence" won top honors for a nine year-old New Jersey student in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Walk Safe, Drive Safe contest sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation, a non-profit group that promotes safe driving through education.

Lea Garcia, a student in the third grade at School #9 in Clifton, N.J., won \$500 for her prize-winning poster about the dangers of distracted walking. Her idea, which shows someone texting as they drive about to hit a surprised cow and farmer, was selected from 1,763 entries submitted by students in grades 3–5 from throughout the U.S. Her teacher, Susan Morgan, will also receive a \$250 gift card as an honorarium.

Three students won \$250 prizes as runners-up in their grades, and their teachers will each receive a \$100 gift card honorarium.

The third grade runner-up is Reese Whichard, a student at Chicod School in Greenville, N.C. Her teacher is Kathy Bello. The runner-up for the fourth grade is Gianna Trager, who goes to school at John F. Kennedy Elementary School in East Islip, N.Y., where her teacher is Jessie Ferraro. Mia Green is the runner-up for fifth grade. She attends Arroyo School in San Carlos, CA, where her teacher is Angela Naughton.

"Distraction impacts pedestrians as well as drivers, so it's important to get the message to young people who are pedestrians and put themselves at risk by walking while distracted by mobile devices," said Michelle Anderson of The National Road Safety Foundation. Distraction is a major factor in more than 40,000 child pedestrian injuries and nearly 500 child pedestrian deaths every year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"The posters from Lea and all the runners-up are outstanding examples of creativity that helps communicate a very important message, which is keep your eyes on the road or sidewalk ahead of you and don't walk or drive distracted," Anderson added. She said many other things besides cellphones can cause distraction, including eating or drinking, listening to music and talking with friends while walking or driving.

For more information on distraction, and a photo of the winning Walk Safe, Drive Safe posters, visit <http://www.nrsf.org/teenlane/content/contests>.

The Walk Safe, Drive Safe program and contest is sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation in collaboration with Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education and media company.

**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](http://www.nrsf.org) or [www.teenlane.org](http://www.teenlane.org).

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