

STEERING TEENS CLEAR OF

DANGER

Join Newspapers In Education as we learn valuable safety rules for the road from State Farm®. This 10-week program is designed to help teenagers prepare to be safe drivers and passengers and reduce the risk for everyone on the road. This program will run in The Seattle Times from March 20 through May 22.

Week Two: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Teens from all across America are teaming up to tackle the greatest danger they face — car crashes. Trying to make a difference may seem daunting. How can one person matter?

You really do matter. Every teen that acts as a role model and supports initiatives that raise awareness of this problem helps to create positive change. Leading by example (like always buckling up and never drinking and driving) rubs off on others and helps break the tired stereotype of teens being reckless, careless drivers.

You may think you're better off not knowing about the dangers you face while driving. Not true. You will be better off armed with the facts and ways to help prevent crashes from occurring. Start spreading the word at your school and in your community.

Make a difference and get \$500 for your high school group

Traffic collisions are the number one killer of teens. Be part of the solution to this tragic problem and win \$500 for your high school group in the process.

Winning money for your school is easy: You get your fellow teens together and share information about an important traffic safety issue, such as distracted driving or drunk driving, and collect a \$500 check for your student program in the process.

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) manages a project funded by State Farm Insurance in which students conduct peer-to-peer educational projects on either distracted driving or teen alcohol issues and earn \$500 for their student group to spend on anything they want.



Photo courtesy of Hoquiam High School

How

Contact Jonna VanDyk at WTSC (jvandyk@wtsc.wa.gov) to get a copy of the grant application.

This is a simple process, in which teens do the work with support from their teachers or advisors.

The grant application lists 15 action steps, but you only need to do five. These include things like developing a brochure that you print and hand out at a school function or in the cafeteria during lunch.

Or develop a commitment poster (think: large banner) that says something like “I promise that I won’t text and drive,” and recruit your fellow teens at school to sign the poster.

Once your group agrees on which five action steps you will take on, write a letter (or cut and paste from the application) and send it to Jonna. Once accepted, funds are set aside for you and you proceed to do the action steps, taking pictures along the way. The pictures are emailed to Jonna and your advisor signs a form specifying that you’ve completed the steps. Once this is mailed in, your group is mailed a check for \$500. It’s that simple.

Thus far, 60 schools have undertaken projects. Students are working together to make a difference and are getting funds for their student groups in the process.

For more information, contact: Jonna VanDyk, Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) Program Manager, at 360-725-9885 or jvandyk@wtsc.wa.gov, or visit the WTSC web page wtsc.wa.gov.



Photo courtesy of Hoquiam High School