

Teens School Peers on Distracted Driving: There's No 'Fine' Time to Text

May 22, 2018

Image not found or type unknown



SILVER SPRING, Md. (May 22, 2018) To educate their peers on the dangers of distracted driving, high school seniors Kirklin “Mack” Hopkins (17) and Kellen Stadler (18) of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, North Carolina, send a clear message: A single second can have life-long consequences. Their poignant video, titled “It’s Not Fine,” is the winner of the [Toyota TeenDrive365 Video Challenge](#), a national driver safety public service announcement competition, using the tools of storytelling to get through to young drivers.

More than 1,300 videos were submitted to the competition by students to help inspire safe driving habits and spark a national conversation about staying safe behind the wheel.

“*It’s Not Fine* delivers a direct and powerful narrative that highlights the dangers of distracted driving and the ability of teens to encourage safe driving behavior,” said Mike Goss, general manager, Toyota Social Innovation.

The video opens with Sarah riding in the vehicle as her older sister Ellie texts and drives. Sarah says, “Mom said not to.” Ellie says, “It’s fine. I do it all the time. It’s only for a second.” The video cuts to years later, with Sarah now old enough to drive and behind the wheel. Believing “it’s fine” to text and drive, Sarah follows her sister’s example, with devastating consequences.

“The driver-safety video by Mack and Kellen is professional, resolute and a great example of how teens can influence their peers and others,” said Dr. Tracey Harrill, principal at Providence High School. “We are very proud of their work to communicate that ‘it’s not fine’ to text and drive.”

Toyota’s *TeenDrive365* is a comprehensive program to provide educators, parents and teens with critical safe driving materials. The video challenge, now in its seventh year, has received thousands of inspirational submissions that have celebrated teen’s creativity, while elevating the critical goal of protecting teens on the road.

“We are very proud of the powerful video storytelling by Mack and Kellen,” said Dr. Clayton Wilcox, superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. “It drives home the dangers of texting and driving in a dramatic, effective way. As a national PSA, it could save lives by showing what happens when you text and drive.”

The students were awarded \$15,000 and the opportunity to transform their video into a TV-ready PSA. View the video [here](#).

“All of us in CMS are very proud that our students’ work has been nationally recognized,” said Joey Burch, principal at Levine High School. “By showing the tragic consequences of texting and driving, the video impresses the need for safety on everyone.”

Other winners include:

- **Second Place:** Porter Christensen, student at Pine View High School in Saint George, Utah will receive \$10,000 for developing *Stupid Stats*.
- **Third Place:** Jake Wieners, an Agawam High School student from Agawam, Massachusetts will receive \$7,500 for *Don’t Blind Yourself*.

- **People's Choice Winner:** Michael Sivvianakis, an Old Rochester Regional High School student from Mattapoisett, Massachusetts was voted the *People's Choice* winner. Sivvianakis will receive \$7,500 – for the *People's Choice* and top 10 finalist awards – and a behind-the-scenes trip to a *Velocity* network taping for *Magic Won't Help You*.

The additional six finalists will receive \$2,500, and four regional winners from the Northeast, Midwest, South and West regions will receive \$1,000. National and Regional *Toyota TeenDrive365 Video Challenge* finalists can be viewed [here](#).

“TeenDrive365 strikes a chord with teens as role models. Peer-to-peer influence is a powerful tool to engage teens in driver safety conversations, said Kristin Hirst, vice president of corporate education partnerships,” Discovery Education. “We applaud this year’s grand prize winners Mack and Kellen for their use of immersive storytelling, creativity and authenticity to positively influence others and ultimately help save lives.”

Access all *TeenDrive365* program resources and view finalist videos at TeenDrive365.com.