**FOR RELEASE TO LOCAL NEWS MEDIA AFTER PRE-OBSERVATIONS ARE COMPLETE:**

*Local students focus on distracted driving*

*prevention with ‘Zero Crazy!’ effort*

Texting while driving. Talking on a cell phone while driving. Looking away from the road to change the radio station. There’s a crazy number of new teenage drivers with these and other crazy habits, so students at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ High School are putting a spotlight on the problem with an activity they call “Zero Crazy!”

Distracted driving is extremely dangerous, yet many teens don’t seem to realize the danger they’re putting themselves in. Zero Crazy is designed to promote awareness about those dangers as part of the Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) program which students at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ High have recently introduced.

Zero Crazy is a student run, hands-on program that helps inspire learning in schools. Members of the TDS program first practice their sleuthing skills by observing and recording instances of dangerous, distracted driving around \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (School name or abbreviation). After compiling the list, students set up a number of demonstrations to show how dangerous distracted driving can be.

These demonstrations and activities involve the student body, so that everyone can see firsthand the dangers of taking their eyes off the road for even a few seconds. After the activities, students once more make observations of their fellow students to see whether they were able to change some bad driving habits.

“Our team is really excited about Teens in the Driver Seat and the Zero Crazy initiative that are both designed to educate teenagers about the dangers involved with driving,” says \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Ex: Student Council leader, TDS student leader, other student leader etc.) Zero Crazy is an entertaining, interactive activity that also spreads awareness about crazy driving habits.”

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**FOR RELEASE TO LOCAL NEWS MEDIA AFTER POST-OBSERVATIONS ARE COMPLETE:**

*[insert high school name] completed distracted driving prevention with ‘Zero Crazy!’ activity*

The [high school name here] Teens in the Driver Seat® team recently participated in the “Zero Crazy” activity through Texas A&M Transportation Institute to help bring awareness of the risks of distracted driving while encouraging young drivers to create better habits behind the wheel.

On [date of observation] the team completed field observations to find out how many teens were visibly distracted behind the wheel. They found [insert percent] percent of observed teen drivers were either holding an electronic device, talking on a cell phone, or visibly using a device.

Over the next three weeks, the Teens in the Driver Seat team completed activities and messaging, such as [insert completed activities here] to encourage the students of [insert high school] to end the crazy behavior of distracted driving, then completed another observation to find out is they made a difference. According to their observations, they were successful in decreasing visibly distracted driving by [insert percent] percent.

As [Insert team member name here], a [high school name] [grade level], explains, “We think distracted drivers are just crazy. Not only are they crazy for taking such a huge risk, but they drive crazy when they don’t pay attention to the road. It dangerous, it’s crazy, and we’re working hard to change people’s habits.”

[insert another team member name] adds, “We can see distracted drivers on the roads. They swerve, they don’t keep a consistent speed, and they put everyone at risk. They are as dangerous as drunk drivers.”

The [insert high school name] Teens in the Driver Seat team includes [insert team members].

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For school newspapers:

*We’re Aiming for Zero Crazy!*

Cell phones are a popular target as a distraction, but distractions are anything that takes your eyes, hands, and/or mind off driving. This can include other passengers, eating, your emotional state and other things. The under-20 age group represents the greatest proportion of distracted drivers – 16% of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving and more fatal teen crashes occur when passengers (often other teens) are in the car.

There has been a lot of research on the effects of distractions and we have learned that texting and driving causes reaction time to double and those drivers have a harder time staying in their lane and maintaining a consistent speed. Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times more likely to get into an injury crash and drivers who text behind the wheel increase their crash risk up to 23 times. Similarly, when there are multiple passengers, the crash risk is three to five times greater than when driving alone. This risk is greater for young drivers aged 16 to 17.

Here is what you can do to avoid distraction dangers:

* Focus on the road. The time to multi-task is not when you are driving
* Keep distractions out of the car. If you know you will be tempted to look at or use your phone, lock it in the trunk or turn it off
* Designate a texter. If you have a passenger, hand over your phone so they can do your texting or talking for you
* Set your music/radio before you take your car out of Park
* Ask passengers to obey your rules while they are in the car, meaning buckle up and don’t distract you
* Be a good passenger by not distracting the driver
* Keep teen passengers to a minimum when you first begin to drive

Keep our drive alive!