



News Release

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National Safety Council announces Teen Driving Safety Leadership Award winners *Judy Weber-Jones and Kaylen Larson recognized*

Itasca, IL – The National Safety Council today announced Judy Weber-Jones of Illinois and Kaylen Larson of Minnesota as the winners of its 3rd annual Teen Driving Safety Leadership Award, supported by the General Motors Foundation. This announcement comes in conjunction with [National Teen Driver Safety Week](#), which takes place Oct. 16-22. The award recognizes exceptional contributions that prevent motor vehicle crashes, injuries and deaths involving teen drivers. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens – killing more teens annually than the next three leading causes of death for that age group combined.

“These two individuals have both demonstrated leadership in their efforts to prevent teen driving crashes,” said Janet Froetscher, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. “They have worked in ways that NSC believes have the strongest impact, such as engaging with elected officials and educating teens about the benefits of Graduated Driver Licensing – a method proven to reduce teen driver crashes.”

Weber-Jones, a driver education teacher for more than 25 years, developed a safety campaign for local youth that expanded throughout the state of Illinois and to other states. Additionally, she has advocated with elected officials for laws that protect teens and other drivers, including the recently passed Illinois bill that bans all cell phone use in school and construction zones. She worked with Families Against Chronic Excessive Speed (FACES4) to increase speeding fines in Illinois. For 2.5 years, Weber-Jones worked with Repr. Bill Black and Gloria and Chuck Wilhelm to pass Matt’s Law, in honor of the Wilhelm’s son Matt who died in a distracted driving crash. The law bans texting while driving in Illinois. Weber-Jones also gives lectures, organizes seminars and works with the Illinois Secretary of State’s office, the Illinois Department of Transportation, The Allstate Foundation, State Farm Foundation, Shriners Hospitals for Children, the Illinois Teen Safe Driving coalition and the Andy Pilgrim Foundation to promote safe teen driving practices in Illinois and other states.

Larson, age 17, works as an advocate for safe teen driving in her community, state and nationally. She has worked with the U.S. Department of Transportation, served as a member of the National Organization for Youth Safety Teen Distracted Driving Prevention Leadership Team and the Minnesota Teen Safe Driving Coalition, and has spoken with legislators and representatives about the need for stronger GDL and distracted driving laws. Larson planned and hosted a local distracted driving summit at her high school that 500 youth attended. She also created a pledge to stop texting while driving, and more than 20 legislators took the pledge. Additionally, Larson testified for the STANDUP Act, a federal bill that would provide incentives to states that enact GDL laws.

“Helping young, inexperienced drivers develop safe driving skills is a vital strategy to reducing vehicle crashes and deaths at the most vulnerable time in their lives,” said Mike Robinson, General Motors vice president, Environment, Energy and Safety Policy. “We commend this year’s winners for their consistent commitment to protecting teens and their collaboration with parents, educators and local officials to develop effective programs that can be modeled across the country.”

The two honorees will receive their awards at the NSC Defensive Driving Awards Banquet, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 29, in Philadelphia.

About the National Safety Council

Founded in 1913 and chartered by Congress, the National Safety Council (nsc.org) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to save lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. NSC advances this mission by partnering with businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public to make an impact where the most preventable injuries and deaths occur, in areas such as distracted driving, teen driving, workplace safety and beyond the workplace, particularly in and near our homes.

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