



U.S. Department  
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Administration

# SAFETY NOW

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## Booster Seats The Focus of Child Passenger Safety Week 2002

### Motor# ehicle Crashes Continue to Be Leading Cause of Death of Children Ages 4 to 14

**February 10–16, 2002. Child Passenger Safety Week.** Despite recent impressive gains in child restraint use and a decrease in the number of child fatalities since 1996, NHTSA estimates that fewer than 10 percent of booster seat-aged children—generally 4 to 8 years old—use booster seats on a regular basis.

According to NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge, that’s why there is special emphasis this year on getting children who have outgrown their child safety seats to use booster seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall. He said that premature use of adult seat belts by children could result in serious abdominal and other injuries. “A booster seat raises the child up so the adult seat belt fits properly,” he said.

This year’s major Child Passenger Safety Week events included:

- **February 5. Avis Rent A Car System, Inc.,** released a video news release announcing that Avis has adopted the new universal LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children) system as its standard for child safety seat installation. Avis will offer LATCH-compatible vehicles to all customers.
- **February 7. The National Safe Kids Campaign** released findings of a new nationwide child safety seat observational survey that looked at child restraint use, nonuse and misuse, and made recommendations for future improvements.
- **February 12. NHTSA, along with the National Latino Children’s Institute (NLCI), Nationwide Insurance, and ASPIRA New York,** hosted a national news conference at 10 a.m. at Beacon School, 2756 Reservoir Avenue, Bronx, NY. The conference highlighted the

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Robert Lange of the General Motors Corporation (left) listens as Dr. Martin Eichelberger, president and co-founder of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign (right) addresses attendees at the Feb. 7th SAFE KIDS news conference.

## If It’s Valentine’s Day, It’s Child Passenger Safety Week

By Jennifer Hogan, NTS-22

Parents want to protect their children at all times including while riding in the car. Cautious parents may always make certain that their seven-year old is buckled up securely in a seat belt. But does this ensure

that their loved one is safe? Not necessarily. Depending on height, children up to the age of eight still require specialized care in vehicles. Seat belts do not fully protect those under 4-feet 9-inches tall, but a booster seat appropriate to your child’s size will.

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*Corazón de mi Vida* ("Center of My Life") campaign for the Latino community, which stresses the importance of placing children in the back seat of a vehicle and in the appropriate child safety seat every time. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 1 to 44.

- Also at the Bronx event, NHTSA unveiled its new multicultural outreach website. The web site ([www.nhtsa.dot.gov/multicultural](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/multicultural)) has an extensive Spanish section and is also designed to make materials tailored to minority communities readily available to the public.
- **February 13. DaimlerChrysler, NHTSA and the National Transportation Safety Board** announced a new national effort that will expand the scope and improve the accessibility of child passenger safety information. ■

## If It's Valentine's Day, It's Child Passenger Safety Week

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Child safety seat use plummets after the age of 3. In a study by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, one-half of 3- to 8-year-old children were not being placed in child safety or booster seats where most belong. In honor of Child Passenger Safety Week, special planner kits are available for parents and organizations that include:

- **"4 Steps For Kids" Poster**—This outlines and illustrates guidelines for protecting your children from infancy through approximately the age of 8.
- **Information**—For example, children under the age of 12 should sit in the back seat of vehicles. The front seat is not only more dangerous, but also front air bags could injure children even in minor fender-benders.
- **School Flyers**—Help us spread the message by taking a kit to your children's school and community groups. Help keep all children safe!

DOT employees are welcome to stop by the Office of Communications and Outreach in Room 5119 to obtain a planner kit. Information on the program is also available in Spanish. Be sure to visit NHTSA's web site at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) for information on Child Passenger Safety Week. ■

## WHY WE USE BOOSTER SEATS.



### REASON #235 TO USE BOOSTER SEATS: HER SMILE.

Sometimes, it's as easy to protect your children as it is to love them. When your child outgrows his or her safety seat, use a booster seat until your child is at least eight years old or is over 4-feet 9-inches tall. Seat belts alone are made for adults. A booster seat raises a child up so the seat belt fits, preventing the child from being thrown from the car in a crash. To learn more, go to [www.buckleupamerica.org](http://www.buckleupamerica.org)

Parents protecting children  
with child safety seats.



## Mothers Against Drunk Driving Holds Impaired Driving Summit

By Misty Moyse,  
Director of Media Relations, MADD

In January 2002, MADD held an Impaired Driving Summit that brought together key partners in highway safety to renew the interest in drunk driving issues and develop new recommendations to substantially reduce alcohol-related injuries and fatalities. Experts in the highway safety field spent two days exchanging ideas and strategizing about methods to reduce alcohol-related fatalities on topics that ranged from the newest research, government responsibilities, effective laws, enforcement and countermeasures.

The purpose of the Summit was to discuss a re-prioritization on impaired driving issues after the release of NHTSA's 2000 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data showed the first increase in alcohol-related traffic fatalities in five years. There were 16,653 alcohol-related fatalities reported in 2000. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people are injured in alcohol-related crashes. A full report with recommendations will be issued later this spring.

Dr. Jeff Runge, NHTSA Administrator, provided opening day remarks and approximately 11 other NHTSA representatives attended the Summit. ■

# NHTSA Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**January 17, 2002. Nassif Building.**

Congratulations and job well done to all the NHTSA employees who produced the inspirational tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. on what would have been his 73rd birthday.

To a standing room only audience, keynote speaker Govinia Lewis Harris, manager, Transition Assistance Management Program, Fleet and Family Support Center, Fort Meade, Maryland, and founding director of an international women's leadership conference, paid tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.'s global vision, his prophetic and profound message of non-violence, and the impact he made on his generation and every generation that followed.

She urged the audience to learn to enjoy the good things that life has to offer; a life that requires us to continue to develop that which has been deposited with us, and to aim for success in every arena in our life. "You too, can develop the innate abilities within you," she said.

Cheree Jefferson and Hakeem Brown-Bey, students at Jefferson Junior High School in Washington, DC read poems they had written in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., and NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge

acknowledged the students participation with a plaque of appreciation.

Dr. George Quick, Director, Office of Civil Rights, closed the celebration, and Almata Hilton delivered the benediction.

Eugene Peterson, NHTSA African American Program Manager emceed the event, and William Hubbard and Friends



**From left to right: Donna Gilmore, Sam Daniels, Jr., NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge, Earleen Hughes, Eugene Peterson, Terrance Webster, Margaret Cauthorne, Dr. George Quick**

contributed the inspirational music.

Members of the Program Planning Committee included Eugene Peterson, Chairperson; Phyllis Alston and Earleen Hughes, Co-Chairpersons; Dawn Beverly, Margaret Cauthorne, Antoine Clark, Cathy Cummings, Renita Cole, Sam Daniel, Jr., Carolyn Felder, Donna Gilmore, Carmen Hayes, Almata Hilton, Barbara Jackson, Derrick Lewis, Hazel Maddox, and Terrance Webster. The ushers were Sam Daniel, Jr., Early Hardy and Mark Vinson. ■



**William Hubbard and Friends. William Hubbard on the keyboard, NHTSA's own Derrick Lewis on saxophone and Tony Cothran on bass guitar**

## Fellowship of Christian Athletes Partners with One Way 2 Play Drug Free NHTSA Challenge

**By Craig Killgo, Traffic Safety Programs**

**January 9, 2002. San Antonio, TX.** The Fellowship of Christian Athletes announced a new national partnership with NHTSA to help deter underage drinking as well as impaired driving among high school and college students ages 15–24. The announcement was made by Dal Shealy, FCA President, during the annual College Coach of The Year awards breakfast sponsored by the American College Football Association (ACFA) and FCA.

The new partnership will develop a **One Way 2 Play Drug Free (OW2PDF) NHTSA Challenge** for high school and college coaches. The president of ACFA, Grant Taft, pledged the support of college coaches while keynote speaker, Bobby Bowden, Head Coach of Clemson University, also pledged his support to the national **OW2PDF NHTSA Challenge**.

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) was established in 1954 by a basketball coach from Oklahoma. Today, the FCA is a nationally recognized sports ministry program with active partnerships with the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and the National Basketball Association (NBA).

During the ACFA morning awards breakfast more than 850 college and high school coaches learned about agency programs and resources available through NHTSA's website and Regional Offices. NHTSA shared statistical data and crash facts that helped coaches better understand the national problem of impaired driving involving the young, high-risk driving population. Following the educational presentation, many coaches and FCA regional directors pledged their support for the national effort.

In the 2002 spring season, FCA plans to engage its coaching fraternities in the **OW2PDF NHTSA Challenge** to target underage drinking and impaired driving during spring breaks, proms, and graduations. Thousands of high school and college coaches will participate in OW2PDF educational rallies. Participating students will learn about the dangers of underage drinking and impaired driving through personal testimony from crash victims, professional athletes, and coaches.

Last October more than 1,000 students from 65 junior and senior high schools attended the **National OW2PDF Month** kick-off in Kansas City, MO, at the Kansas City Chiefs football stadium. Several Chiefs players, along with cheerleaders, gave motivational speeches while local KCTV5

provided coverage on the evening news. NHTSA Region VII Administrator Romel Cooks spoke with students about drunk driving prevention and received a special recognition award from FCA Vice President Carey Casey and FCA Director Milton Cooper. "It was a very powerful experience to see 1,000 students attend and participate in the anti-drug rally on a Saturday morning," said Ms. Cooks.

NHTSA Region VI Regional Program Manager Carl Wells and Joe McDonald of the Oklahoma Office of Public Safety helped establish the first known FCA traffic safety partnership in the United States. Today, the partnership continues to utilize the influence of FCA coaches and well-known members to promote traffic safety. At one past event, 8,000 students attended a University of Oklahoma football game and a pre-game FCA rally. Successful local efforts demonstrate how the State Highway Safety Offices and NHTSA Regions can work effectively with local chapters of the FCA.

May 21–28, 2002, during national **Buckle Up America Week**, FCA and NHTSA will actively promote the national **Buckle Up America** sports challenge to 850 coaches attending the Annual Black Coaches Association Convention in Indianapolis, IN. Coaches will be provided information and resources to help plan future traffic safety activities targeting high school and college students and athletes.

With FCA on board as a national partner, NHTSA has expanded its ability to deter underage drinking and impaired driving among youth, as well as encourage seat belt usage. ■

# M.J. Fingland Appointed Director of the Office of Public and Consumer Affairs



M.J. Fingland joined NHTSA's Office of Public and Consumer Affairs as Director in October 2001. As Director, her primary goal will be to educate the public about what NHTSA does on a day-to-day basis, not only in consumer information and recalls, but in effecting behavioral changes in the way Americans drive that can ultimately save lives and prevent injuries.

Prior to joining NHTSA, M.J. managed the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) public relations office and programs, serving as primary liaison between ACEP and the media. She began her career working for the NBC affiliate in Washington, DC, and also worked for the *Today Show* in booking guests

and contributing to story ideas. She has worked on the Hill as a press secretary for a Senator, and was a press secretary and surrogate media coordinator for the *Bob Dole for President Campaign* in 1996. As Director of Communications for the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Attorney General, she was afforded the opportunity to combine her key interests in medical and public health issues with communications.

M.J. is aware that public and government entities on the local, state and congressional level may not have a clear awareness of all that NHTSA does. "Everyone assumes we deal with the vehicle recalls, but they don't understand all the other things that we work on, such as Emergency Medical Services, impaired driving prevention, the promotion of booster seat use," she says. "My job is to pro-actively get the word to the public about the life saving measures we're taking here at the agency."

Getting the word to the public can take many forms. Certainly conference and public speaking forums that the Administrator attends, but also earned media, working in partnership with television, radio and newspaper outlets to help them inform their viewers, listeners and readers about what NHTSA is doing on a daily basis.

"Since September 11th, people are far more aware of security and safety issues. We'll be working in partnership with community organizations, various associations, both in the transportation realm, but also in the medical, health care and consumer advocacy arena where we can work in joint partnerships. Those organizations can work with their unique audiences and groups that they deal with on a day to day basis to help us get our messages out," she said.

M.J. lives in Alexandria, Virginia and is very active in her church and choir, and enjoys sailing, skiing and painting. ■

—Jameise Kelly, OPACA,  
interviewed M.J. for this article.

## Volunteers Represent NHTSA at Major Events

Volunteers from the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) staffed a booth at the 60th annual Washington Auto Show at the Washington Convention Center to promote the DOT Auto Safety Hotline and NHTSA's vehicle safety-related programs including the newly released Tire Safety Campaign. ODI partnered with the show sponsor, Washington Area New Automobile Dealer's Association (WANADA), who donated the 20-foot booth space to ODI. This year's auto show set a new attendance record reaching 854,000 during the seven-day event that ended on New Year's Day.

Volunteers from ODI and the Office of Planning and Consumer Programs also participated in the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) by staffing a booth to promote NHTSA's safety recall campaign, the Hotline, the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP), child safety, and other NHTSA programs. TRB is a unit of the National Research Council, which serves



as an independent advisor to the federal government on scientific and technical issues of national importance. Approximately 8,800 transportation professionals attended the annual meeting held during the second week

of January at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC representing federal and state agencies across the country with many participants coming from other countries throughout the world. ■

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance.

—Bruce Barton