

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Susan Barnett

773-881-6558

sbarnett@mothermcauley.org

OPERATION TEEN SAFE DRIVING PROGRAM

Mother McAuley was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Ford Motor Company and Allstate Insurance Foundation to present a safe driving program at the school. McAuley's program will focus on distracted driving, in particular, the hazards of cell phone use while operating a vehicle.

A committee of faculty from McAuley's Counseling Department and students developed activities to educate the school community about these major teen traffic safety concerns. The program was kicked off at Mother McAuley's Spirit Week Pep Rally on March 7 with a relay race. Students rode tricycles through a designated course while texting on a cell phone. As fellow students watched the racers veer off course, stop in mid-track and even drop the phones, they witnessed the dangers of distracted driving.

During the next few weeks, McAuley students will be involved in a number of different activities that will increase their awareness to the dangers of driving and using their cell phones. These activities include surveys, a slogan contest, guest speakers and an evening parent program. For the contest, student may submit slogan ideas that express the dangers of distracted driving. Once a slogan is selected, it will be printed on mobile phone holders and on stickers to be distributed to students and at local cell phone retailers.

Announced in November 2007, Operation Teen Safe Driving is a statewide program designed to help Illinois high schools implement local teen-led safe driving campaigns to decrease the number of fatalities and crashes involving teenagers. Selection

of the winning programs was based on each school's effectiveness in identifying a problem, creativity of proposals in addressing the problem and the program's ability to reach teens and the entire community. Ultimately, high schools that come up with the most creative solutions will be invited to participate in a half-day Ford sponsored "Ride and Drive" safe-driving clinic. These clinics will be taking place in the Chicago area, Central Illinois and Metro-East area. These "Ride and Drive" events feature professional drivers giving young drivers behind the wheel driving exercises, including: Hazard Recognition/Accident Avoidance, Vehicle Handling/Skid Control and Speed/Space Management.



McAuley sophomore Paige Travis demonstrates that driving and texting is dangerous - even if your vehicle is a tricycle.

###