

Xander Jordan Travis Lindsay TJ
Nielsen Kristin Emily Hughes Kevin
Barillo Kevin Alexander Mendes dos
Santos Jeremy Isaac Martinez
Mannah Lee Wagstaff Erica Trudy
Knell Chelise Locher Calvin Hansen
Alyssa Lopez Xander Jordan
Travis Lindsay TJ Nielsen Kristin
Emily Hughes
Alexander M
Jeremy Isaac
Wagstaff Erica Trudy Knell Chelise
Locher Calvin Hansen Alyssa Lopez

**THIRTEEN STORIES WE'D
RATHER NOT TELL 2008**

**The Utah Department of Health Violence and Injury Prevention Program
would like to thank all the families who so graciously shared their stories.**



**While Utah has a goal of Zero Fatalities—
it isn't about the numbers.**

Most teen publications thrive on volume: more pages equal more ads and more dollars. In the case of 13 Stories We'd Rather Not Tell, our equation is quite the opposite. Everyone affected by these deaths would be much happier if this book contained fewer pages. In fact, we'd prefer to have nothing to publish at all.

Each of the following 13 teens was much more than a number. They were just like you. Each was a friend, a neighbor, a classmate and a relative; someone who had dreams for the future, but will never see them fulfilled. Each tragic story, told from the heart of a mourning parent, could have been prevented if drivers would have taken more care on the road. The information in the following pages might be the most important thing you learn this year. So please, Don't Drive Stupid and help make this our last issue.

Alyssa Marie Lopez "Lys," Age 17, Salt Lake City, UT



On the afternoon of February 26, 2008, our baby girl Alyssa was taken from us. Alyssa was killed instantly in a three-car collision in the 5100 block of Ogden's Harrison Boulevard. She was coming home from a high school basketball game in Ogden with her friends. The car that clipped the car she was in was also full of her friends from Granger High School. The boy driving the other car tried to catch up to the car Alyssa was riding in, weaving in and out of traffic at high speeds. His car clipped Alyssa's car, sending it into a spin and into the northbound lanes of traffic. Her car was T-boned by another vehicle. The driver of the northbound car was in the hospital for orbital fractures. Alyssa was killed and her friend Isaiah, who was driving Alyssa's car, was treated for broken ribs and later released.

Dylan, another friend in the car with her, was hospitalized for a broken pelvis and other complications.

Getting the news that your daughter has died in a car crash is the worst feeling a mother can have. Seeing her lying there on that hospital bed motionless just about killed me. Since that day, my life has been awful. It has been really hard to get up and go to work. I have lost my most precious child to someone else's carelessness. She was a determined girl who worked to be the best she could, whether it was at home taking care of her three younger brothers, Reuben, Gregory and Anthony, or at school with her studies or with cheerleading.

In a moment, our lives were changed forever. A senseless crash took our daughter, sister, granddaughter, niece and friend. Her beautiful hazel eyes and bright smile would light up a room. Her laughter has been silenced, but her spirit will live on with us forever. She proved that a short life is not an incomplete life. The lives she touched will never be the same, and each day without her is a day where we will mourn our loss and remember our good fortune for having had her in our lives.

This crash should never have happened because one kid was not paying attention to the road or the people's lives that were in danger while he was driving aggressively. Unfortunately, the boy driving the car that hit Alyssa wasn't driving with his head. Now all we are left with is memories. We miss her so much and want her with us but the careless actions of this other driver robbed us of a life with "Lys."

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Calvin Hansen, Age 13, Spanish Fork, UT

We were all headed to Las Vegas to visit Grandma and Grandpa when we were involved in our car crash. The rest of the family was fine but Calvin wasn't wearing his seat belt. He was ejected from the car and died immediately. He would still be with us if he had been wearing his seat belt.

Calvin was in 8th grade. He did pretty well in school, but seemed to really love Spanish and was doing quite well learning the language. He had a plan for his schooling. He wanted to go to college and, after he graduated with his bachelor's degree, he wanted to continue on with either a Nurse Practitioner or Physicians Assistant degree. He had looked into the field, done some job shadowing, and was seriously planning on this for his life.

Calvin was supposed to be born in January, but he couldn't wait to come into the world and was born just before Christmas. He was our Christmas present that year, and he was the best present ever. Ever since that early entrance, he has always been eager to do things first. He loved being first when most of us would rather hang back and let someone else be first. He has always been so much fun. He was a friend to so many people and he didn't even realize it. He had a way with people - he could talk to grownups and entertain toddlers or babies while texting his friends all at once. He was our firstborn and he was such a wonderful example to his younger brothers. They looked up to him and he protected them.

Calvin was so full of life. He always had a smile on his face. He had an infectious happy spirit and was kind to everyone. That is one of the recurring themes in the notes from his friends. He was always active and full of life. He never seemed to slow down for anything. He enjoyed playing sports, hunting, camping, Scouts, rock climbing, running around with his friends and especially eating nonstop. He was also always volunteering to help others. He loved to help others; it was part of what everyone loved about him.

Calvin will be sorely missed but his memories will bring smiles and laughter forever. We will always remember his adventurous and sensitive spirit.

The rest of the family was fine but Calvin wasn't wearing his seat belt. He was ejected from the car and died immediately. He would still be with us if he had been wearing his seat belt.

Chelise Locher, Age 16, Hooper, UT



With 10 days left until Chelise's Daddy was to arrive in the country from his tour in Iraq, we were ready and counting down the days. On September 5, 2008, Chelise left with friends to go out. Full of energy and smiles, she yelled her usual "Bye, Ma" and slammed the door behind her. I called her later to ask a question. I joked and laughed with her. She was having a great time... but within the hour she would be dead.

Driving down a rural road in Plain City, the Ford Escort she was in with her friends was T-boned by a 26-year-old male driving a full-size pickup. He was driving approximately 40 miles per hour and failed to yield at the intersection. Chelise took the full impact of the crash. Her friends were able to walk away, but they will bear the scars that no 16-year-old should have to. Later, we would find out that the man was out on bail pending a felony DUI charge. While not drunk at the time, he had levels of a controlled substance in his system. We are currently awaiting charges.

Within 36 hours of her death, Chelise's Daddy came home to a very different homecoming than we had meticulously planned—six sobbing children and a broken wife to meet him

at the airport. Within three hours of stepping off the plane, we were selecting a casket for our beautiful angel. I can't even imagine the trauma he must have felt. Leaving a war zone and coming home to this.

No parent plans to bury a child. It is unthinkable. In time, I know my family will find happiness again. For now, every event is tainted because of her absence in our lives. I see her in sunflowers... wild, bright and bold. I never knew how deeply I could miss someone.

We all bear responsibility when we get behind the wheel. Not only for our safety, but for the safety of others. Be aware. The people in the other cars are someone's children.

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Erica Trudy Knell, Age 17, Park City, UT



It takes just a few seconds to make the decision to buckle up. Think about my daughter the next time you are deciding whether or not to buckle up, and think about how the consequences of that decision could affect the lives of all those who love you.

When Erica died, the hospital staff handed us the heart necklace she had been wearing that day. It was all they gave us. It was all that was left for us to keep. But that heart necklace was

the best thing that we could have received. It was around her neck on the last day of her life, Friday, September 5th, as she went to her classes and talked to her friends. It was around her neck as she left the University of Utah campus and drove to Park City. It was around her neck as she overcorrected her car, which had strayed over the edge of the road, causing it to roll. It was around her neck as she took her last breath and had her last conscious thought. It was around her neck when she passed from this world into the next.

How could it have survived such trauma without any scratches? How could it survive when her own heart couldn't? The doctors told us that impact with the ground after ejection caused Erica's pulmonary artery to tear. As she lay on the dirt and people stopped to help, her life was ebbing away. When the paramedics arrived, her life was almost gone. They didn't know then that her heart was broken beyond repair.

The heart necklace represents the best part of Erica because she lived her life with all of her heart. Everything she did was done with passion. Anyone who had watched her dance was mesmerized by the way she poured herself into her performances. Her freestyle aericals coach at the Utah Olympic Park

saw in her an athlete with determination and "fight"—an athlete with great heart; and it had been highly anticipated that she would join the 2009 USA Ski Team. She did everything to the fullest, and she shared herself so freely with others. When she left this life, the people who remained behind knew that they were deeply loved. She left a legacy of love. She left her heart here.

Her heart necklace survived when her own heart was beyond repair. My heart is also broken, and sometimes I don't understand how it can go on beating. I wonder every day, why she didn't wear her seat belt. Did she just forget? Did she think she was invincible? Why didn't she take a few seconds on that beautiful autumn day to buckle up? I will never know if that seat belt would have saved her life or not, and I will forever be left with the question.

It takes just a few seconds to make the decision to buckle up. Just a few seconds can end the life of someone as young, vibrant and beautiful as our Erica, and steal the happiness away from so many. Think about our daughter the next time you are deciding whether or not to buckle up, and think about how the consequences of that decision could affect the lives of all those who love you.



Hannah Wagstaff, Age 14, Tropic, UT

This photo was taken about 12 hours before Hannah's death on August 12, 2008. Our family was camped for the evening in preparation for a handcart trek to begin early the next morning. While we were waiting for our friends to arrive, Hannah got out her violin. She looked so beautiful silhouetted against the evening sky that I rose up from my seat and found the camera. This is the look she gave me when she realized I was taking pictures of her. It's a poor shadow of the actual scene, but we are so grateful for the photos now.

We arose early the next morning to begin the trek up Fairview Canyon.

I woke up with an inflamed sciatic nerve, and could tell that I would not be able to hike up and down hills all day. We reluctantly sent our two daughters with the group and planned to meet them at camp later in the day. About 30 minutes later we received the awful phone call.

The driver of the truck that hit Hannah didn't see the group, which included a horse-drawn wagon, a handcart and about 10 pedestrians. The truck struck the handcart from behind, killing Hannah instantly. Hannah was pushing the handcart alongside her good friend and her friend's father, with two younger children pulling at the front. It is a miracle that all five were not killed, as the handcart was literally reduced to bits of kindling. Hannah's eight-year-old sister was picked up and thrown into the barrow pit by an alert young man who perceived the danger before the impact. The man who organized the event was hit and killed as the truck swerved into the oncoming lane where he was attempting to wave the truck down.

No one intentionally caused this tragedy. A series of smaller errors in judgment combined to produce it. The driver said that the sun was in his eyes. We also feel that the organizers of the trek used poor judgment both in planning the route and not furnishing a flag car.

We miss Hannah more than we can say and we will never "get over it" until the day comes that we are reunited. However, we know that Hannah wants us to go on living, so we are doing our best, but it is pretty hard sometimes. My husband and I are both more conscious now of small errors in judgment while driving. All of us repeatedly get away with small mistakes, and tend to be overconfident while driving, often even multi-tasking. It would be wise

...all of us—repeatedly get away with small mistakes, and tend to be overconfident while driving, often even multi-tasking. It might sound trivial, but the fact is that every day some among us don't "get away" with the small mistakes and then the weight and speed of the vehicle magnifies the small error into a tragic crash.

to say something like the following to ourselves each time we slip behind the wheel: "Driving prudently is the only task I should be focused on until this vehicle is stopped and the ignition is turned off." It might

sound trivial, but the fact is that every day some among us don't "get away" with the small mistakes and then the weight and speed of the vehicle magnifies the small error into a tragic crash.

Isaac Martinez, Age 15, West Valley City, UT



Please watch the road closely, do not talk or text on your cell phone, do not play with the radio, or let your passengers distract you. Please drive safely!

On September 4, 2009 at about 11:00 p.m., our son Isaac, his grandparents, his three-year-old cousin, and I were leaving the Utah State Fair. Our car was stopped at a red light and Isaac was sitting in the back seat when an SUV, driven by a 19-year-old male not paying attention, slammed into the back of our car going 35 miles per hour. The force of the collision pushed the trunk into the backseat and the metal hit Isaac in the head so hard that he was immediately knocked unconscious. His brain swelled so much that he had no brain activity and was kept alive through life support for 18 hours. We begged the doctors to do every test possible to confirm there was no brain activity before we took him off life support on September 5th. THAT WAS THE HARDEST-MOST HORRIBLE DAY OF OUR LIVES.

As his mother, I can't begin to describe the

impact this has had on our lives. I relive that night daily. I have nightmares often and get little sleep. I remember the ambulance ride and the loud sirens that haunt me to my soul. I will never forget his last breath. Every day is a struggle to get out of bed as I pray this nightmare will end. We are numb, yet in so much pain—trying to survive each day. We miss Isaac so much it hurts every part of our bodies. We grieve knowing we will never see him graduate from high school, never watch him get married and never get to see him be a father. We have wonderful memories and talk about him every day. Isaac's 16th birthday was July 18, 2009. Most teenagers would get a driver's license on this day, but Isaac received a headstone for his gravesite.

Isaac was a happy, outgoing, friendly and funny teenager with many dreams. He had just started 9th grade and was looking forward to high school. He was a handsome boy with a great big heart and beautiful smile. He loved listening to his iPod, playing his guitar, texting on his cell phone and

hanging out with friends and family. He loved to greet everyone with a hug and kiss. Every day I told him I loved him and he always smiled and said, "I love you too, mama."

The last time I saw Isaac alive was when we were leaving the fair. I asked him if he had a good day and he replied with a big smile, "Yes, mama I had fun." He had watched the rodeo, rode some rides and eaten a deep fried peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Our fun family outing became our worst nightmare in an instant.

Our family has changed. Our lives have changed. We are heartbroken. I hope Isaac's story helps everyone be more aware and pay more attention when driving. Please watch the road closely, do not talk or text on your cell phone, do not play with the radio or let your passengers distract you. PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY!

Jeremy Lynn Rasmussen, Age 17, Pahrump, NV

Jeremy Lynn Rasmussen was born on November 8, 1990. He was a beautiful, blonde-haired, blue-eyed baby. Soon after his birth, we all knew he was a going to be a risk taker. Jeremy would be the first one to try something new. When Jeremy was three years old, he dove right into a swimming pool. At seven, he tried to cross a flooded wash. He was fearless and never backed down.

Jeremy was an incredible kid. He had a heart of gold and had his whole life ahead of him. He was very involved with his community, family and school. He volunteered during the summer coaching at-risk youth basketball players. In high school, he participated in basketball, football and weightlifting. He was aspiring to be a personal trainer.

On July 18, 2008, our lives were changed forever as he took one last risk. Early that morning, we were contacted by the Utah Highway Patrol that Jeremy had passed away in a preventable crash on Interstate 15 at mile marker 12, near the Exit 10 off-ramp in St. George, Utah. The driver of Jeremy's vehicle was tired from driving 15 hours non-stop and had fallen asleep at the wheel.

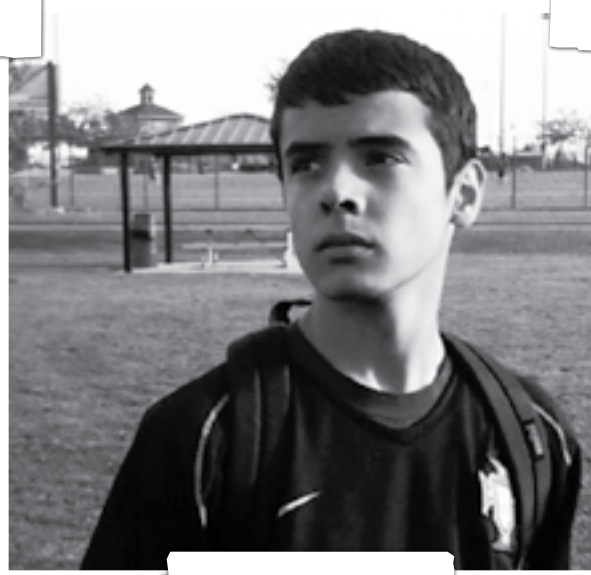


The Highway Patrol said that if Jeremy would have been wearing his seatbelt he would have survived the crash. His younger sister, Alise, who was wearing her seatbelt, was the only survivor.

Not a moment passes that Jeremy and the thought of this tragic accident does not touch our family. He and his daring nature will live on within our hearts forever.

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Kevin Alexander Mendes dos Santos, Age 15 Provo, UT



Kevin Alexander Mendes dos Santos was born into a family of one sibling, his brother William. Later, his younger brother, Steven, came along. Since a very early age, Kevin was a very sensitive and caring soul, always able to make others feel comfortable, accepted, valuable, of worth and loved. His loving ability to make others feel more sure of themselves and capable of doing good things was his own trademark.

No words in any language can properly define what we all felt. Kevin was taken from us abruptly, with no warning signs, no time to prepare ourselves, and no goodbyes.

Kevin came to Utah with his family when his father came to pursue Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Having been raised in Europe until the age of 12, he faced the challenge of learning a different language and culture. He grew up in a family of multicultural members; his own maternal grandfather was British. Kevin had the opportunity of living in England for awhile where he attended school with his brother William. With these experiences, Kevin was keen on accepting others and understanding the value of each individual and the worth of each nation.

Kevin was 15 when he passed away in a tragic crash on his way to Salt Lake City for a soccer game. His friends had pleaded with him to go, as he was a very promising soccer player. He woke up on the morning of August 2, 2008, his parent's wedding anniversary day, and got ready for the game. The trip ended just a mile from his home on 1-15.

After his passing, quite a few of his friends spoke of Kevin's characteristic of brightening their days with just his smile. Kevin was always willing to help anyone in need, even without being asked. He was always very keen on excusing people's faults even without them excusing themselves. He

saw people for who they truly were. Kevin grew up to be a very strong young man, in the sense of upholding principles of justice and peace, always in his relationships with other young men and young women to strive to maintain and defend peace.

The emotional trauma that we as parents, brothers, family away in Europe and friends suffered is indescribable. No words in any language can properly define what we all felt. Kevin was taken from us abruptly, with no warning signs, no time to prepare ourselves, and no goodbyes. No one can replace Kevin, so when we hold a life in our hands we should be aware that we are holding someone else's treasure.

If there is something we can ask from you reading these words about a young man that you have never met, it is that you will be willing, as he was, to truly think of others first, their worth, their value, their future that can be interrupted by a careless little second. On Kevin's behalf, as a mother, I dare to ask from you to think of others first, serve others, do good and live well. Honor your life by honoring the lives of others.



Kevin Yhair Carrillo

Age 13, Salt Lake City, UT

My son died on August 9, 2008 in a motor scooter crash just one block from our house. His friend, whom he liked a lot, came over on his scooter early on that Saturday morning to the house. We were all home—my husband and my other two children ages four and six. I was cooking and my husband was outside in the yard with them fixing a bicycle. About 2:30 p.m., my son's friend told Kevin he was leaving. My husband told Kevin, "Don't get on the scooter, Kevin." When my husband stopped what he was doing to get him off the motor scooter, they drove off. My son's friend didn't stop at the stop sign at the intersection and they crashed into a white Acura. Being thrown from the scooter, my son hit his head and crushed his torso, dying instantly. He was only 13 years old. He never made it to the hospital. His friend survived.

It is a very painful loss. One feels a great emptiness inside. Now when my children ride bicycles I require that they wear helmets.

It is a very painful loss. One feels a great emptiness inside. His two brothers miss him very much and we can't overcome the loss of my dear son Kevin Yhair Carrillo.

Now when my children ride bicycles I require that they wear helmets. I would ask parents that they be more careful and protective of their children. Teenage years can be difficult, but at the same time, this loss is irreplaceable. Kevin will always live in our hearts and in our minds.

Kristin Emily Hughes, Age 18, North Salt Lake, UT

Kristin grew up in North Salt Lake, attended Orchard Elementary and South Davis Jr. High, and had recently graduated in 2007 from Woods Cross High School. Kristin was attending the University of Utah, intending to become a veterinarian.

On January 2, 2008, we were to meet Kristin and Mikaela, her youngest sister, in Price at about 6:30 p.m. The girls had spent Christmas and New Year's with their dad, and were coming down to visit before they had to start school. Their dad usually ran a bit late, so we waited and went to get something to eat. We tried calling both Brian and Kristin's cell phones, but couldn't reach them. At 8:30 p.m., we decided to check with the Price Police Department to see if they knew if something was going on in Spanish Fork Canyon that was delaying them. They told us there had been a bad wreck and asked my children's names and what color of car they were in. I had a gut-wrenching feeling by what they were asking that something was not right. We had barely left the Police Department when Primary Children's Medical Center called and said my daughter Mikaela had been in a car accident and to make sure I bring someone with me for support. I asked about Kristin and was told she was taken to another hospital. At this point, I felt that Kristin had not made it because, if she had, she would probably have been taken to Primary Children's too.

We started heading toward the wreck and finally turned our hazard lights on and drove on the wrong side of the road to get to the wreck site, since they had basically shut the road down

and were still cleaning up. The officer said they hit black ice and lost control. The car veered into oncoming traffic and was T-boned on the passenger side where Kristin was. She was pronounced dead at the scene. Mikaela was in stable condition and their father was in critical condition. The officer gave us a police escort out of the canyon. The accident happened on the only place on Highway 6 that had snow and ice that night. This accident could possibly have been avoided if the road had been sanded or cleared.

At Kristin's funeral, I was touched to see how many people were there. I didn't know how many lives she had touched. She loved to make people laugh. Looking through all the family pictures we have of her, she either has a smile on her face or is making a funny face. Kristin will be greatly missed. Not a day goes by that we don't think of her. Some days are harder than others, especially family gatherings or holidays. You never know what will set you off crying. Alan Jackson's song, "Sissy's Song," reminds me so much of Kristin. Cherish each day you have with your family because life can change in an instant.



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T.J. was not a "show-off;" he was a very responsible motorist. It was his inexperience as a motorcycle rider that caused his crash.

Terry Jeremy "T.J." Nielson, Age 18, West Valley City, UT



T.J. was very responsible and fun-loving and had a zest for life. While attending high school, T.J. got a job at Jiffy-Lube and, during his two-year tenure, never missed a day of work. T.J. enjoyed working on his cars and bullet bike; he was blessed with mechanical talents. Upon high school graduation, T.J. started working at Larry H. Miller Dodge in the Lube-shop. T.J. was looking forward to starting their mechanic apprentice program to further his talents.

Whenever his car or bullet bike had a mechanical problem, he would not rest until he had it fixed. The Saturday before his accident, we participated with the House of Hope's annual biker ride. On our way home, T.J. explained that his bike did not seem to be working right. During the next few nights after work, he would be out tinkering

around to fix it. On Thursday evening, T.J. had discovered the problem. I came home with pizza, but he was not ready to eat. He said "I gotta take it out for a quick test drive." The minutes passed and we began to wonder why T.J. had been gone for so long. Then came the knock on the door, it was the West Valley City Police Department and they had come to tell us about the crash.

T.J. was heading North on Bangerter Highway, crossing through 3500 South changing lanes into the right lane. As the curve approached, he realized he was going too fast and braked. Unfortunately, T.J. used the front brake pulling the bike straight and forcing it off the road and into the gravel. This caused the brakes to lock up and, at this point, the bike was out of his control.

Although he had on all the correct protection - helmet and protective riding jacket - he was killed on impact. T.J. was not a show-off; he was a very responsible motorist. It was his inexperience as a motorcycle rider that caused his crash.

We truly miss T.J. and always will. T.J.'s contagious laughter, silly jokes and smile are the things we miss the most. However, we are comforted to know he is waiting for us. In 2005, T.J. and his father attended the Promise Keepers Event. T.J. kept his member card in his wallet where his driver license should be. Two weeks prior to his death, he had lost his wallet in a public parking garage. I advised T.J. that "We have a big God," and that the wallet would be returned with all the contents in it. About a week later, we received a knock at the door. T.J. answered, and a gentleman was there returning his wallet and all the contents in it.

Upon returning to the accident scene, his sister looked over the wall, and lying on the ground on top of some trash was a picture of Jesus. We are comforted to know that these little events happen to assure us that T.J. has returned to his loving creator, and we will get to see him again.

Travis Lindsay, Age 18, Spanish Fork, UT



On September 22, 2008, we lost our son Travis in an auto crash on the freeway. Travis was on his way home from work around 9:30 p.m. He and his friend, Rory, met up with another car of guys they knew traveling down the road. At this point we are not sure what happened but something caused Travis' car to veer off the road. The car lost control and rolled, ejecting Travis and Rory from the vehicle. Travis passed away at the scene and Rory was critically injured. According to the police, they were not wearing seatbelts.

Our family will never be the same. Our loss is so great and Travis was so young, just 18 years old. Travis was our second son and his older brother Bo had passed away just three months earlier. We miss them every minute of every day and take comfort from knowing they are together.

Please set an example of wearing seatbelts. Hug your family often and love them unconditionally. You never know when they will be taken from you and you may not get the chance to tell them just how much they mean to you.

You are forever in our hearts, Travis.

**Please set an example of wearing seatbelts.
Hug your family often and love them unconditionally.
You never know when they will be taken from you and
you may not get the chance to tell them just how
much they mean to you.**

Xander Jordan, Age 18, Draper, UT



Xander was so alive and so active in the world that looking at his picture is just devastating. We know that he is an eternal part of our lives, but this existence is so much less without him. This has been the most difficult thing we have ever had to write. It makes us have to face our biggest regret that we won't be able to see him accomplish his goals.

Xander was going uphill on 1300 East just north of the 12300 South intersection where the road does a large S-turn. The worst cloudburst of the year had caught him unprepared. Xander's phone was found on the floor of the 2000 Mustang we had just purchased for him six weeks earlier. It appears he was texting just before he lost control of the car. The police determined that the condition of the tires was a contributing factor to the crash.

Xander was one of those rare souls who touched everyone he met. He was not one to sit at home alone. Even when he gamed online he did it with a group from around the world. He would talk to them and do homework at the same time. We had no idea just how many people knew and loved him.

Xander only had to do his solo flight to earn his private pilot's license. He had discovered his love of aircraft after getting a job working for MillionAir, who also offered him the opportunity to head up the 2007 Santa Flight. This program involved helping to collect and distribute food, clothing and toys for Indian Reservations in Utah at Christmastime. He coordinated the distribution of over 80,000 lbs. of food and hundreds of articles of clothing and toys and logged more than 2,000 hours of personal and volunteer time on it.

Our solace comes from the stories others have told us of the things he did. At his funeral, we met and cried with some of the people he knew. They ranged from CEOs of corporations, the mayor of Draper and State Representative Greg Hughes, to those kids at school nobody understood. We really didn't know our son as much as we thought. We found out how he took care of so many others and was an influence for good in their lives.

We realize that Xander lived more in his 18 years than most people live in their entire lives. How many others like him have we lost? How many DaVincis or Ben Franklins? How many poets or future leaders or healers have we lost to carelessness? My prayer is that we can eliminate the loss of life from the avoidable. To teach our kids and ourselves to eliminate cell phone usage while driving would help our world to be a better place and keep our youth here as long as we can.

Parents aren't the only ones affected

There are upsets in life that career you down a path you are not prepared for. My sister saved my life. Her sudden departure was my first experience with the precarious, preciousness of living. I was in an abusive relationship, I was living in filthy conditions and I was not taking charge of my situation. Losing my little sister made me see, touch and feel a new range of life that I had not yet made contact with. I still really miss her every day; however, I am in a healthy relationship with a very good man and I continued with school to finish my degree. Accepting the challenge, no matter how unpleasant, painful or frightening it may be, and continuing on is, for me, what the journey called LIFE is about. I can choose to sing or cry, dance or crawl, hide or fly. In the end, we all go on to the next great adventure.

-Sister

It was a horrible shock. Our planned weekend of fun went in a totally opposite direction. It's never quite the same when someone is gone... whether it's for the weekend or for a while longer.

-Brother

She was my big sister and a close friend. She was extremely ticklish and was always smiling or laughing. I am so proud when people say I look or act like her. I miss her so much. Sometimes I find myself so sad or full of anger that I can't help but cry. My life has been turned upside down and shoved into a blender. Things that were once meaningless or worthless have now become priceless, my most cherished possessions. She brightened my world and did the same for many others. I only hope I can follow her example.

-Sister

You were my best friend, the one who knew me better than anyone, the one who fought away my fears, catching every tear. You were always helping me live, making sure I was safe, a real role model. You were hard to follow in steps, because you were better than the rest. You were a light inside us all, a real 'BIG SIS'.

The light is no longer there, my fears taking over, my tears keep falling, life is not the same, my big sis is gone forever, never going to see her first niece or know her name, but she will see you and know who you were. I wish every day you were here, life is no longer fun, it's a nightmare that seems like it never ends. You will never see me graduate, I can't bear your birthday, wondering how things would be if you were still here. I love you so much and miss you more. I don't know why you, someone whose life was just beginning.

-Sister

On September 22, 2008, my life and many others' lives changed forever. I was awoken in the night to see a very close friend with tears running down his face. I asked what he was doing and what was wrong. I remember him replying to me, "Trav just died, dude."

The next few days taught me a lot about life. I learned not to take things for granted. We had it made, a group of friends from high school, so many good memories and fun times. I thought that was something that was a part of life. I realize now that it can be taken from me so easily. I learned to live in the moment and to love and express it to my friends and family and everyone I know because there might not be another time to say I love you or to give them a hug.

For me and many of my friends there was not a tomorrow to give Trav one more hug. There was no "next time to do this," or "one day we should do that." I can't express in words how much I miss having Trav around and how much I wish that I could have that "next time" or "tomorrow."

So, one way that losing my best friend in a car crash has changed me is to be more attentive. Not only in the car and paying attention to regular maintenance to my car and to friends' cars, to wearing our seat belts and paying a little more attention when we're driving. Also, being more attentive in my relationships with friends and family because taking the time to give a hug or to say thank you or I love you is a lot better than wishing I had one more time.

-Best Friend

Kristin was a friend to our entire family and we all felt happier after being around her. Our 6 year old, Sarah, still makes silly faces when you go to take her picture because it was taught to her by Kristin. Another one of our daughters, Tawnie, has special needs. Kristin was a true friend to her. If Tawnie had been left out of something, here came Kristin to the rescue to take her out and cheer her up. Kristin always included Tawnie on outings with her other friends. She really made Tawnie feel special and a part of things. Kristen also planned to be a vet and have her own clinic. She planned to have Tawnie work at her clinic. Other parents heard about how Kristin was with Tawnie and they say it brought them hope for their own child's life.

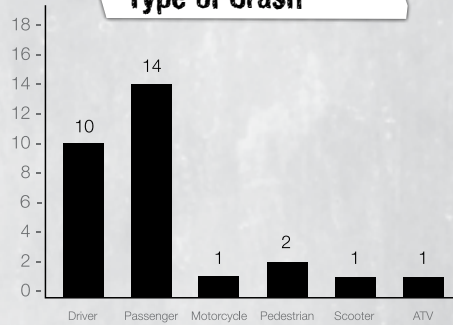
Tawnie still cries a couple times a month and talks about her everyday. Sarah still has to leave the room when Kristin is brought up. They tell everyone about her. Amanda and Maria look at her picture and they know how special she is to every one. My husband and I instantly had a huge hole in our hearts and lives. We have had other people come into our lives, but no one is like Kristin. Kristin's animation, story telling, laugh, encouragement, compassion, determination and silliness made her so unique and so irreplaceable.

Love,

- Friends of the Family

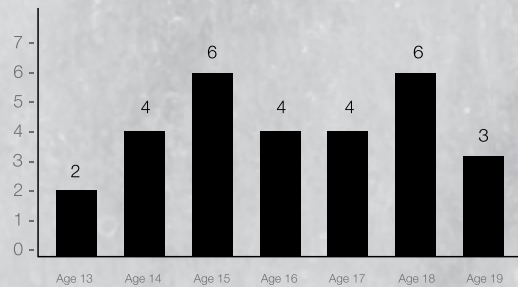
2008 Statistics

Type of Crash



29. That's the number of teens who lost their lives on Utah roads in 2008. The majority of these teens were killed as either a passenger or driver in a car.

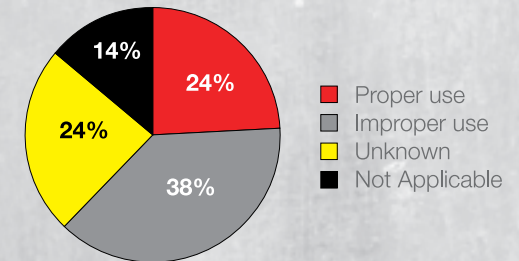
Age of Teen Deaths



Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 killer of teens in Utah. Of the teens killed in 2008,

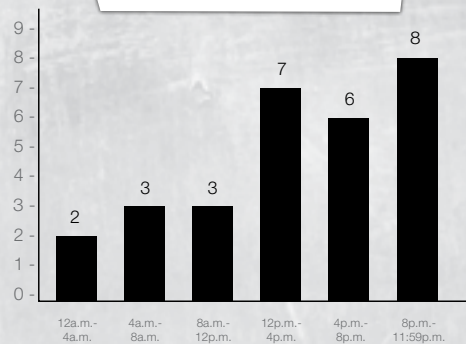
- 69% were males
- 55% were killed in a single car crash
- 45% were speeding above the posted speed limit
- 62% of the crashes were during clear weather conditions
- 3 teens were killed because they or another driver was talking on a cell phone

Seat Belt Use



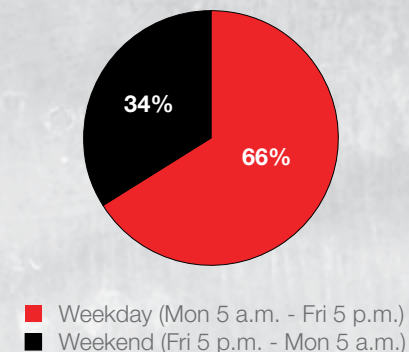
Only 24% of teens killed were wearing their seat belts properly.

Time of Fatal Crash



Almost half of these fatal crashes occurred between 4:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight. Driving on the weekends did not appear to play a significant role in these crashes.

Weekday vs. Weekend Fatalities



These teens could have been anyone's child, brother, sister or friend. There was no typical scenario that led to their deaths. However, improper seat belt use, poor judgment and distracted driving played a role in many of these crashes. Such tragedies could be prevented by making safe driving decisions. Visit www.health.utah.gov/vipp or www.dontdrivestupid.com/ for more information.

**The Utah Department of Health Violence
and Injury Prevention Program
would like to thank the following partners:**

- > Utah Department of Transportation**
- > Utah Department of Public Safety**
- > Utah Teen Traffic Safety Task Force**

Kander Jordan Travis Lindsay TJ
Nielsen Kristin Emily Hughes Kevin
Barillo Kevin Alexander Mendes dos
Santos Jeremy Isaac Martinez
Hannah Lee Wagstaff Erica Trudy
Knell Chelise Hansen
Alyssa Lopez
Travis Lindsay Kristin
Emily Hughes Kevin
Alexander Mendes dos Santos
Jeremy Isaac Martinez Hannah Lee
Wagstaff Erica Trudy Knell Chelise
Locher Calvin Hansen Alyssa Lopez

**DON'T DRIVE
STUPID**