

WE REMEMBER
EVERY DAY



STORIES OF

TEEN LIVES

LOST ON UTAH'S ROADS IN 2011

HERE ARE THEIR

NAMES,

THEIR

FACES,

THEIR

STORIES



WE REMEMBER

Their dreams and everything they wanted to be.
The color of their eyes, their hobbies, the way they hugged and the way they laughed.
And we remember the very last words we said to them.

Losing a loved one in a car crash is something that sticks with you. The people we knew are gone, but the memories remain. Read these stories and remember the people we loved and lost.

AND PLEASE REMEMBER:

**DON'T DRIVE
STUPID**
ZERO Fatalities A Goal We Can All Live With

We would like to thank all the courageous families for sharing their stories to help prevent others from dying in motor vehicle crashes.



COLLIN

JAMES WORLAND

AGE 13 | WEST JORDAN, UT



“ If there is any good that can come from this, I hope it will send a message to young people about the dangers of drugs and the importance of attentive driving. ”

Because I'm awesome—" words we will never again hear our precious Collin say—now engraved upon a headstone. Before, we'd laugh at his humor and unwavering confidence; now, we cry at the truthfulness of this statement and remembrance of what was lost.

Collin truly was AWESOME. He was talented, intelligent, fun-loving, outgoing and adored by many. He was destined for greatness with limitless potential. He was anxious to grow up, to drive, get a job, serve an LDS church mission, get his own apartment and be independent.

Collin was the oldest of five children and an incredible big brother! He would carry his sister on his shoulders when she was too tired to walk, called his one-year-old twin brothers his "babies," and was inseparable from his younger brother, his best friend.

On the morning of November 2, 2011 (only two weeks after his 13th birthday), Collin was tragically stolen from us by a 19-year-old driver high on marijuana.

The day began as any other. Collin woke up and got himself ready for school. We lived across the street from the Jr. High, so he and his friends walked together. At 7:20 a.m., I awoke to Collin in my bedroom doorway as he said, "Bye, Mom, I'm going." I replied, "Okay, I love you."

About five minutes after he left, I heard a siren. My heart sank a little, but I told myself not to jump to conclusions. Upon seeing traffic backed up behind my house, I grew more concerned, and looked out a window to see an ambulance and paramedics gathered around somebody on the ground. I yelled to my husband to make sure it wasn't Collin.

Impatiently, I ran outside praying. As I approached the scene, I saw a pair of blue and black DC shoes in the road. Collin's shoes. My worst nightmare had come true. I ran over to my precious boy, who was unconscious and lying in a pool of blood. I couldn't believe this was real. The officer informed us they were going to fly him to Primary Children's. My husband and I cried and prayed harder than we ever had before.

A moment later, the officer approached us again to say they'd canceled Life Flight. Collin had gone into cardiac arrest. I ran over to the ambulance, where they were administering CPR, and yelled, "Collin, come on buddy!! You've gotta pull through! We need you!"

A few minutes later, the officer approached us one last time, shaking his head and saying, "I'm sorry." I have never felt such intense, unbearable, pain, shock, disbelief and sorrow as I did in that moment. My life, as I knew it, was over.

Next came the responsibility of telling our other children that their big brother was gone. This has been incredibly hard on our family, as well as countless friends, neighbors and classmates. Many hearts were broken that day and some, like my own, will never fully heal. Collin was an indispensable part of our lives. One of the hardest things is knowing his twin brothers will never know him.

If there is any good that can come from this, I hope it will send a message to young people about the dangers of drugs and the importance of attentive driving. There are some mistakes that can't be undone and will forever rob us of what could have been.



AGE 18 | BRIGHAM CITY, UT

“ It is the driver’s responsibility to make sure everyone in the car has a seat belt on at all times and that the vehicle is safe. ”

Courtney was an in vitro baby and was so wanted by her family. It was a pleasure to have her in our lives. She loved her brothers and her dog, Pookie. Courtney had a job, bought her own car and made sure that it had good tires on it. Courtney loved high school and had many friends, who describe her as amazing, funny, true, exciting, adventurous, forgiving, caring and indescribably beautiful. She would take her friend Jacob to and from work because he was diabetic and couldn't drive. She got up at 4 a.m. and helped her friend Corbet with his paper route and she took lunch to her friend Alec at work.

Courtney loved to get dressed up and go to school dances, first with all her friends, and then exclusively with her friend Byron. Courtney lived a lifetime while she was here. She was 17 when Byron left on his mission. Court made him a book of pictures she had taken throughout their relationship and asked him not to forget her. He was back by her 18th birthday because he missed her so much. It was a good thing he came back. He got to spend those last six months with her.

Courtney graduated high school in June 2011. She got a job she really liked and moved out to see if she could make it on her own. She missed high school and started to think maybe it was time for college. We found a scholarship for media design at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC), but they needed transcripts to enroll her.

On November 18, 2011, Court got a copy of her transcripts and asked a friend to drive her to SLCC. She called me and said, “The office is closed. I can see that nice lady inside but she can't hear me knocking on the door.” I told her it closed at 6 p.m. on Fridays and that we would mail in her transcripts. She told me it wasn't a wasted trip because she was still going to dinner with her friends. The last words I ever heard her say were, “I love you, Mom.”

On the way home, the roads were slick from the first winter storm. It was 9:45 p.m. Courtney was seated in the back seat on the passenger side. None of the kids were wearing seat belts. The car had threadbare tires and the 18-year-old driver lost control. The car slid across four lanes of traffic and was struck on the rear passenger side by an SUV. Courtney was killed instantly along with all of her dreams... shattering the lives of her family, friends and devoted boyfriend.

We would like everyone to know that every time we got in the car with Courtney or anyone else, we insisted that they put their seat belt on before we left the driveway and made sure the vehicle was safe. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure everyone in the car has a seat belt on at all times and that the vehicle is safe. We think there is peer pressure to not wear a seat belt, but something needs to change to make the driver more liable. This may have saved our little girl's life and saved us so much grief.

JAXEN

HENDERSON

AGE 17 | WEST JORDAN, UT

“ Our hope and prayer is that ALL drivers will slow down and be more aware of their surroundings. Don't be in such a hurry to get somewhere. It's better to slow down, be safe and arrive alive. ”



Our beautiful daughter, Jaxen, was a senior at Copper Hills High School. She worked at Sub Zero Ice Cream in Jordan Landing. She enjoyed her job. She loved meeting new people and her job was a perfect fit for her friendly and outgoing personality.

She loved her family (especially her cousins) and her friends. She had many friends she treasured spending time with. She loved clothes and shopping...high heels were her favorite accessory.

Jaxen was beautiful on the outside but more importantly, she was beautiful on the inside. She would drop anything she was doing to console, comfort or help a friend. She was full of life—always coming and going—too busy to be bothered by mundane things. When Jaxen was 13, one of her cousins was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis. This diagnosis had a great impact on her. She was determined to go into the medical field and wanted to spend her career finding a cure for Cystic Fibrosis.

Jaxen was looking forward to graduating from high school and moving on to college. She was taking AP and concurrent enrollment classes, hoping to graduate with an Associate's Degree.

The day of her accident was October 17, 2011. She dropped a friend off after school, came home and called me to check in. I normally work from home but had to go into the office that day for meetings. She talked to me about school and a few other things. She talked about dressing up for Halloween. She wanted to be Pocahontas. We talked about craft stores where she could find some feathers to put in her hair for her costume. She said was going to go look for feathers and would see us when we got home. We said our "I love yous" and that was the last time I talked to her.

Jaxen headed out of our neighborhood at 5150 West and New Bingham Highway. She pulled out into the intersection and was hit on the driver's side by a truck. We aren't sure why she pulled out in front of the truck. We don't know if she saw it or not.

She died on impact.

Jaxen was a strong believer in organ donation. She was able to donate her eyes, tissues, bones, and skin. We know that her gift of being a donor will help others in need.

Jaxen was our only child. She was the best part of our lives, and we will never be the same. We miss her every single day. We remember the wonderful times we had with her, the goofy things she did, and the way she made us laugh. She had an amazing sense of humor! She impacted everyone she met.

We are so grateful for the love and support from our community. We have truly been blessed and surrounded with love by everyone who knew Jaxen, especially the staff and students at Copper Hills High School. We are so thankful to them for all they have done for us.

Our hope and prayer is that ALL drivers will slow down and be more aware of their surroundings. Don't be in such a hurry to get somewhere. It's better to slow down, be safe and arrive alive.

With love for our daughter,
Mom and Dad

JAYDEN

RATHBONE

Jayden loved riding horses, fishing, camping, and baseball. He collected cars in packages, but never opened them. He loved to cook. Every year we went river rafting at Lava Hot Springs and you always found Jayden at the grill, cooking with Grandma.

Jayden also loved heavy equipment like semis, dump trucks, and tow trucks. He also had a skill for operating heavy equipment. He dreamt of going into the military when he grew up.

On Halloween night, Jayden was trick-or-treating with his dad and he wanted to go to a couple more houses. His dad worked for a tow company so they were in a tow truck that night. Jayden got out of the truck and crossed the road. A car was approaching them and the lights from the tow truck blinded the driver who hit my son.

I was out with Jayden's siblings when I got the phone call. At first I thought it was something minor. A mother's hope. But then they told me it was worse than that. It seemed like a year before I got to the hospital. When I arrived, they wouldn't let me see him. They put me in a conference room.

I've been put in a conference room before...17 years ago I lost another son in a car crash, so I knew what it meant. The officer said they were flying Jayden to Primary Children's Hospital. We jumped in my truck and that was the longest drive of my life.

At Primary Children's, I ran into the emergency room and the only thing out of my mouth was, "Where is my son?"

Again they made me wait. It was horrible. When they finally let me in, I saw things that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. He was on life support with 25 different medications keeping him stable.

We prayed he would pull out of it. For a month we prayed. We'd see his hand move or his eyes flutter. It was like he was trying to pull out of it, but he couldn't do it. His brain damage was so severe that the only function left was his breathing. After a month, we had to decide.

The community was amazing. They did prayer chains, candlelight vigils, and a walk for Jayden. A rock band, Iron Maidens, from California sent autographed posters and to this day they dedicate the last song at every concert to Jayden. The Dodgers sent him a care package in the hospital. This year, we took our annual trip to Lava Hot Springs and 30 people showed up to dedicate the first river run.

I don't drive anymore. I'm terrified of taking away someone's life. At 15 and 18, Jayden's sisters don't want to drive either. Jayden's younger brother used to be so good at skateboarding, but hasn't touched a skateboard since that day.

Please slow down, especially on Halloween night. It's a given there will be children running around, popping out of nowhere. If you see a car stopped in the middle of the road, don't go around them. You don't know why they are stopped. Someone could be crossing the road. I see it every day. And my plea to drivers of large trucks is to please turn your lights off if you are on the side of the road.



AGE 13 | ROY, UT

“ Please slow down, especially on Halloween night. It's a given there will be children running around, popping out of nowhere. ”



JOSE

CEBALLOS

AGE 17 | WEST JORDAN, UT

“ I hope that one day the youth will understand that automobiles are not toys, that they can learn how to use them responsibly, and that they will ALWAYS obey traffic safety laws. ”

Jose loved life. He was proud of who he was, his roots and his family. He was a respectful and loving son, and he enjoyed having fun. He liked spending time with his family. He was willing to cancel going to the movies with his friends in order to stay home and play cards with his parents and his sister, or to help his sister with her math homework. Jose's favorite sport was soccer. He always practiced and wherever he played, he drew admiration for his talent.

He was always a good student, an honor roll student. Six months before graduating from high school, Jose was already taking college credit classes; he was planning to study architecture, establish his own office and be an independent architect. He also belonged to the "Latinos en Acci3n" club, which consists of Latino students who wish to do community work.

Jose had many friends, Caucasians and Latinos. With some he went to soccer practice and games, and with others, he enjoyed dancing at family Mexican parties. At the same time, he was also able to listen and counsel a depressed friend for two hours because his girlfriend had left him, and another friend because she had family problems. Jose's greatest characteristic was his big, warm, and sincere smile. He was the pride of his grandparents, uncles, cousins, and of course his parents and sister.

On Monday, January 3, 2011, we were visited by the principal and a police officer at our home. They explained to my husband and I that Jose, along with other students from his high school, were returning

from a trip to the elementary school, where they were tutoring children who were behind in certain subjects. The elementary school was no more than five minutes away. There were six students in the pick-up truck returning to the high school. Two were in the front of the cab and four in the rear. Jose was traveling in the rear of the cab and since there were four in a space designed for three, they did not use seat belts. The driver lost control due to excessive speed, and according to the police report, Jose was thrown out the window and died instantly.

I remember thinking, "It's not true, my son could not have died. He is full of life and energy and he has many plans and many dreams to fulfill. He has to graduate from high school, he has to go to college and become a great architect." The whole family was in shock.

The death of my son has affected many people. His friends and family miss him deeply. This tragedy has completely changed the life of my daughter, my husband and myself. We fight day by day to continue on, despite our pain.

I hope that one day the youth will understand that automobiles are not toys, that they can learn how to use them responsibly, and that they will ALWAYS obey traffic safety laws.

FAMILIES AREN'T THE ONLY

ONES AFFECTED

It was a cold January day when the call came in. We needed to respond to a traffic crash in front of the local high school. My first thought as we were enroute was, 'Teenagers? Why aren't they in school?' It wasn't until later that we learned the crash victims were returning to the high school from a nearby elementary school where they were helping students with reading.

Upon arriving at the scene, my partner and I were given the assignment to pick up the body of a handsome young man who had apparently been ejected from a truck and was lying lifeless on the cold winter ground. We moved the young man quickly onto the gurney and then to our waiting ambulance.

When we had finished moving the body, I stole a glance at the crowd starting to form and an obviously distraught woman caught my eye. "Is that my son?" she cried. All I could say was, 'I'm not sure.' As a parent myself, I could feel her pain. I could picture these parents trying to remember what their kid had worn to school that morning, and wondering if they had said 'I love you.' My heart ached for the ever-growing crowd and especially for the parents, sick with fear, wondering if it was their son lying on the gurney.

I needed to know how the boy ended up on the ground, so I walked to the truck. The passenger window was broken out, but on further inspection, I found only minor damage to the truck itself. I couldn't help but think, 'If only he had worn his seat belt, he might still be alive.'

My partner and I drove somberly to the hospital with the body in the back of our ambulance. It was only a five-minute drive, but truly one of the longest transports I've had in my career. As we wheeled the body into the ER, it seemed time stood still as everyone watched us walk by. We moved the body to a hospital bed and decided to clean him up before his family arrived. We quickly cleaned up and left so the family could spend time alone with their boy...I felt the deep heartache and despair at the scene from the students, parents, passers-by, firefighters and police officers.

I later learned our 16-year-old victim was a soccer star, leader at school, good friend, and mentor to younger children. He was what most parents hope their kids will be like. He had a very bright future ahead of him. Why didn't he wear his seat belt?

Erik Andersen
Paramedic/Firefighter, West Jordan Fire Department

You hear all of these stories about driving safe and buckling up, but you really don't pay much attention to them until you're the one in the story.

Monday, January 3, 2011, our group was returning from tutoring sixth graders from the nearby elementary school. It was a beautiful winter's morning, and then, without warning, everything changed.

Six of us had jumped into a truck that held only five people. Only two of us chose to wear seat belts that day. We were two minutes away from arriving back at the school when we hit black ice and lost control of our vehicle. We were holding onto anything we could, but before we knew it, the truck had rolled over. All we could hear were loud, worried screams, "JOSÉ, JOSÉ, JOSÉ!"

Snapping back to reality, we looked up to find our best friend lifeless and lying on the cold cement. We were helpless. We couldn't do anything other than hope that our best friend would get up. Unfortunately, he never did.

José was our best friend. He was the person we ran to with all of our problems. No matter what, he never failed to make us smile. You never expect that the last time you will see your best friend will be in a casket.

One year and seven months later, we are still dealing with his death, still dealing with the thought that our best friend is gone and won't be back. Not a day goes by when he isn't in our thoughts, wishing we could see that smile, hear that voice, and feel his beautiful presence. All that is left are our memories and an emptiness that cannot be filled.

Please learn from our story. It takes seconds to put on your seat belt, but yet we forget the real importance of it. Please remember to BUCKLE UP & DRIVE SAFELY. The grief, the emptiness, the thoughts, the story after are just not worth it. If you can't buckle up for yourself, buckle up for your family and friends. EVERYONE is affected. No family or friend should feel this pain.

José, we love and miss you! Thank you for everything. We'd do anything to have you back. You will always be in our hearts, WE LOVE YOU, ANGEL!

Nathalie Valenzuela & Maria Cruz

KELLIE

ANN MCELROY

“ Speeding, reckless driving, texting while driving, DUI...they just simply are not worth the price that has to be paid when a crash occurs as a result. ”

AGE 19 | SALT LAKE CITY, UT

My daughter, Kellie Ann McElroy, died in a rollover car crash on Wasatch Blvd. on November 18, 2011. She was 19 years old. Kellie had only lived in Salt Lake for a few months. She was a vibrant young woman and full of life. She was the third of five children. She loved people and made everyone feel like they were her best friend. She was a nanny to two beautiful little boys, whom she absolutely adored.

What makes her story a little different is that her best friend and cousin was the driver of the vehicle. The tables could have easily been turned around as I learned that this was not the first time our girls had done what they did that morning. And sometimes, my Kellie was the driver.

What they would do is drive, beginning on the south end of Wasatch heading north and, waiting until they were on a section of the road where no houses were located, they would speed up and then let off the gas to coast as they enjoyed the city lights below. This time, however, it didn't end the same as it had in the past. The car flipped end over end, landing on its roof, and then it caught fire. Kellie never made it out of the burning car.

I know that neither my daughter nor my niece ever thought that one of them would die from the choice they made to speed. These tragic stories don't end with the loss of a life; the emotional wounds will heal but the scars will always remain. And it doesn't end there, either. Although the entire story could have played out and ended exactly as it did, because there was speed involved, my niece is now part of the legal system and having an additional price to pay.

Kellie's Dad and I both requested no legal action be taken against my niece, but she was still charged with negligent homicide. If speeding wasn't part of the equation, my niece would have never walked into that courtroom. Speeding, reckless driving, texting while driving, DUI...they just simply are not worth the price that has to be paid when a crash occurs as a result.

Kellie was a daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, niece, granddaughter, great-granddaughter and friend. Her loss has affected hundreds. If sharing Kellie's story can prevent another life from being cut short, it will be worth it to me. Young people have so much to offer and so much life to live still. Don't think it can't or won't happen to you. We have no guarantees in life. Be wise, be smart...be safe!





LOGAN

FULGHAM

AGE 19 | TREMONTON, UT

“ Our precious Logan had crossed the center line and hit another vehicle head-on. ”

On Sept. 3, 2011, we had planned to take our children to see a movie. However, one by one, the older kids couldn't go. We worked in the yard as a family that morning. A few hours later, as Logan prepared to leave, I asked if he had on good hiking shoes and he kicked his foot in the air to show me he did. I said (as I always do) "I love you. Be safe!" He smiled his famous smile and his crystal clear, blue eyes sparkled. If I had only known!

Logan and his friend, Jay, hiked and talked of life, love, girls, school and Logan's upcoming mission. On the way out of Logan canyon, a car cut them off and they blew a tire. Logan went to call us for help but discovered he had lost his cell phone on the hike. So instead, he struggled and changed the tire himself. He was tired and hot because he was wearing his beloved brown flannel shirt. As he dropped Jay off, Jay asked him to come in and rest and get something to eat, but Logan declined, saying he just wanted to go home.

We had also gone to Logan City that afternoon and were coming home around 6:30 p.m. There was trouble on the road and we were routed through Beaver Dam on the old road. I texted Logan and told him to not come home yet or to go through Sardine because there appeared to be a bad wreck. He never answered me back. I kept looking at that upper road for his car (hoping not to see it) but couldn't make out any of the vehicles involved.

As we pulled up to our house, we were met by Lieutenant Lee Perry, our bishop, and a friend from the fire department. Our precious Logan had crossed the center line and hit another vehicle head-on. Through the Lord's tender mercies, Logan died instantly.

The man Logan hit lost his right leg just below the knee, but he and his family have been blessed. The simple things in life have become more important to them. But his life is changed forever. We feel so bad for him and his family.

Two families' lives were changed that day in the blink of an eye. We think Logan might have gone into a diabetic coma. Our 17-year-old is also diabetic, and he carries a snack kit in his car now. Logan never got his mission call here, but he did in Heaven. Logan was a donor and two people now see because of him.

He was a self-taught musician, playing the banjo, harmonica, dulcimer, guitar, ukulele and piano. He loved life and people were drawn to him because of his dynamic personality. He was loved by all who knew him.

A few weeks before the accident, Logan had posted on Facebook "It's hard to see the whole picture unless you are helping paint it."



MASON

BROWN

*My Son Mason is everyone's friend!
And his life meant something, right up through the end.
In losing his life, his heart gave to others,
And two tiny babies went home with their mothers.
Two others are seeing because of his eyes,
And some will grow taller from the bones of his thighs.*

*Mason loves Star Wars! About more than any other!
His life's ambition? To DRAW, and take care of his mother.
At a mere fourteen years, he'd accomplished both goals,
Son, Scout, Friend and Brother, he magnified all roles.
His friends and his family all miss him so much,
And there's no limit to the lives he continues to touch!*

*So onward my son! As you progress on your way!
And we'll see you in less than one heavenly day!*

Love, Mom

“ I would especially ask you to be careful driving through and around crosswalks! The life you save might be someone's precious son. ”

AGE 14 | KEARNS, UT

My son Mason's last conscious moments were spent doing what he loved! Being with his friends, laughing, joking, acting goofy, being a teenage boy. Then, he entered the crosswalk with his back to an oncoming car.

The next 17 days were spent on the neurosurgery floor of Primary Children's Medical Center, where the stellar skills of the medical staff, serving around the clock, were not enough to save him from the effects of a stroke that had resulted from his head injuries.

His last unconscious moments were spent alone with his mother, silently comforting me from a realm of existence I could not see, but could feel its approach without a doubt.

Now, I live with sweet memories of Mason—which are wonderful—but I also live with the “What if's?” and the “If only's” that will be my constant companions for the rest of my life.

My desire for anyone reading this story is for you to know that you can be the best driver out there, avoiding all electronic distractions, obeying all the laws—and crashes can still happen! Your life can change or end with the screeching of tires and wailing of sirens. I would especially ask you to be careful driving through and around crosswalks! The life you save might be someone's precious son.



RINZE

DAVIDSON

AGE 18 | MURRAY, UT

“ Please, stay the night or call a cab, but never drive home if you have been drinking. It’s not fair to the people who love you. ”

Rinze enjoyed music and wanted to be a DJ. He also loved to travel and was a very happy person. Even on a gloomy day, he always had a smile on his face and everybody sought his advice.

That Friday was a normal work day. He got off work before me but came back at 4:30 p.m. to pick me up. We went to the grocery store. He got his favorite, macaroni and cheese and tuna. We talked about the parties he was going to that evening and then he started playing his Call of Duty game. I went to my bedroom to watch TV.

An hour later, Rinze came into my room and said, “I’m going to get a haircut. Can I use your car?” I said, “Yes, be careful.” The weather had already started getting bad. He came back later and said, “Mom, question.”

“Son, answer.”
“Do people tip for haircuts?”
“Some do and some don’t.”
“Okay, I’ll be back.”

He left to tip the gal who had cut his hair and then called to tell me he was heading over to a party. I told him to be safe and that I loved him. His last words to me were, “I love you and I’ll be safe.” No matter where he was going or what he was doing I always said, “Be safe.”

The night went on. About 11:00 p.m. I tried calling his phone, but it had died. I called one of his friends who answered but said Rinze was in the middle of a game and would call me back. I finally fell asleep. Between 1 and 2 a.m., I woke up for a bit, looked at my phone, and didn’t see a call back. I knew he was going to the gun show with his

dad at 7:00 a.m. so I figured he was just spending the night at his friend’s house. I went back to sleep.

There was a knock at the door. I thought, “Ah, Rinze, you forgot your key or lost it somewhere,” but on the doorstep stood two officers. They asked me if I knew where my car was.

“Yes, my son, Rinze, has it.”
“I’m sorry to tell you this, but we could not save your son.”
“What? No, he has my car and he’s at a friend’s house!”
“At 4:32 this morning we had a report of a car that lost control and hit a tree.”

It took them two hours to get him out of the car. The officer thought he lost control of the car due to slush on the top of the hill. He was dead on site. They tried everything to resuscitate him.

I was just beyond myself. I went to the hospital and identified him. I gave him a big old hug, held his hand and told him I was sorry.

It was in the middle of June when the police report came back. My son had alcohol in his body when he crashed.

Please, stay the night or call a cab, but never drive home if you have been drinking. It’s not fair to the people who love you. It has been a really rough road. I know we all grieve in our own way, but I just miss him. He had so much life in him. One of the hardest things is going home and he’s not there. It’s awful, like a really bad dream that I’m never going to wake up from.

TYSON PETERSON

AGE 17 | SPANISH FORK, UT

Tyson was a 17-year-old who had just barely graduated from Landmark High School. He got all his credits done so he could graduate early and was preparing to go to Utah Valley University. Tyson was so driven; he knew what he wanted to do in life. He was awesome, caring, creative, great at music, loved sports and loved everybody. He was a great people person. He was also fearless. He would do anything without even thinking about consequences...but that is what led to his death.

Tyson's life hadn't all been easy. Sixteen months before, Tyson was fixing a car with his 11-year-old brother, Jordan, when the jack slipped and crushed his little brother right in front of him. Jordan died of a severe head injury. Our family was still recovering from his death when we lost Tyson, too.

Tyson got up early at 6:00 a.m. Halloween morning to catch the UTA bus to Spanish Fork where he planned to spend the day with his girlfriend. The bus left at 6:30 a.m. and he was rushing to catch it. He was trying to cross State Street when he was hit by a car and thrown into the middle lane where a small SUV ran over him. Tyson was taken to the hospital, but he died a few days later from the exact same head injury that killed his little brother. He hardly had a scratch on him besides the severe head injury.

Tyson had been hurrying to catch the bus. He was wearing dark clothes, a black shirt and gray pants. He crossed the street against the light. He just didn't think about the consequences of rushing across that street.

I lost my oldest son and the world lost a beautiful person who would have changed the world if given a chance. Just think before you act. Don't think things aren't going to happen to you. Stop and think.

Tyson planned to get his driver's license when he turned 18, but he had a learner's permit and had declared himself an organ donor. His organs went to help 12 people. In life, Ty gave his heart to everyone, and in death, he lives on in those 12 people who have a new chance at life. I'm so proud of him.

There is not a day that we don't think about him. We attended the graduation ceremony that we would have gone to with him, had he lived. The principal paid tribute to him. We find little notes at his grave all the time. He still has a Facebook page and people still go on and leave messages. Tyson made a huge impact on people and he will be forever loved and forever missed.



**“ Just think before you act.
Don't think things aren't going to
happen to you. Stop and think. ”**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

TO SAVE LIVES

For the past five years, families have courageously shared their stories on how they lost their teen on Utah roads. Their hope in sharing these stories is that others never have to feel the pain of losing a loved one in a car crash. Please learn from these stories. Talk with your loved ones, friends, classmates and students about these tragic stories and set rules for your car and whenever you ride in a car.

When reading these stories, please consider the following questions:

- What caused the crash?
- Could it have been prevented?
- What rules can you set while you are driving or riding in a car that can help avoid this type of car crash?

Remember to be sensitive and not to place blame on any one person. Rather, focus on the principles that can be applied to encourage safe driving. Point out actions that are dangerous and should be avoided.

To view Teen Memoriams from previous years, visit DontDriveStupid.com.



"You Don't Get to Say Goodbye..."



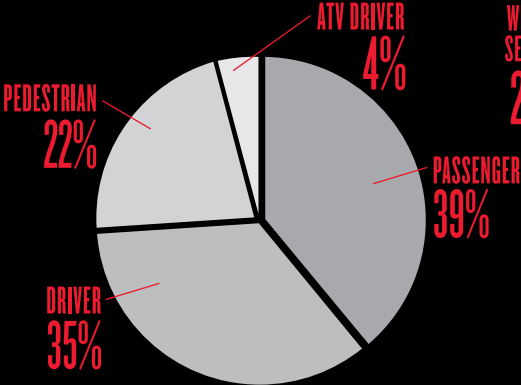
ZERO FATALITIES

2007



2011 TEEN STATISTICS

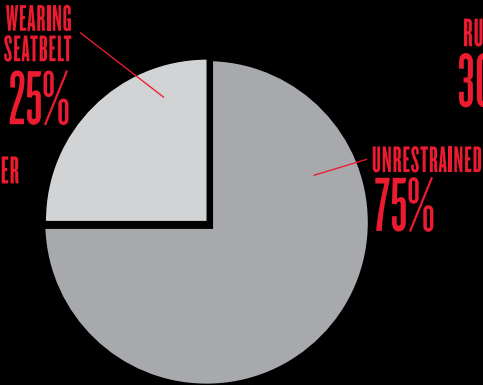
23 TEENS LOST THEIR LIVES ON UTAH ROADS



PERSON TYPE

Of the 23 teens killed in 2011:

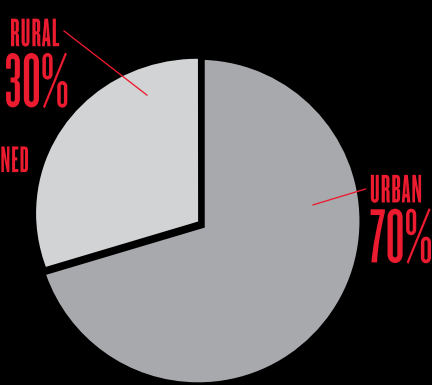
- 74% were male
- 52% were on a weekday
- 65% were in a single vehicle crash



SEAT BELT USE

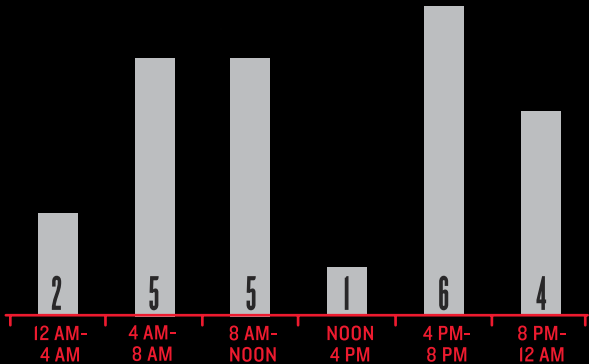
Three-fourths of all teens killed were NOT buckled or NOT wearing their seat belt properly.

Teens have the lowest seat belt use of any age group.

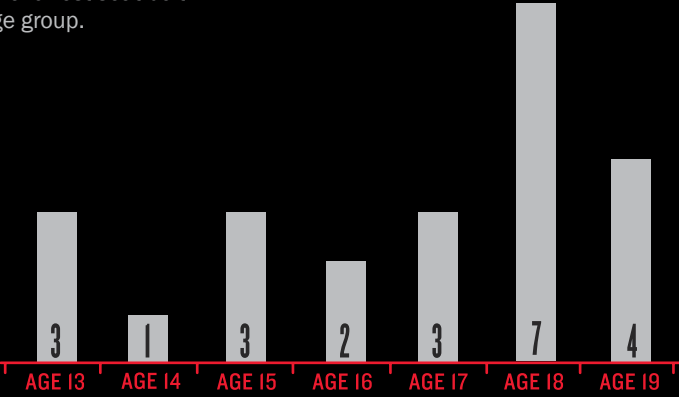


URBAN V. RURAL

Statistic based on roadway.



TIME OF DAY DEATHS OCCURED



AGE OF TEEN DEATHS

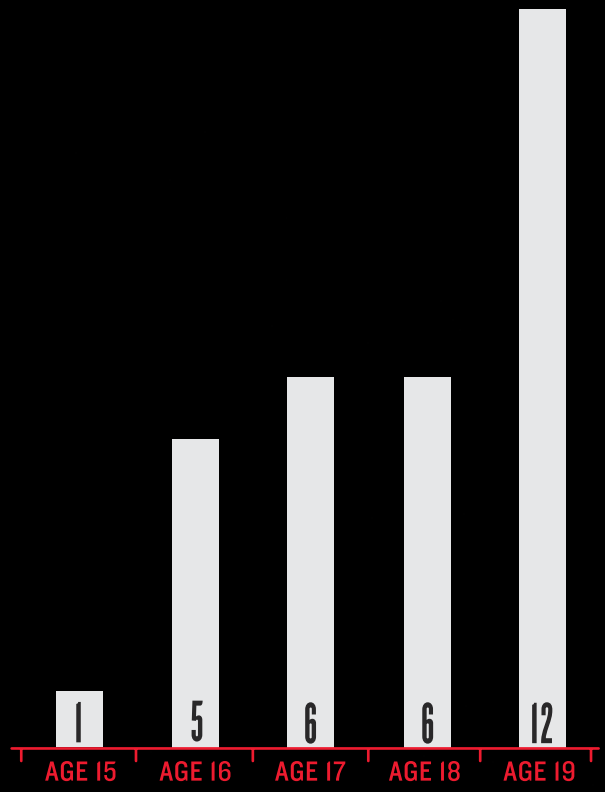
48% of teens killed on Utah roads were 18 years of age or older.

TEEN DRIVER STATISTICS

Teen drivers were three times more likely to have a contributing factor in a fatal crash than drivers of other ages. Contributing factors included: (Each crash may have more than one contributing factor.)

- 11 speeding
- 7 drivers under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- 6 failures to keep in proper lane
- 5 overcorrections
- 3 drivers distracted (1 distracted by passengers; 1 distracted by cell phone; 1 distracted by external distraction)
- 3 failures to yield right-of-way
- 2 disregarded traffic signal/sign
- 2 improper lane changes
- 2 reckless/aggressive driving
- 2 driving on wrong side of road
- 1 driver fatigue/asleep
- 1 improper passing
- 1 improper turn

AGE OF TEEN DRIVERS INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES



The fatal crash rate for drivers ages 16 – 19, based on miles driven, is four times higher than for drivers ages 25 – 69. Source: The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute and State Farm Insurance Companies ©. 2011.



**THIS BOOK WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT
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Utah Department of Transportation
Utah Department of Public Safety
Utah Teen Driving Task Force
Office of Health Disparities Reduction



DON'T DRIVE STUPID

Zero Fatalities® *A Goal We Can All Live With*



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