



MEMORIES
OF
YOU

2018 - 2020 Teen Memoriam



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

It's impossible to portray a complete picture of the young lives lost on Utah's roadways. Even for the teens within this memorial, a small glimpse is all you'll see.

For their families, the memories make a collage that they'll carry in their hearts forever. But those memories will always remain incomplete, as their stories ended far too soon.

The tragedy of it all is that their lives were lost because of one wrong decision. We highlight these tragedies not to lay blame, but as a reminder of the importance of safe driving. One bad decision on our roadways can lead to the loss of a precious life.

Please, don't let your choices end up as a tragic memory of another teen life lost.



KEATON SMITH



17 years old
2017

Keaton was one of the most loving teenagers. He loved life. He loved music and he loved to share it with his family and friends. Whenever he heard a new favorite song, he sang it with his whole heart! He loved to sing and dance especially around his family.

Keaton's passion was football, and everyone knew it. There were many times that he would say "I love football more than anything on this earth! Thanks for letting me play!" He had a great relationship with all his coaches. He loved his teammates, he was kind to everyone around him and he always wanted to help. After his tragic death, we heard many stories of his kindness. There were many people who were at his viewing just so they could tell us of his influence on them. Keaton was not a perfect child and he had his own personal battles, but he pushed through the hard times and became a better person.

On November 18th, 2017 life changed forever. The morning of Keaton's accident was like most Saturday mornings in our home. Keaton sat with his siblings while they ate breakfast and watched cartoons. The Sadie Hawkins dance was that night and he couldn't wait. He talked about what he and his friends would be doing for their day date. He was excited for them to pick him up. They had plans to go to the Space Center in Pleasant Grove. The group came and left for a fun morning. As they finished up their space adventure, Keaton and his date along with another couple loaded into the car. As they headed home a car turned in front of them. The friend driving the car did everything they could to avoid hitting the other car, but it was too late. The car was hit, and it rolled, which ejected Keaton

and another friend. Keaton hit the pavement headfirst and his friend landed in the yard. With all the excitement of the date, Keaton and his friend had failed to buckle up. The two left in the car were wearing seat belts. We are grateful for the quick response of the Pleasant Grove Fire Dept. and EMT, as well as those who helped comfort Keaton and the others. Keaton was rushed to Utah Valley Hospital where they stabilized him and rushed him into surgery to relieve pressure on his brain. As news of the crash spread, family and friends hurried to the hospital. The surgery lasted over 4 hours. Then the waiting began. The doctors ran tests and surgeries in hopes that things would improve. As we watched him lay in that bed on life support, our hearts broke. His condition worsened, and the doctors informed us that his brain had sustained too many injuries. The decision was then made to withdraw care. No parents should ever have to make this decision for their child. There are no words to describe that day. In the early afternoon on November 24th, 2017 as we sat by his side, we watched our son and brother take his last breath.

Keaton's death has affected us in many ways. The terms "#clickitforkeat" and "#carelikekeat" have become part of our lives. These reminders have taught us to always wear our seat belts and be kind. We hope that others will incorporate these hashtags which may in turn save lives. We miss Keaton every day. This experience has changed our family forever. We hope our story has touched you as you make the decision to always wear your seat belt.
#clickitforkeat #carelikekeat

We hope our story has touched you as you make the decision to always wear your seat belt.



OLIVIA

RODGERSON

Friends 
FOREVER



16 years old
2018



Unfortunately, she was not able to recover, and died from her injuries on August 22nd, that would have been her first day of 11th grade.

Olivia turned 16 on May 4, 2018 and received her driver license a week after. She was so excited to drive! She always had plans with her friends, work and drill team. Her hilarious, mischievous personality made her the life of every party and the ringleader of every prank. She was so brave and loved adventure. She lived a full and fabulous life.

Olivia had recently finished her sophomore year at Hillcrest High. She loved her friends, football games and dancing with the Hillcrest Drill Team. She danced at Dance Concepts dance studio, and on the night of June 14th she danced in the spring recital.

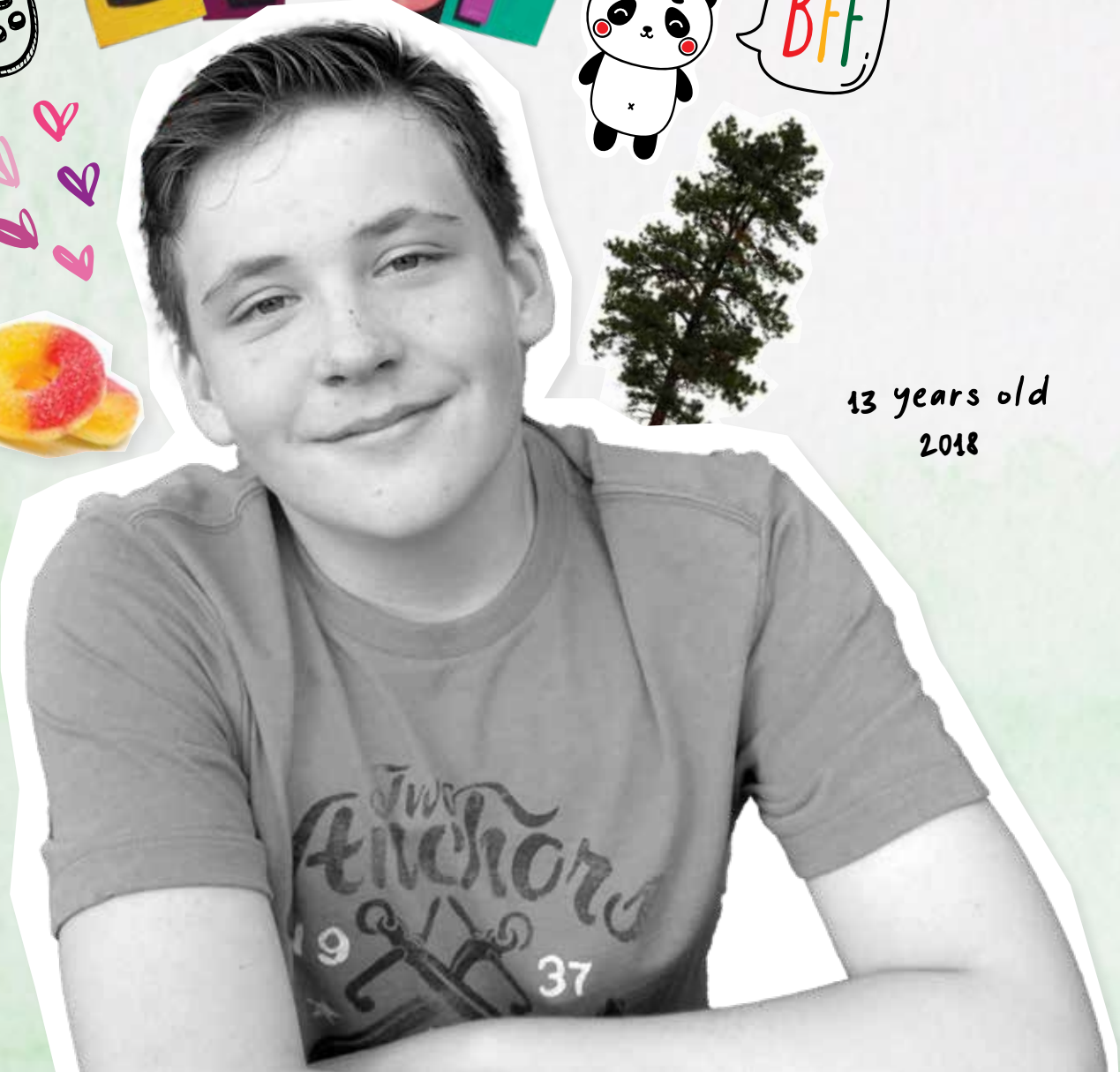
The following morning, on June 15th, her mom woke her up at 6 am to get ready for drill practice. She didn't seem any more tired and cranky than any other morning, but she fell asleep on the 2-mile drive to school. She drifted across 700 East and hit another car. Other girls and coaches on their way to practice stopped at the accident to try to help. Olivia was wearing her seat belt, had an airbag and her head wasn't hit by anything in the crash. Just the sudden impact of the fast stop was too much for a brain to absorb. Olivia wasn't responsive to the paramedics and was quickly taken to the hospital for brain surgery.

Olivia had two surgeries on her brain and was in a coma for 9 weeks. She battled through cardiac arrest, pneumonia, and many other life-threatening conditions. Her family and friends stayed with her during her entire hospital stay and hoped for a miraculous recovery.

Unfortunately, she was not able to recover, and died from her injuries on August 22, that would have been her first day of 11th grade.

Olivia had made the decision to be an organ donor and was able to donate lifesaving and life enhancing donations such as her kidneys, liver, tissue, bones and eyes.

Her family and friends miss her laugh like crazy. She was an incredible friend, sister, daughter, cousin, niece and aunt. Her memory is honored everyday by friends and family, who live like Liv by finding ways to adventure and celebrate every day.



13 years old
2018

Drugs kill.
If not you, then maybe someone
else that you didn't intend to hurt.

Baylor was the heart of our family and large part of our community. He was a lover of pandas, drawing and anything sweet, especially Peach Rings. He was often found hanging out with his brothers, drawing, playing video games or watching YouTube. He was at the center of his friend groups and he made everyone feel as if they were his best friend. He connected with people from all walks of life and had friends both young and old. His loss has sent a ripple of devastation through our community and continues to be far reaching.

He was 13 years old when a tragic car accident took his life and forever changed our family.

The last week of his life, we spent a beautiful week together at our cabin in central Utah. Baylor loved riding his motorcycle and exploring the mountains in our RZR. He convinced our family to play a few games of Yahtzee on our last night together, then kissed his mom goodnight with an "I love you, Momma" and a long hug.

Baylor and his dad got up the next morning at 7:30 a.m. to travel two hours back home. Baylor was not a morning person but had gotten up early so he and his dad could go to church. About half-way home on highway 89 near Bennie Creek, UT Baylor's dad noticed an oncoming car drifting into their lane. He made a split-second decision to switch lanes into the oncoming traffic lane, hoping the vehicle would pass them by, but instead the driver of the other vehicle suddenly swerved back into her lane colliding with the passenger side of our large Ford F-150 where Baylor had been asleep. The collision forced the F-150 off the road and down a 25-foot steep hill. The collision caused life-threatening injuries to Baylor and he did not regain consciousness.

The site of the accident didn't have cell coverage and neither did our cabin. By the time our family was made aware of the accident and we were able to make it to the hospital, Baylor died from his injuries. I will forever hear the words from the emergency room doctor echo in my head, "Your son was in a very serious car accident and has died". We struggle with the reality of losing Baylor every day. This is something that happens to other families, not your own.

The driver of the other vehicle had reportedly fallen asleep, but later was confirmed to have a high level of marijuana THC in her blood. She was sentenced to serve only 7 months in jail for the death of our precious son. A senseless act that could have been prevented by choosing not to use drugs and not to drive drowsy. When you get behind the wheel of a car, you are responsible for not only your own life, but all those who are on the road with you. Drugs kill. If not you, then maybe someone else that you didn't intend to hurt. The other driver has to live with the outcome of her decisions for the rest of her life and we have to live without the heart of our family. We miss Baylor every minute of every day.



19 years old
2018



Our precious Holly was so full of life! She had the biggest heart and a tremendous positive impact on those around her. She always had a smile and brought happiness with her wherever she went. She truly loved people and could make friends with anyone. Words don't describe how fun and amazing it was to be around her! From the time she was little, Holly had a passion for clothes, painting her nails and make up.

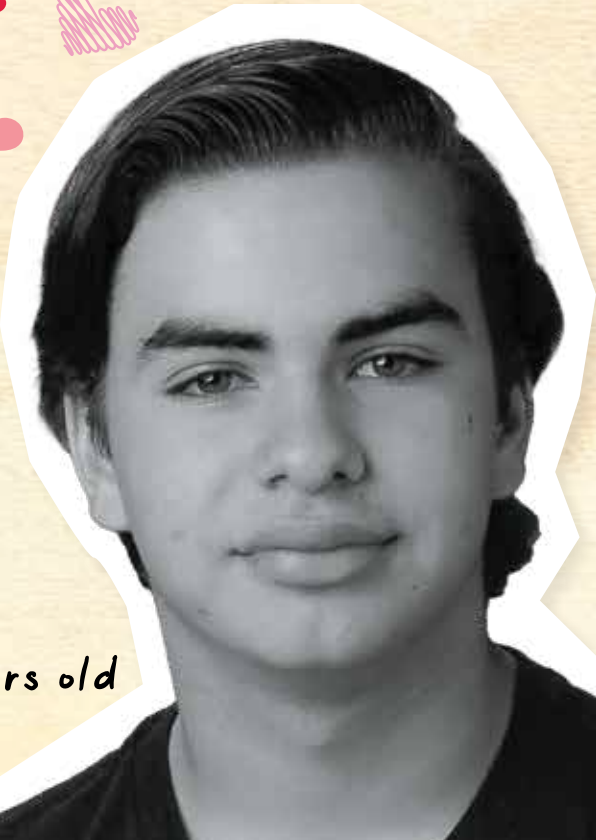
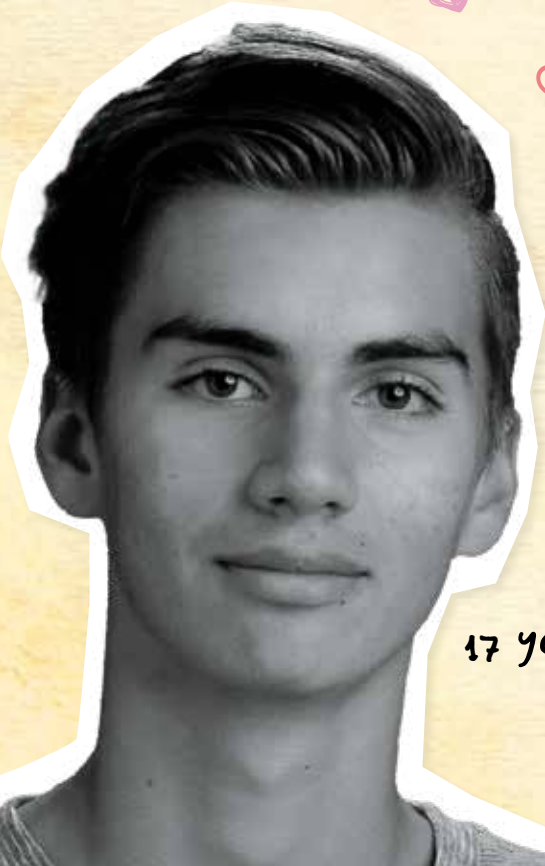
On the Morning of December 1, 2018, Holly was driving south on U-444 near 5400 S. Due to a recent storm, the traffic lights at the upcoming intersection were covered with ice/snow making them difficult if not impossible to determine what color the light was. As Holly entered the intersection through a red light (unbeknownst to her), she was struck by a pick-up truck towing a trailer that was headed Westbound on 5400 S. through the intersection of U-444. Holly was killed upon impact. At this moment, our lives changed forever. When Holly wasn't home on time nor answering her phone, we began driving the roads to see if maybe she had become stranded somewhere. After a short time of searching, we discovered the crash scene at the intersection.

There is absolutely only one thing that's more difficult than having a law enforcement officer inform you that your child was killed instantly in a car crash, and that's saying goodbye right before you lay your child to rest. Our hearts are completely shattered. While many questions exist, there's only one truth that matters, and that is Holly isn't coming home and this accident is so very tragic. The pain has remained constant. Everything about life as we knew it before the crash has forever changed and the void that now exists only continues to grow. There's not a day that goes by without tears, and not a second that goes by without thinking of her and missing her. But we absolutely know we will see her again according to Jesus' promise and the Faith, Hope and Love that He gives us through His word! But in the meantime, we do our best to get through the days. Her memory is always so very much alive in us! Holly has had so much of a positive impact on so many lives, both before and after the accident. There's absolutely nothing in this world we wouldn't do to go back in time and change it all! We miss her so very much and we strive to do our best in moving forward in life with her constantly on our minds and in our hearts.

Everything about life as we knew it before the crash has forever changed and the void that now exists only continues to grow.



SAGE AND RYAN SNOW



17 years old

16 years old

2019

These inseparable brothers were the youngest boys of our family, which granted them the nickname "the boys" by all that knew them. Sage was a junior at Valley High School, and Rylie was a sophomore at West Jordan High School.

The boys shared many passions, including anything with a motor, outdoors, guns, and country music, which contributed to their closeness. Sage and Rylie could always be found together either working under a car—whether it was one of their own, a family member's or friend's—in the West Desert or in a field of mud. These two were a perfect pair; Sage's charisma and fearlessness broke it, then Rylie's ingenuity and practicality would fix it.

Sage was the most spirited of all his siblings. He could persuade any of his siblings or friends to participate in his shenanigans, or convince them to do things even Sage would not do himself. There was not much Sage wouldn't do, though. Everything Sage did was wild, fast, and sometimes dangerous. But if you were to ask him, it was wilder, faster, and extremely dangerous.

Sage was a captivating storyteller; he could keep everyone at the edge of their seat wondering what would happen next, even though they had all heard the same exaggerated story countless times. Sage could draw anyone in with his stories, but they stuck around because of his quick wit and caring heart. Sage was so genuine he made all those around him feel like family.

At a very young age, Sage developed his love for anything with a motor. It all started with vacuums, then lawn mowers and four-wheelers, and eventually cars. Sage has owned more cars than we can count because each car only lasted as long as his attention span, then it was off to the next one.

Rylie, on the other hand, was quiet and reserved with a fascination of how things work. If it had nuts, bolts, or screws, he would take it apart and try to put it back together again. Over time, Rylie developed the patience to pull things apart and not just put it back together, but make it bigger, faster, or better. Little did we know these traits would turn him into the Mr. Fixit we knew him to be.

Since age 11, Rylie could make major home improvements like running new electrical circuits, installing underground sprinklers, building sheds/fences/decks,

and laying tile or hardwood floor—things most people would hire a contractor for. Although Rylie could fix anything, his passion was fixing cars. Before he even learned to drive a car, he knew how to fix one.

At age 15, he rebuilt a motor for his eldest brother's car. As the excitement of routine automotive maintenance and work faded, Rylie was still the first one to offer his assistance because of his love for his family and friends. Rylie's big heart was one of his most defining attributes. Whenever Rylie saw someone in need, he was always willing to lend a hand. This was not limited to the people he loved. Rylie had a love for all animals. He had given a home to multiple stray animals which became his loved pets.

These two boys were inseparable, even in death. Sage's and Rylie's lives may have been short, but can be described as nothing short of full. Sage and Rylie will be greatly missed by everyone that had the opportunity to know them.

On the night of the crash, my boys left our home at 11:10 p.m. They crashed and passed at 12:07 a.m. It was raining and the roads were wet. We were planning to change the tires, but they crashed before that happened.

Sage was driving at least 15 miles an hour over the speed limit. He was known to speed, cruise, and race cars. They think Sage was driving a lot faster than the police could tell. The car crossed the centerline and they collided with another car.

Please remember that speed can kill, driving should not be a race. Leave your competitive instincts at home. I know teens like to have fun, and they should, but not when they are driving. Please save the fun and games for when you reach your destination. Also, if the car has safety issues, take care of them immediately. Do not put it off.

Please remember that
speed can kill, driving
should not be a race.



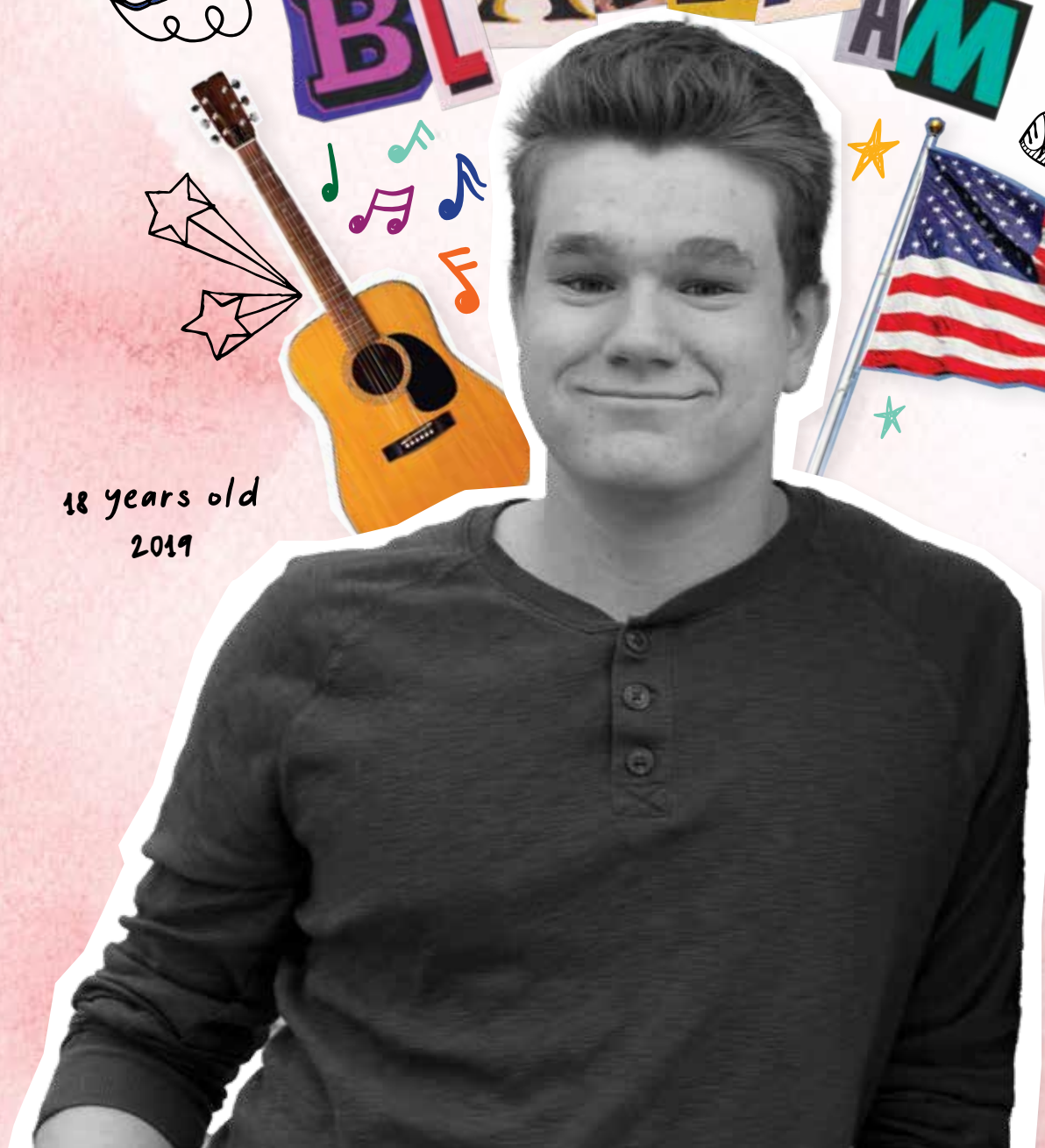
EJ



BLACKHAM



18 years old
2019



Oct 7th, 2019, at 5:14 p.m., our lives were permanently altered because of road rage and bad choices. The earth lost a ray of sunshine that afternoon. EJ Blackham was driving home on State Road 147 near Payson, Utah. He had finished a fun afternoon of target practice with one of his best friends at West Mountain. EJ was scheduled to leave for Marine Corps Bootcamp in six days and was out enjoying his free time doing the things he loved. Things like spending time with friends, driving his old, blue 1975 Ford F250 named Rex and making memories with his family, girlfriend, and his cattle dog named Jinx.

On his drive home on Oct 7th, he and his buddy were listening to Toby Keith with the windows down and going the speed limit, when they noticed a white truck that flew past them. This truck then pulled in front of my son and hit their brakes. This caused EJ to swerve to avoid hitting them. EJ then made the choice to speed up and pass this other truck.

As he tried passing, the other vehicle swerved to block him. A sideswipe occurred and EJ lost control. He overcorrected and his truck rolled twice before hitting a cement fence pole and then turned over landing on the passenger side. EJ was not wearing a seat belt and was ejected. He passed on impact. His 18-year-old passenger was wearing a seat belt and he walked away with minor injury and a forever broken heart.

Please buckle up for the ones you love, and if someone drives erratically or aggressively, please remember road rage kills. Just let it go and do not encourage or engage with a reckless driver. Speeding kills. Not wearing a seat belt kills.

My son's life was taken too soon and the entire event was 100% preventable.

EJ's mom (Kimberly Harter)

My son's life was taken too soon and the entire event was 100% preventable.

Please, let this be a reminder that drowsy driving is as bad as impaired driving and it's just not worth it.



13 years old
2019

Angelina was my Glowworm. That's the nickname I would use because of her big, beautiful eyes and the way she was wrapped in her blanket the day she was born. It all reminded me of the kids' old glowworm toy looking the same way.

Lots of parents claim to have the perfect child, but I can honestly say that my little girl was as close as you can get to being there. She had and made friends wherever she went and was a social butterfly just like me and her mom were. She always was the center of whatever group she was around.

Angelina loved school and never wanted to miss a day—not even for a doctor's appointment and even in the subjects she struggled with. She still wanted to be there. Her glowing personality made her stand out with her teachers as well. I guess her friends were so impressed with the way she carried herself and how happy she always appeared that they wanted to be part of that. She always had sleepovers, every weekend if possible, or friends invited her to their house.

In July of 2019, she went with her cousin who was also her best friend to Maui for the trip of a lifetime. She had so much fun and looking back on it now I'm so glad I allowed her to go.

Everyone would tease me and call her a "Daddy's Girl" because of how close we were or how everyone thought she could pull the wool over my eyes but we were so in sync from the day she was born, that maybe she could. I kept her grounded by having her donate her old toys and clothes to the homeless shelter for mothers with children to instill in her to always give when you can.

Angelina's mom lived in Bountiful, Utah, and Angelina and I lived in Las Vegas. She was going to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with her mom that year. She was all packed and had just got her hair done and was waiting for her mom who was running a little late because she got started on the drive to Vegas

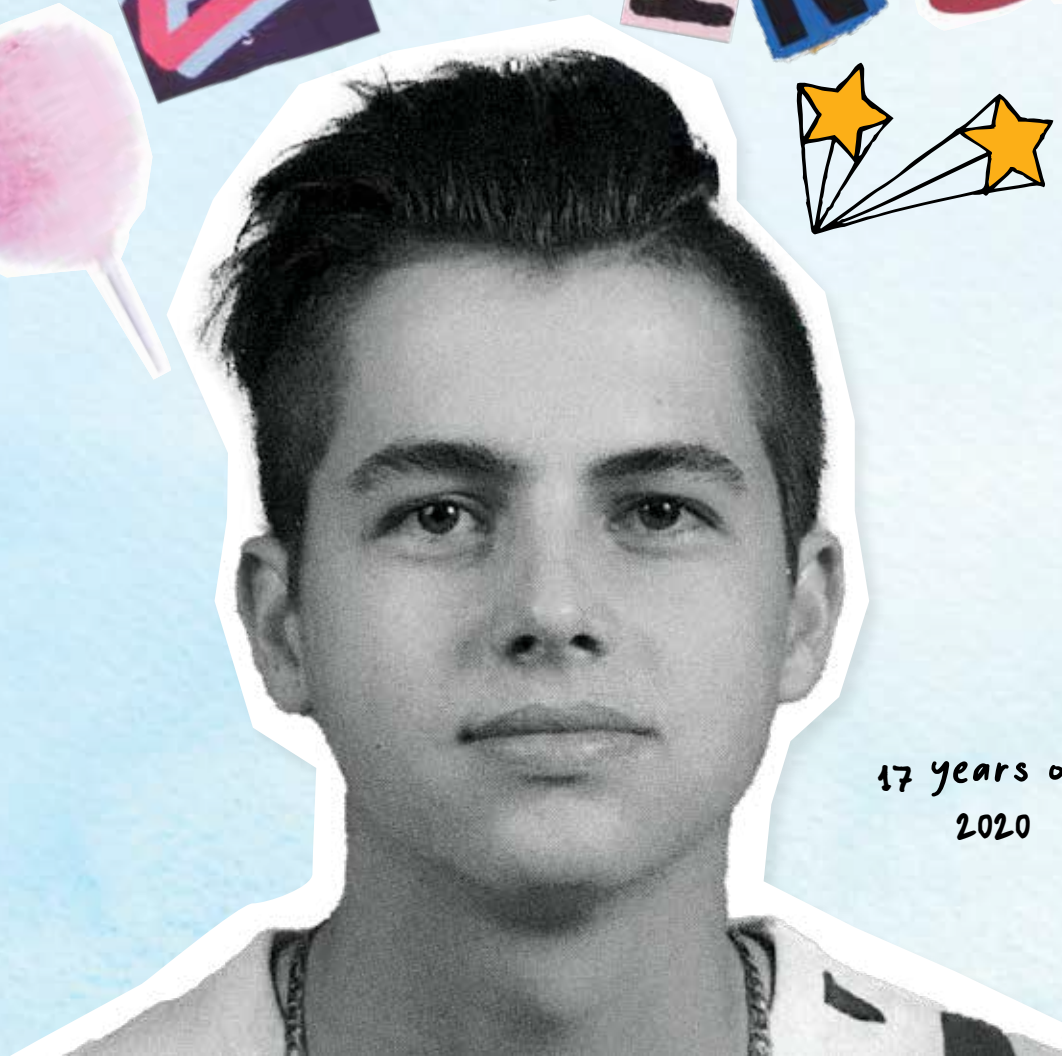
a little later than expected. Her mom and her mom's friend, who made the trip down with her, showed up and we chatted a bit before they got on the road. I remembered telling Angelina to make sure she kept her seat belt on and I took a photo of her with her Mom and her dog "Misty" before they got on the road.

I don't remember sleeping particularly well that night and started texting and calling them as soon as I woke up, but didn't receive any answer from either Angelina or her mom, so I was a little worried. Around 9:30 a.m., I received a call from Angelina's grandfather on her mother's side asking me if I'm sitting down. He proceeded to tell me that there was an accident and no one survived. I still remember screaming and dropping to the floor in disbelief. Apparently, her mom fell asleep at the wheel, and over-corrected, and had a rollover that ejected Angelina from the vehicle.

Through social media, I was contacted by the woman who witnessed the accident. She gave me details I so badly needed by telling me that she stayed with Angelina, who at the time was still breathing, and held her hand the whole time until paramedics arrived. They couldn't revive her.

Angelina had just turned 13 on October 6th and was gone a month later on November 23, 2019, along with her mother and another passenger. Angelina was my only child and I miss her every day and wish her mom would have pulled over to rest or to change places with the other driver. My life will never be the same and as much as I try to live a normal life, the pain and anguish shows on my face.

Please, let this be a reminder that drowsy driving is as bad as impaired driving and it's just not worth it.



17 years old
2020

On Saturday, March 7, 2020, my husband and I were upstairs getting ready to head out to dinner for a date night. Our youngest three children were home and our oldest son, Mason (he was 17), was out with friends riding his dirt bike down by the river. He loved to ride! He had been riding since he was five years old and he loved to ride wheelies and go fast. They had been gone for a few hours so I sent him a text at 4:59 p.m. asking if they were okay. His response was "yeah, I will be home soon."

That was the last text I ever received from our sweet Mason. About 15 minutes later, one of Mason's close friends that he'd been riding with came bursting into our house yelling that Mason was hurt, that there was a lot of blood, and that we needed to hurry. Both my husband and I went running barefoot down the street. Mason had wrecked four houses down from where we lived. I could see him laying in the street. It was just like in the movies when they describe how everything goes into slow motion. My legs just wouldn't go fast enough.

My husband got to him first. I noticed that Mason's helmet was off (one of his friends removed it, afraid that the strap may have been choking him). He always wore his helmet. Three neighbors were already on the scene, trying to slow the bleeding and another one of Mason's friends was on the phone with 911. I vividly remember how much blood there was. I knelt beside Mason and held his hand and told him Daddy and I were there, to stay with us, that the ambulance was on its way and that we loved him.

I remember praying for the ambulance to hurry and soon we could hear the sirens. They came very quickly, but just before they got to us, I watched the light leave my baby's beautiful brown eyes. I rode with Mason to the hospital in the ambulance. During the short ride there he went into cardiac arrest and flatlined. The paramedics frantically worked on him. After performing CPR for over an hour and giving him 40 units of blood, Mason was in critical but stable condition.

Surgery to repair a severed artery just below his clavicle bone had gone miraculously well. Mason remained in a coma, yet we still had hope for a couple of days. However, on Wednesday, March 11, we learned the severity of Mason's injuries. He had suffered an anoxic brain injury (from all of the blood loss) and we were faced with the life shattering decision that no parent

should ever have to make. Our options were to keep him on life support, with no quality of life, or to let him go. Neither alternative was comforting. We made the very difficult decision to let him go. On Friday, March 13, at 9:32 p.m., our sweet Mason peacefully crossed to the other side, forever breaking our hearts.

When Mason got his driver's license, he made the choice, on his own, to be an organ donor and we strongly felt that we needed to honor this request. Through this gift of life, he was able to save six lives and benefit many others. One in particular that we have been able to connect with is a little girl that received one of Mason's kidneys. She had been waiting for her perfect match for some time. Because of Mason, she lives, and a part of him lives on through her—along with the other lives that he was able to save just by simply circling "yes" for organ donation on his driver's license application.

Mason Derrick Esplin was born on October 30, 2002. He was a sensitive, silly, tender-hearted boy. He loved cotton candy, Pepsi, Sponge Bob, animals, dirt biking, snowboarding, skateboarding, traveling and hanging out with friends. He touched so many lives with his beautiful light and gentle spirit. Always a friend to those that truly needed one. He was such a gift and will always be our hero! Forever loved, forever missed.

We later learned that Mason was having some trouble with his bike, either he was running out of gas or having mechanical problems and was trying to get home as soon as possible. The police report revealed that Mason was going too fast on his dirt bike when he crashed.

Please slow down and follow the speed limit—whatever vehicle you choose to ride—and consider being an organ donor! We would never wish this tremendous loss on anyone, but if you could save another's life with your own, then why not?

Please slow down and
follow the speed limit

Please be careful
and look at your
surroundings.

October is my favorite time of the year. That is until
October 29, 2020. That morning is burned into my
memory. I remember every single thing that happened
that day. It was in super slow motion.



13 years old
2020

Greysen was the best son a mom could ever have. He was the peacemaker, the sweetest soul. He was a typical 13-year-old kid. He is the fourth child out of five. He was born with a heart condition that never ever slowed him down. You would never know he had a problem by looking at him. He was super close in age to his little brother, Milo. They were best friends. He was Milo's voice. If anyone asked Milo a question, he'd look at Greysen for him to answer. He loved to hang out with his friends, be outside, play video games, and tell the funniest jokes.

He always had something clever to say. He was loud and opinionated. He would get into trouble talking to his friends on the phone past curfew. He, we later found out, was talking his friends out of suicide. He would be there for anyone. He loved his friends so much. The pandemic was really hard for him because he couldn't be with them as often as he wanted to. He was often outside with them before the pandemic jumping on the trampoline. He was the best back-flipper there is and he loved to show it off.

He loved to go to school, not because he was a great student, but because he could be with his friends. He would often go to school early just to have the most time possible with them. He was an active member of our church. He had the cutest lisp and a dimple in his cheek. He loved animals, especially the family dogs.

October 29, 2020, Greysen headed out to school that morning. An hour later, I was awoken to police pounding on our door. They politely asked to speak to my husband and me. They said that they needed to speak to us about Greysen. I never imagined that I'd ever hear the words that they were about to say.

They informed us that Greysen had been hit by a car and we needed to get to the hospital right away. My heart instantly went numb. I couldn't believe what they were telling me. They told us that we needed to follow behind the police car and that the other police car would be behind us. We made the three-mile drive to the hospital where we were escorted into the building by the officers. They took us up to the intensive care floor and ushered us immediately into a small room. There were police lining both sides of the room. It was like a movie.

When we got into the room, they told us that Greysen was in surgery and that it was pretty bad. They said something about brain damage, but nothing definitive.

We were also met by another policeman that we hadn't previously spoken to. He informed us that he witnessed the accident. Greysen was crossing Redwood Road, a very busy 45 mph road, and he was struck by a car. He wasn't in a crosswalk. He didn't use the skybridge that would have safely gotten him to the other side to the school. He told us that the driver immediately got out of the car and administered CPR while calling 911.

Greysen did not have a heartbeat. He landed hard on his jaw, which broke immediately, so the EMTs couldn't get an airway. They had to do a tracheotomy to gain an airway. His heart didn't beat again until they got him to the hospital. It was still touchy and they immediately took him into surgery. He had a broken jaw, ruptured spleen, a head injury and a spinal fracture. The doctors told us that there was a 1% chance of survival. He was out of surgery and on life support and was very unstable. They let us come in and be with him. Words can't adequately express what I saw—my sweet baby lying there connected to machines. We held his hand and talked to him.

When the doctors thought we had enough time with him, they told us that they would be taking him off life support. We were visited by a transplant team who asked if we would consider donating his organs. Without hesitation, we agreed. We knew the kind of giving person he was and we knew it was something that he would have wanted to do. They took him off life support and immediately took him to the transplant surgery. That whole day seemed like it was five minutes long.

I lost my son that day. In an instant, because of a stupid decision on his part, he was gone. My life has not been the same since. My heart is shattered. I long to hear his jokes, see his dimple and listen to that lisp. The only solace I have is that through organ donation, he saved the lives of three people.

Please be careful and look at your surroundings. Make good decisions when crossing a street. If there are safer ways to get across the street, please use them. Even though it may take longer to go that way, it could save your life. It could save another mother from the crippling pain of losing their precious child. Please learn a lesson from Greysen. He was the best kid. Even the best kids make mistakes. Unfortunately, his cost him his life.



PEYTON KIMBEL



18 years old
2020

On October 10, 2020, our world would be forever changed in the most devastating way imaginable.

Peyton was born on August 10, 2003. He was a twin. He had a sister and a little brother. He loved us all so much. He was his siblings' best friend, giving them all his love in his special way. He loved late night runs to McDonald's for his Frappe and cheeseburgers. He was a light to all who knew him. He stood up for the bullied, he made you laugh, and he would annoy you until you smiled if you were sad. Or if you were in a bad mood, he would work harder to make you smile.

He loved adventure and he was always looking to do more things. He loved ice climbing, hikes, to repel off cliffs with no fear. He was a catcher in baseball until he was 14; he decided to give that up and to pursue other adventures. He was an amazing wrestler, winning a state title at five years old. He had just gotten into mountain biking before he died. His plan was to practice hard his junior year and for his senior year wanted to join the team.

The mountain he was on, he and his friends drove on the daily to get to the bike trail, so it was comfortable to all of his friends. The night of the 10th, a friend came to get him so they could go grab a couple of friends who needed their help. The driver on the way down the narrow, steep road decided to show off and became reckless. On one of the corners, he fish-tailed around it. The back tire hit the edge of the mountain side and the truck rolled. Peyton was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown from the vehicle. He rolled down the cliff and he ended up underneath the truck.

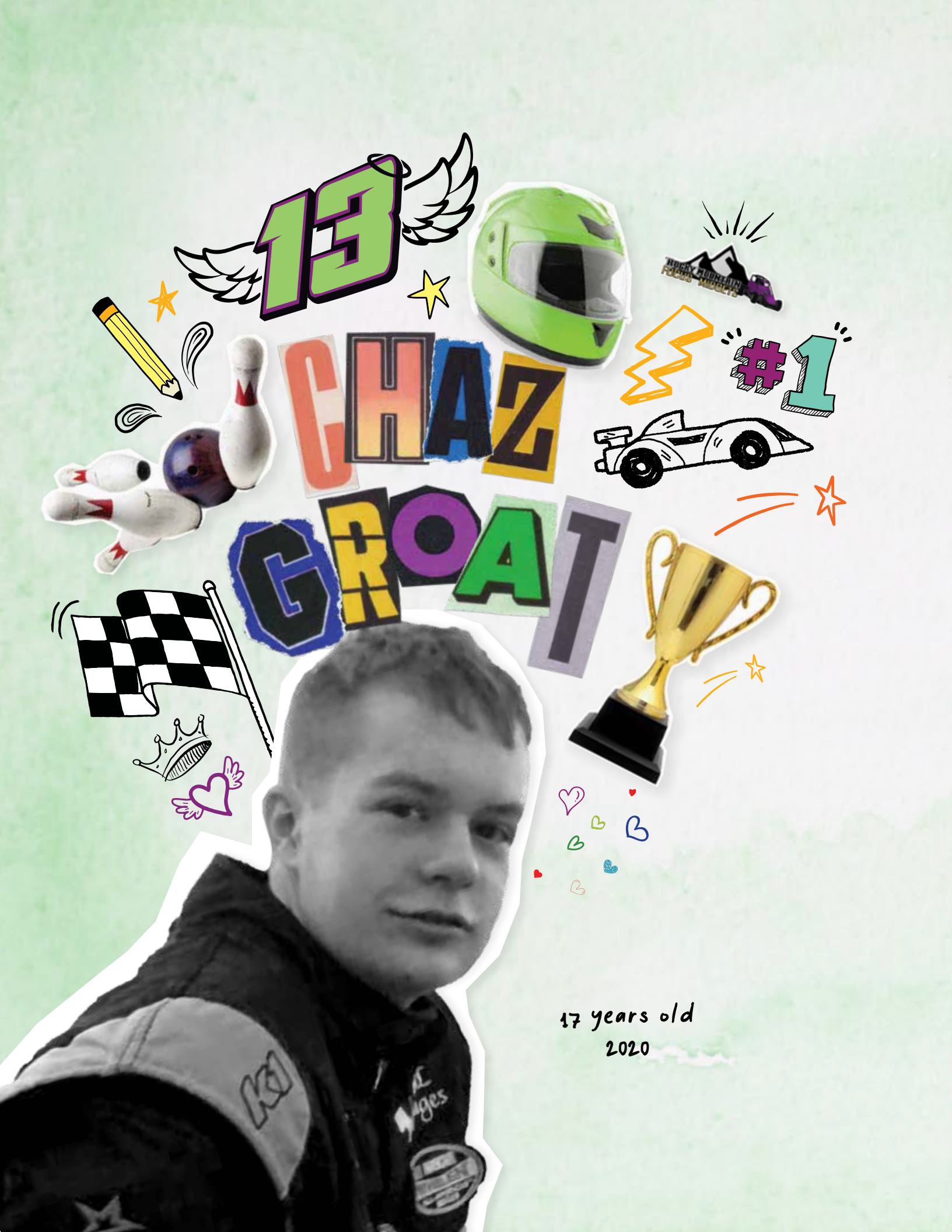
His brother received a call that Peyton had been in an accident and he needed to get up there. We thought he was ok. So, we headed out to go get him. As I was walking out of the house I received the most dreaded phone call a parent could imagine. I will never forget the officer saying "your son" has been involved in a car accident. I asked if he was ok and he said "let me have you speak with the doctor". He was barely alive, he was bleeding internally and he was not awake. They were taking him in for surgery, and they called for Life Flight. He lay in a hospital bed at Primary Children's Hospital in a coma for eight days before they told us Peyton was brain dead.

This all happened because of a reckless moment, because he wasn't wearing a seat belt. If you have read this far, understand if you are a driver and you have passengers, they are precious cargo. Their life has been placed in your hands. One moment destroyed the lives of all who knew Peyton.

Wear your seat belt, and know as a driver, passengers place their lives in your hands. Those passengers have a family who loves and cherishes them. Death changes everything. Death is unchangeable. Our lives are forever changed. We are missing a link in our chain.

Peyton leaves behind a lesson. Live without fear, forgive quickly and love with all of your heart.

This all happened because of a reckless moment, because he wasn't wearing a seat belt.



13

CHAZ

GROAT

#1

17 years old
2020

With his decision to speed, he paid the ultimate price by losing his life and injuring the other driver.

Friday, December 31, 2020, started off as a normal day, but subsequently turned into the worst day of our lives. Chaz left the house early afternoon to meet a friend for lunch. He was full of life and extremely happy as he walked out the door saying: "Love you! See you later!"

We had just gotten home from a bowling tournament in Las Vegas the night before, and ironically, during the drive home, we discussed driving habits more in depth as Chaz recently bought a new car. We discussed increased insurance costs related to speeding violations, getting in a wreck, etc. More so, how a few moments of adrenaline from speeding, or the consequences from aggressive or distracted driving wasn't worth his life. Or as we stated many times, "people who get in your car put their lives in your hands." I told him our worst nightmare was seeing him in jail, the hospital, or morgue due to a bad driving decision. Regardless of how much we talked to him, he would always tell us, "Don't worry! I'm a good driver."

Less than 24 hours later, our nightmare became a reality when a police officer knocked on our door at 3:15 p.m. that afternoon. He told us Chaz was in a bad car accident and had been rushed to the hospital in critical condition. I fell to the floor. By the time we arrived at the hospital, he was basically gone due to a traumatic brain injury. The root cause of the accident

appears to be speeding around a corner and losing control of the car, which resulted in him swerving into oncoming traffic and colliding into another vehicle at an excessive speed. With his decision to speed, he paid the ultimate price by losing his life and injuring the other driver.

To any teenager who may be reading this, your parents aren't just nagging at you, or trying to control you. You are at a point in your life where you start to gain more freedoms. We are merely just trying to make you understand the consequences of bad decisions. Obey the laws and rules of the road! They are there to protect you and others from being injured—or worse, a tragic loss. As grieving parents, please listen! Don't be a Chaz—your life depends on it.

For only being 17, Chaz made a huge impact on those around him. He was known by his sense of humor and quick wit, but mostly by his goofiness. He loved making people laugh and was someone who would light up a room whenever he entered. He had a way of cheering people up, even during the most difficult times. Even in death, Chaz continued giving to others by choosing to be an organ donor. Chaz is talked about constantly and will always be remembered. The void we (parents), family and friends feel will never go away. We love and miss him so very much!

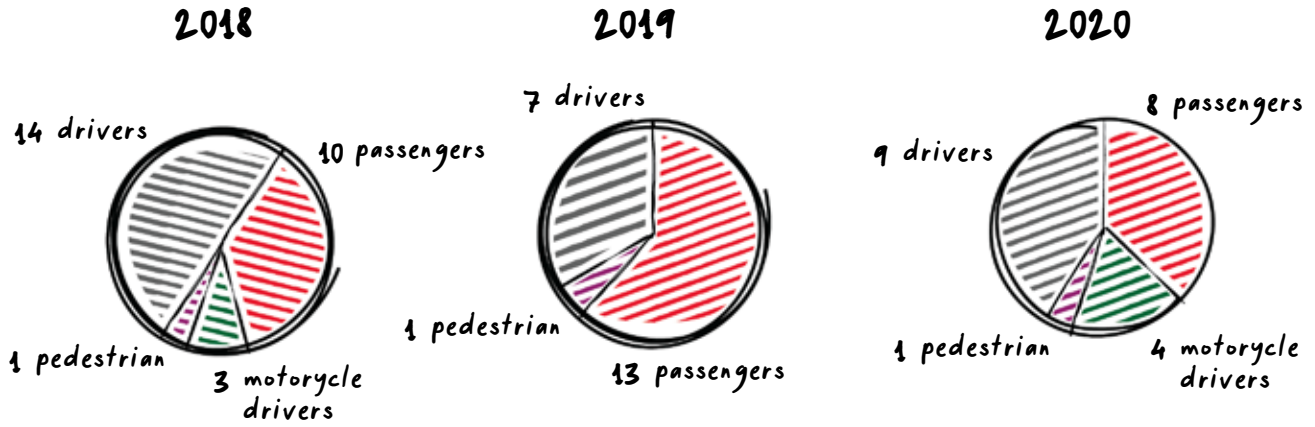
Groat Family

2018 - 2020
TEEN CRASH
STATISTICS

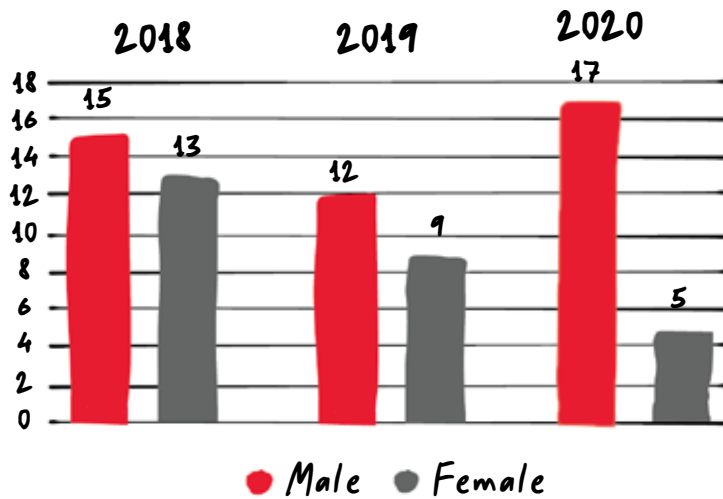
71 teens lost their lives
on Utah roads.

*A fatal crash is defined as a crash involving a motor vehicle
traveling on a traffic way resulting in the death of at least
one person within 30 days of the crash
(Utah Department of Public Safety)*

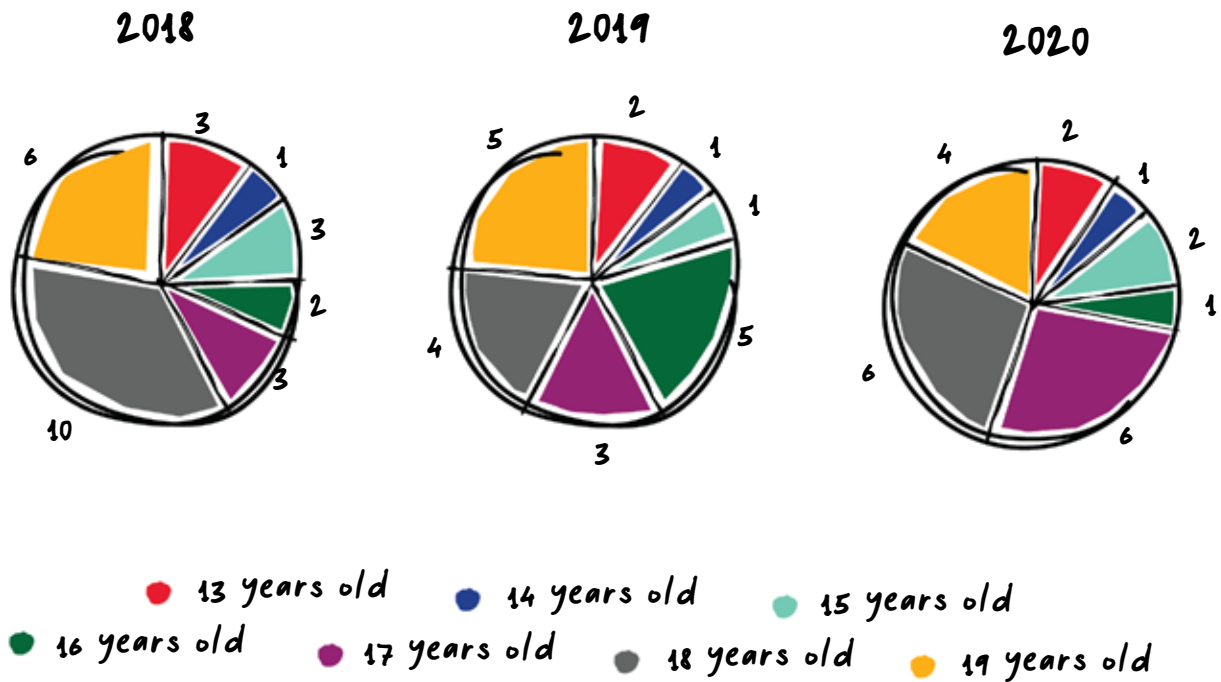
Person Type



Gender

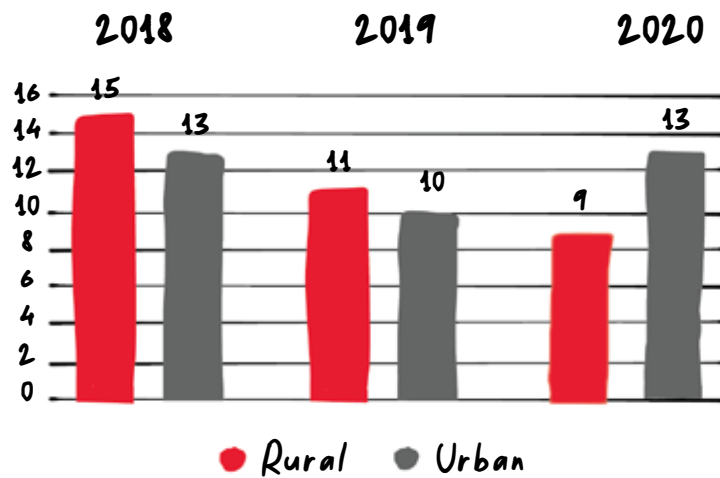


Age of Teen Deaths



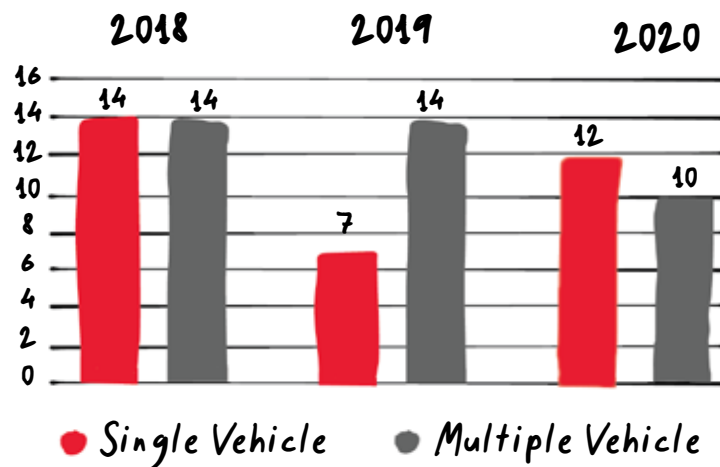
The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers aged 16-19 were nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. And among teens aged 16-17, the fatal crash rate per mile driven was nearly twice as high as it was for 18- to 19-year-olds (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute).

Teens Who Died in Rural vs Urban Areas*

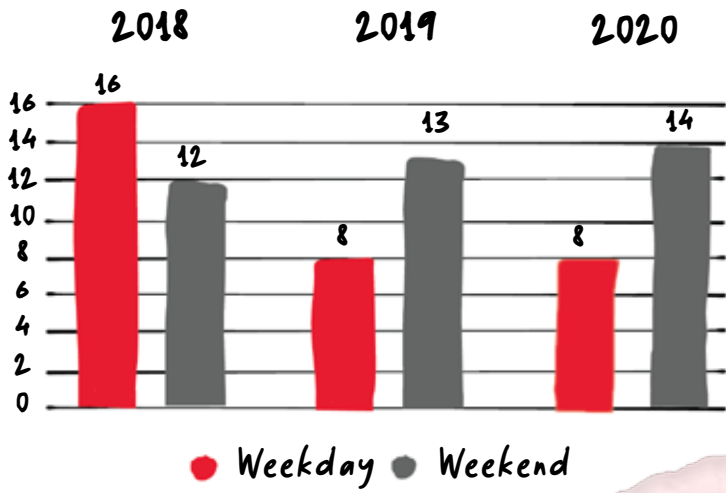


*Statistics based on roadway

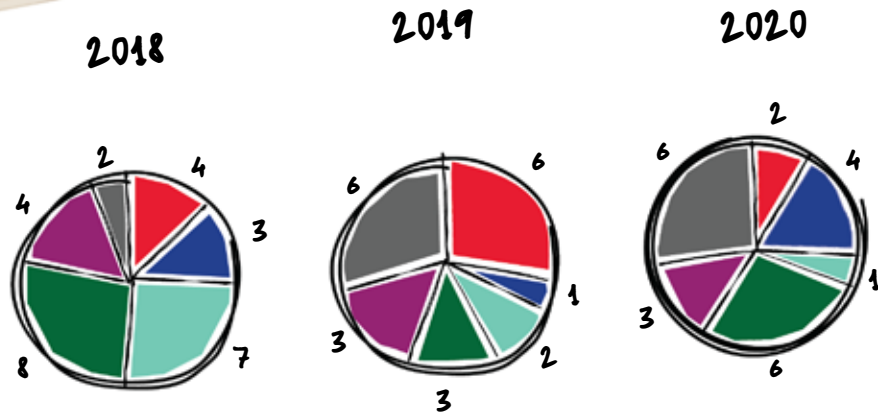
Teens Who Died in Single Vehicle vs Multiple Vehicle Crashes



Time of Week

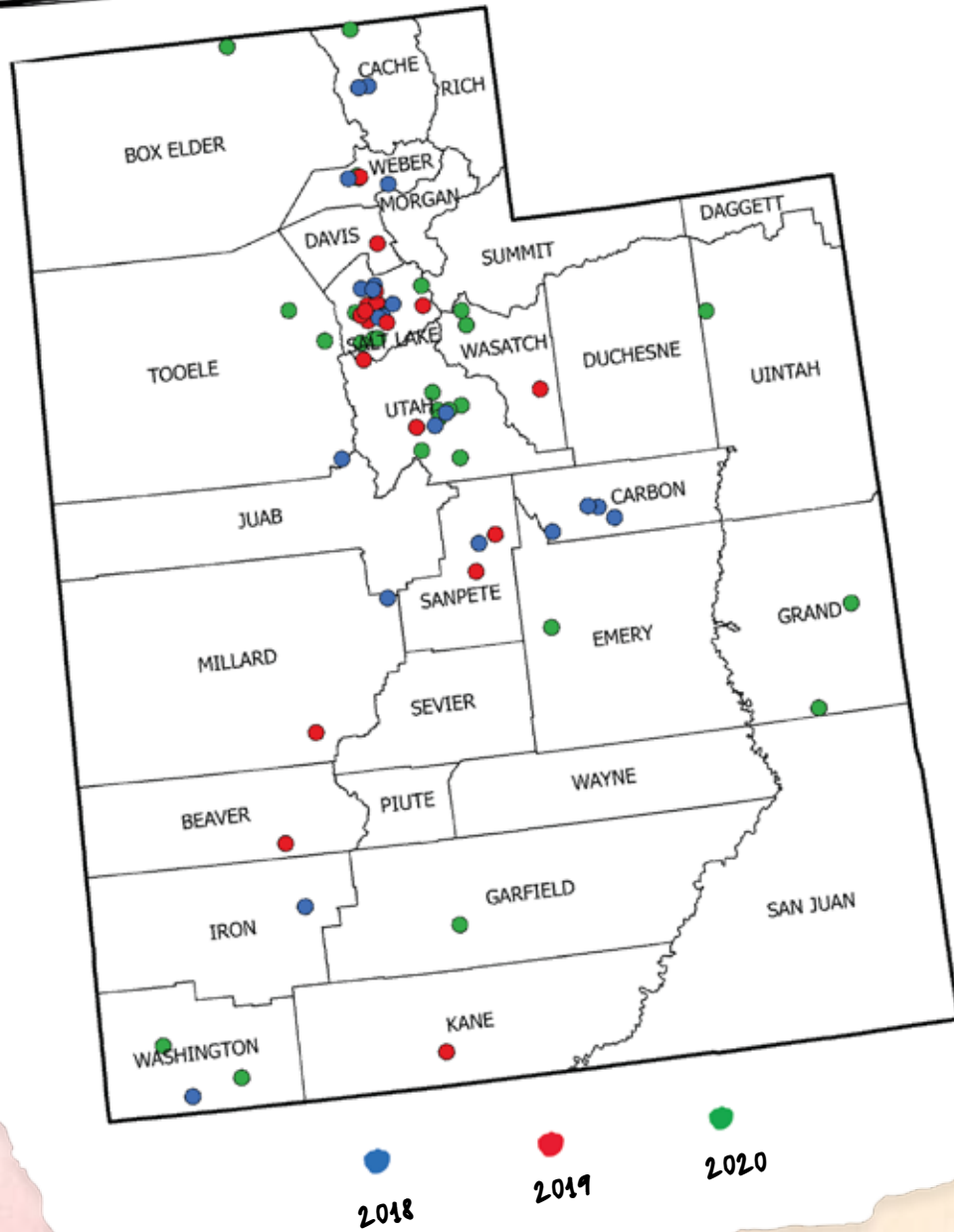


Time of Day



- midnight - 4am
- 4am - 8am
- 8am - noon
- noon - 4pm
- 4pm - 8pm
- 8pm - midnight

2018 - 2020 Utah Teen Motor Vehicle Fatalities



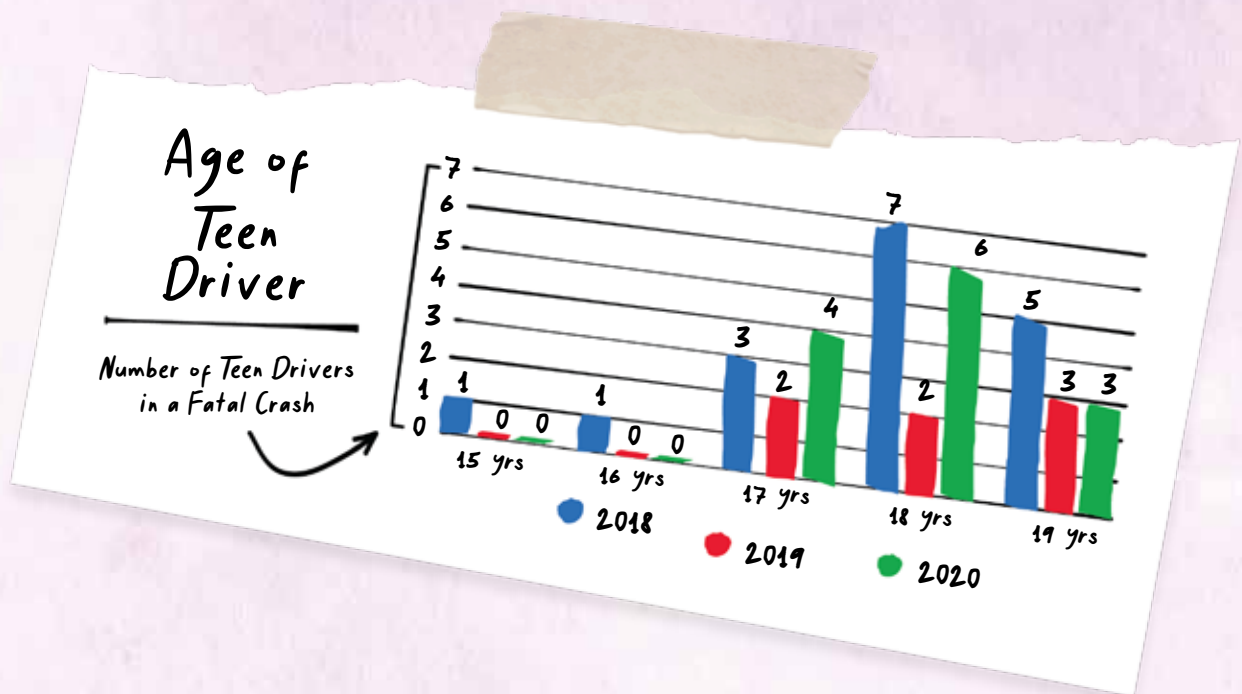
Since the Utah Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws went into effect in 1999, there has been a 69% decrease in the rate of teens ages 15 - 17 killed in motor vehicle crashes (Utah Department of Health.)

2018 - 2020

TEEN DRIVER

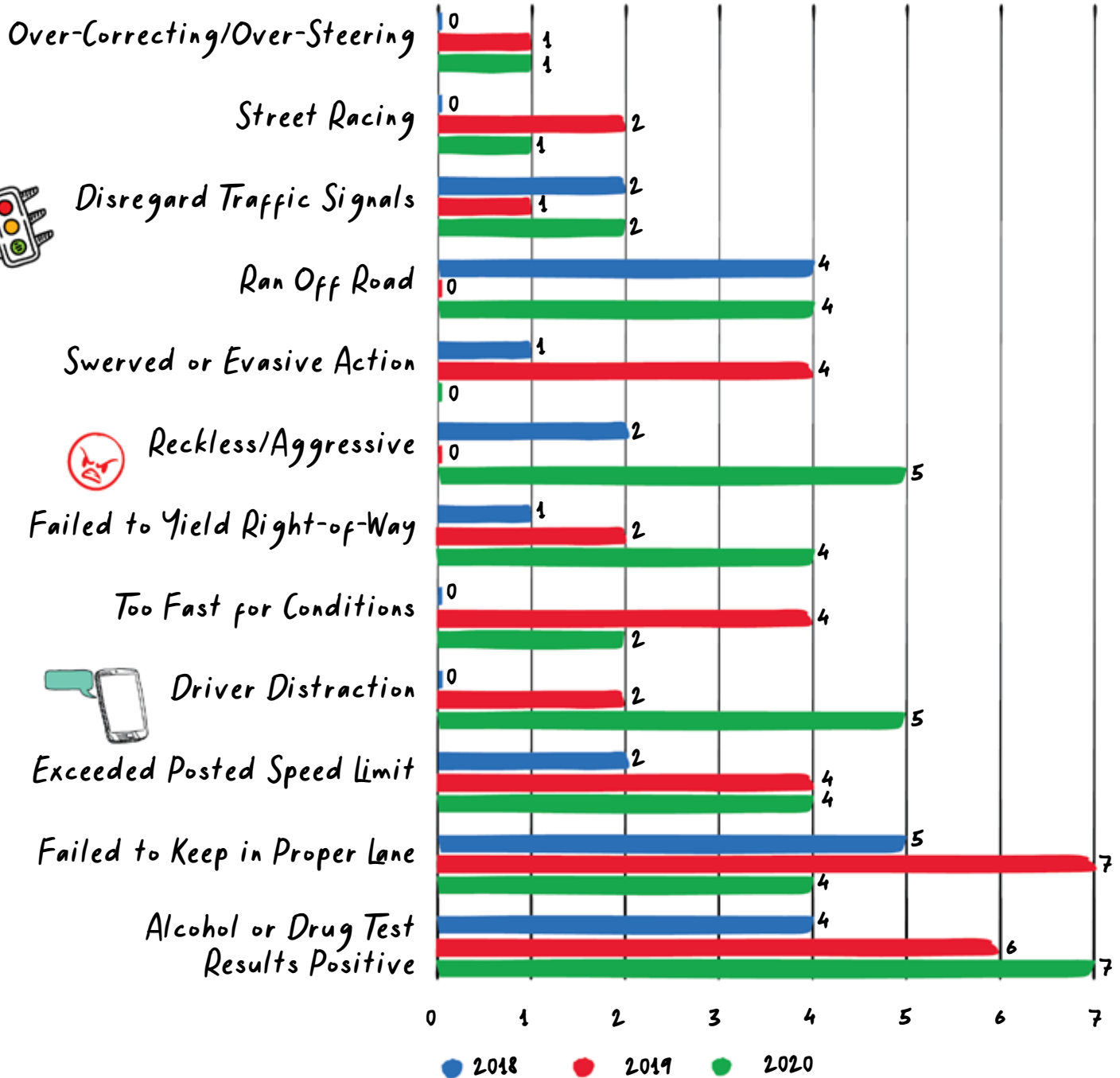
STATISTICS

In 2018-2020, 104 teen drivers were involved in a fatal crash; a total of 101 people were killed in these crashes, including 37 of the 104 teen drivers.



Contributing Factors*

*Each crash may have more than one contributing factor



USE THIS

BOOK

TO

SAVE

LIVES

For the past 13 years, families have courageously shared their stories about how they lost their teen on a Utah road. 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?

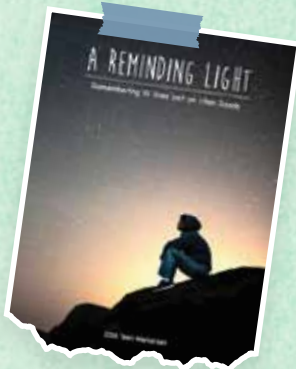
Could it have been prevented?

What rules can you set while you are driving or riding in a car that can help avoid this type of 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.



2017



2016



2015



2014

To view Teen Memoriams from previous years, visit zerofatalities.com/teen-memoriam-books

This book would not be possible without support from the following organizations:



Utah Teen Driving Task Force

ZERO Fatalities

Zero Fatalities[®]

A Goal We Can All Live With

