



## NEW YORK

# Save Your Face, Click It or Ticket Westchester Teen Safety Belt Program

### ► AT-A-GLANCE

► **Project Characteristics**  
Public Information & Educ.  
Enforcement

► **Program Areas**  
Youth Programs  
Occupant Protection

► **Targeted Populations**  
Teenagers ages 16-20

► **Type of Jurisdiction**  
County

► **Jurisdiction Size**  
937,279 (40 High Schools –  
Approx 100,000 students)

► **Funding**  
402 Funds: \$10,000  
NYS Governor's Traffic  
Safety Commission Grant:  
\$153, 597  
Private Funds: \$50,000  
(Local Volvo dealership; and  
corporate donations for  
prizes)

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## Problem Identification

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) 2003 report on teens and safety belts, teens have the highest fatality rate in motor vehicle crashes than any other age group. The report lists car crashes as the leading cause of death for 16 to 20 year olds in the United States. The report also indicates that two-thirds of those teens killed in car crashes were not wearing a safety belt.

NHTSA data shows that wearing a safety belt during a crash is the most effective measure a person can take to survive a crash and prevent serious injury. Teens are not only more likely to be involved in a car crash, but also less likely to wear a safety belt. This is consistent with the findings of Westchester County's police department and other local police departments' accounts of crashes involving teen drivers. It is also reflected in pre-program surveys completed by local high school students.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals of the *Save Your Face, Click It or Ticket Westchester Teen Safety Belt Program* are to:

- Increase teen safety belt use by educating teen drivers about the importance of safety belt safety;
- Encourage high schools to educate teens about safety belt use by incorporating safety information into existing teen driving programs; and
- Reduce the number of injuries and fatalities resulting from non-safety belt use among teenagers countywide.

## Strategies and Activities

The *Save Your Face, Click It or Ticket Westchester Teen Safety Belt Program* launch coincided with the implementation of the New York State graduated licensing law in 2003. The teen safety belt campaign incorporated the following strategies and activities:

- Coordinated with Westchester County Police and local police departments to increase safety belt enforcement during this public information campaign to reinforce the safety belt use message.
- Created a teen safety belt brochure and distributed 30,000 to teens at three Westchester County DMV offices and high schools in White Plains, Yonkers and Peekskill.



- Developed a teen driving website, [www.westchestergov.com/teendriving](http://www.westchestergov.com/teendriving), to provide information on the new graduated licensing law, obtaining and keeping a driver's license, and safe driving tips.
- Presented a comprehensive high school safety belt assembly program using the New York State Police rollover or convincer to demonstrate the affect of unsafe driving behaviors.
- Broadcast teen-inspired public address system announcements with a humorous safety belt message. Announcements were read by students during school hours to reinforce the importance of safety belt use.
- Created brochures and posters to educate and raise awareness about safety belt facts.
- Offered high schools an opportunity to participate in a safety belt contest for student drivers. Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) students issued mock tickets to fellow students driving into the parking lot without wearing a safety belt. Students wearing safety belts were given a key chain and a coupon giving them an opportunity to win bigger prizes. Coupons from all participating high schools were included in the grand prize drawing.
- Aired a 30-second, teen-inspired safety belt commercial on Black Entertainment Television (BET), Cartoon Network, CNN, ESPN, Family, MTV, News 12, Nickelodeon, USA, and WTBS (11 channels) for thirteen weeks. Additional commercials were shot at local high schools featuring local teens.
- Aired teen-inspired messages about safety belt use read by teens on local radio stations.

## Results

The *Save Your Face, Click It or Ticket Westchester Teen Safety Belt Program* achieved the following results during 2003:

- Presented the program to more than 7,097 students at 21 high schools throughout Westchester County
- Implemented safety belt use information into existing teen driving programs at all participating high schools (Those high schools without a teen driving program realized the significance of creating one.)
- Conducted pre- and post-program safety belt surveys showing a 20 percent increase in safety belt use since the program's start

Due to the positive results and success of the program this fall, the program will continue in Spring 2004.