

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DRIVE SAFE HAMPTON ROADS TEAMS UP WITH COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY

GROUPS TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE AMONG TEENS

Thirty one area high schools meet the challenge to increase seat belt use & decrease death & injury.

Hampton Roads, VA., March 20, 2017 – Thirty one local high schools competing in the 2016-2017 *Get It Together High School Seat Belt Challenge*, a program led by Drive Safe Hampton Roads and supported by other traffic safety groups, have been successful in producing a 6.8% increase in student seat belt use. Each school put forth a significant effort to raise students' awareness of the importance of wearing seat belts every time they ride in a vehicle. Winners of this year's *Get It Together Challenge* were announced on March 15 at an awards ceremony.

Participants used a variety of strategies to encourage their fellow students to "Buckle Up!" Tactics included pledge drives during lunch bells and having the Grim Reaper "take" a student every 15 minutes during the school day. Other efforts included making buckle up videos and developing cheers to be used at sporting events. Their efforts not only produced an overall increase in seat belt use, but some schools increased belt use as much as 24.6% from the start of the *Challenge* and others showed belt use as high as 100% percent at the end of the *Challenge*.

The *Get It Together Challenge* is in its 19th year in the Hampton Roads area and has been successful in increasing seat belt use each year. The 2016-2017 challenge, completed on February 17, included over 49,000 students representing the cities of

Chesapeake, Hampton, Isle of Wight, James City County, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and York County. Drive Safe Hampton Roads joins with its community partners - AAA Tidewater Virginia, State Farm™, and DMV: The Virginia Highway Safety Office - in congratulating all of the *Get It Together* high school participants this year.

2016-17 Challenge Program Results

1st place Highest Overall Seat Belt Use = Grafton High School 100%
2nd place Highest Overall Seat Belt Use = Ocean Lakes High School 99.1%

1st place Most Improved Seat Belt Use = Norview High School 26.4%
2nd place Most Improved Seat Belt Use = Lafayette High School 18.9%

1st place Most Activity Points = Woodside High School 2500 points
2nd place Most Activity Points = Poquoson High School 2300 points

Drive Safe Hampton Roads (DSHR) is a non-profit regional coalition whose goal is to increase the community's involvement and awareness of traffic safety issues. For almost 30 years, Drive Safe Hampton Roads has been dedicated to preventing crashes, injuries, and fatalities on the region's roadways. For more information: www.drivesafehr.org or call (757) 498-2562.

