

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Georjeane Blumling 757/233-3825
Chair, Get It Together
Drive Safe Hampton Roads
Vice President, Public Relations
AAA Tidewater Virginia
Kathy Raymond, 757/536-6839
Administrative Coordinator
Drive Safe Hampton Roads

DRIVE SAFE HAMPTON ROADS TEAMS UP WITH COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY

GROUPS TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE AMONG TEENS

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

Hampton Roads, VA., March 12, 2018 – Twenty nine local high schools competed in the 2017-2018 *Get It Together High School Seat Belt Challenge (GIT)*, a program led by Drive Safe Hampton Roads and supported by other traffic safety groups. *Get It Together* ended with better than 50% of the schools ending the Challenge at over 90% seat belt use and an average increase in seat belt use of 7.3%. 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* will be announced on March 14 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, many of which were developed by students themselves, included making buckle up videos, holding poster contests, as well as developing cheers. Schools also used DSHR costumes, "Vince & Larry" and the "Grim Reaper", at many school functions and events as well as on homecoming floats and at sporting events. Student involvement is critical to the success of the program and results show that the schools that have increased student involvement have better results in increasing seat belt use. Their efforts not only produced an overall increase in seat belt use, but some schools increased belt use as

much as 25.4% from the start of the Challenge and others showed belt use as high as 99.4% percent at the end of the Challenge. This year's Get It Together recognition was based on both the number of activity points and a recorded increase in seat belt use over baseline. The 5 Gold Medal winners showed active participation in all categories - pledges, seat belt checks, activities, video; a minimum of 1000 activity points; and improvement in seat belt use over baseline of 16% or greater OR a final seat belt use over 95%. There were 17 Silver Medal winners and 5 Bronze medal winners.

The *Get It Together Challenge* is in its 21st year in the Hampton Roads area and has been successful in increasing seat belt use each year. The 2017-2018 challenge, completed on February 23, 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.

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 over 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.

DriveSafeHR.org



###