



# SAFETY FIRST

Fall 2011

— Prepared by: Teresa M. Thomas, Program Manager

Serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties.

## SURVEY SAYS

The 2011 Seat Belt Observational Survey completed in June revealed that seat belt use remains at **93% for drivers and front seat passengers** in the region, continuing the trend of the last five years. Female seat belt use (96%) continues to be higher than male seat belt use (91%) and cell phone use continues to be low, even decreasing one percentage point to 4%.

For the second time, the survey included observing commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers for seat belt use and cell phone use. These observations revealed an increase of ten percentage points in seat belt use for **CMV drivers from 72% to 82.4%**. Again, female seat belt use (88%) is higher than male seat belt use (82%). Although cell phone use by male CMV drivers remained at 5% (5.7% to 5.4%), female cell phone use decreased from 4.3% to 2.2%.

New in 2011 was the inclusion of backseat and child restraint (CR) observations. These were done by partnering with local police departments participating in the Click It or Ticket Enforcement Campaign, allowing observers to be closer to the vehicle for more accurate viewing. These observations, at 9 locations throughout the region, consisted of viewing 1,900 backseat passengers, with **59.1% of adults** wearing seat belts and **89.1% of children** using child restraints.

The Alliance has been looking for a way to track backseat seat belt use and child restraint use and although this method is not without its challenges, it does seem accurate for adult backseat passengers. The problem with the CR observations is that they don't differential between children under 4, who use a 5 point harness system, and children between 5 and 8, who use a booster seat. Crash data supports the high usage rate for children under 4 but indicates a much lower usage rate (50%) for booster seat aged children.

View the full report and a year to year analysis on-line at [www.SJTSA.org](http://www.SJTSA.org).



The SJTSA is proud to announce that they are the new lead agency for the Atlantic and Cape May Counties SAFE KIDS Chapter.

SAFE KIDS USA is a nationwide network of organizations working together to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the number one killer of children aged 9 to 14. There are more than 600 coalitions and chapters in 49 states educating parents and distributing safety materials.



The Atlantic/Cape May Chapter was established in 2002 under the direction of Barbi Harris, RNC, at AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center. Ms. Harris, has agreed to continue as Chapter Coordinator at SJTSA.

The SJTSA and SAFE KIDS will partner to address traffic safety issues, such as occupant protection, pedestrian safety, bicycle, skate and skateboard safety. Additionally, SAFE KIDS will address: sports safety, amusement park safety, water safety, playground safety, poison, falls, and choking,

There will be a task force and kick off meeting this Fall. Those interested in attending and participating can download a Request to Participate Form at [sjtsa.org](http://sjtsa.org) or contact Barbi Harris at 856-794-1941 or [safekids@sjtsa.org](mailto:safekids@sjtsa.org).

[WWW.SAFEKIDS.ORG](http://WWW.SAFEKIDS.ORG)

# GDL LAW

Due to the recent tragedy involving the Mainland High School football players, NJ's Graduated Drivers License Law is back in the spotlight.

The original law that went into effect on January 1, 2001 has had amendments and changes to close loopholes and strengthen the law. The most recent changes were effective May 1, 2010 and include increasing the supervised driving period to one year, limiting passengers to one unless a parent or guardian is present, eliminating the use of any wireless communication device and reducing night driving times.

The Alliance has long believed that the key to keeping our new teen drivers safe is parental involvement. Last year the NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety unveiled their **Parent Teen Driver Orientation Program**, an hour program designed to help parents set rules and monitor their teen's driving in a helpful and supportive way. Studies indicate that teen drivers with involved parents are half as likely to get in a crash.

During the Fall of 2011, the Alliance presented the parent teen driver orientation program at Egg Harbor High School and Buena Regional High School.

Schools or organizations interested in hosting the program should contact Mike Tullio, SJTSA Traffic Safety Specialist at 856-794-1941 or [mike@sjtsa.org](mailto:mike@sjtsa.org).



*Prior to the state's program, the Alliance developed its own program and unveiled it to nearly 60 parents at Egg Harbor Township High School in 2009. A fair amount of the Alliance's material was incorporated into the state's program. Although not adopted, the Alliance continues to inform parents of their liability when hosting parties and serving alcohol to minors.*

# SEAT BELT SURVEY

Observations for Part 1 of the FY2012 survey are scheduled for October through December 2011. Part 1 will provide data on senior seat belt use and teen seat belt use by performing observations at Over 55 communities and high schools.

Part 2 will focus on child restraint and booster seat use by performing observations at youth sporting events around the region. These observations are planned for the Spring of 2012.

On Saturday, July 30, 2011, a pink tree at Saw Mill Park in Buena Vista Township was dedicated to Nick Gazzara, a 18 year old resident who died in a motor vehicle crash on December 16, 2010.

The dedication ceremony was part of a Buena Vista Township Community Safety Day to promote traffic safety and unveil the new state of the art pedestrian crosswalks at the same location. Educational offerings included child restraint checks and car-fit assessments.



On Saturday, August 13, 2011, the Gazzara family kicked off the **Inaugural Goals for Gazzara Memorial Outdoor Soccer Tournament**. Twelve teams from Atlantic and Cape May Counties competed.

In between games, players, family and friends could participate in traffic safety related activities, such as the multi-million dollar Save A Life drunk driving simulator, kick a soccer ball with fatal vision goggles that simulate impairment, watch the Matt Maher Video Documentary and pledge to buckle up for Nick by signing the banner. The banner now hangs at the park by the pink tree.



**DON'T FORGET  
TO REQUEST  
SPLASH  
FOR YOUR NEXT  
COMMUNITY EVENT**

