



The
ZERO
FATALITIES
Project

“We are a small state, but we have a huge problem when it comes to this issue. As parents, as professionals involved in criminal justice and law enforcement, and as human beings, we can’t help but be alarmed and energized to take action. We are also united in our desire to do something to address the devastation these crashes cause - for victims and their loved ones, for offenders and their families, and for the hundreds of lives which come to a screeching halt every time there is a reckless driving or driving under the influence-related crash in our state.”

**- Corrections Director Ashbel T. Wall,
Director, Rhode Island Department of Corrections
at the April 23, 2008, press conference
announcing *The Zero Fatalities Project*.**



A SMALL STATE WITH A BIG PROBLEM

The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) has seen a 78% increase over the last five years of overall DUI-related offenses among its sentenced population. Today, there are approximately 48 men and women doing time for crimes related to driving recklessly or under the influence. Some will be participating in panels for this project and the hope is that by telling their stories to young drivers, they will make an impact. It is one small way they can contribute to something positive out of the terrible results of their actions.

PARTNER AGENCIES

The Zero Fatalities Project is a collaborative effort involving many agencies with an interest in this critical statewide issue. They include:

- Rhode Island Department of Corrections
- Rhode Island Attorney General's Office
- MADD-RI
- Rhode Island Family Court
- Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association
- Rhode Island State Police
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Funding for this brochure was provided by the **Tori Lynn Andreozzi Foundation.**



Cathy Andreozzi, whose daughter Tori Lynn, was severely injured by a drunk driver while walking home from school at the age of 12, speaks about the pain her family has experienced as the result of someone's poor decision to drink and drive.

Brendan, now age 25 and a senior in high school at the time of his crash in which he killed two of his best friends, speaks to a group of high school students urging them to make better choices than he did.



The ZERO FATALITIES Project

Dan Converse stands before a slide of his son, Jon, taken just months before Jon's death in a DUI crash in November of 2007. Dan speaks to students about the impact his son's death has had on the hundreds of people who knew and loved him.



Attorney General Patrick Lynch speaks at the April 2008 press conference announcing the *The Zero Fatalities Project*. Behind him are partners in the initiative including, from left: Corrections Director A.T. Wall and DOT Director Michael Lewis.

COMMENTS FROM ATTENDEES

"When Mr. Converse started talking, I started crying. You don't realize how your actions affect others. I thought it was the best part of the presentation because finally someone was yelling at us and getting through."

Portsmouth HS 12th grader

"Definitely changed my life and opinions. Powerful and emotional."

Johnston HS 11th grader

*"My students were moved to tears by the speakers and made a suitable connection to the program and the Senior Prom the very next day. It is with deep appreciation that I write this letter of thanks for providing me and my students with a life changing opportunity. **The Zero Fatalities Project** was well planned and professionally delivered."*

Bill Lyons, Coventry HS teacher

"I found this presentation to be extremely eye opening. It personally touched me and allowed me to fully understand the consequences of drunk driving."

East Providence HS 11th grader

"The inmates were very open and their stories got through to me. The whole atmosphere made it more meaningful."

Scituate HS 10th grader

"I cried a lot for both the inmates and the families."

East Providence HS 11th grader

"Unbelievable. I am so glad that we had the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful program. It not only was so thought provoking for the students, but also for myself and the other adults who were with us. Each speaker had a remarkable story, one that is a learning lesson for all. I hope that other students around the state appreciate what you have put together."

Jordanna Ruggeri, Coventry HS teacher

"As the parent of a teen, I just wanted you to know how powerful the program is. My daughter came home and filled us in on all of the details. It really made an impact on her thoughts about driving. I felt like I had attended the meeting after she explained to me what had occurred. I can tell that she really took everything in and now even more so realizes what a responsibility it is to be a good driver and to make good choices when driving. The words of the inmates who spoke were very informative and meaningful. We would like to thank you for the opportunity she had to attend this meeting."

Parent of Ponaganset HS teen

COMMENTS FROM SPEAKERS

"No words can capture the pain that was in that court room, but you could feel it. This is a burden none of you ever wants to carry around for the rest of your life."

Michael, former offender panelist, age 39, sentenced to 15-years, DUI Death Resulting

"A ten-year sentence is nothing compared with the pain of knowing I took a mother's only child."

Dawn, offender panelist, age 32, sentenced to 10 years, DUI Death Resulting

"Close your eyes. Envision the person you love more than anyone else in the world standing up here in my shoes, talking about your death. This is as real as it gets."

Dan Converse, father of Jon Converse, killed by a drunk driver (his best friend) in November of 2007

"Prison is like another world, especially for someone young who's never been in trouble before. All it takes is one bad choice."

Brandy, offender panelist, age 23, sentenced to 10 years, DUI Death Resulting

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Zero Fatalities Project presentations, which can accommodate groups of up to 100, can be scheduled on Wednesday mornings beginning at 9 a.m. Those interested in booking a session are invited to call or e-mail **Tracey E. Zeckhausen**, Chief of Information and Public Relations at the RIDOC, at **(401) 462-2609**, or **tracey.zeckhausen@doc.ri.gov**. A reservation form, along with directions and the Visitor Dress Code will be emailed upon registration. The registration form can also be cut out and photocopied from this brochure. Sessions must be booked at least two weeks in advance and groups are encouraged to arrive at the facility 15 minutes to a half hour prior to the session's start time to allow for processing at the front desk. Students must be middle school age or older, and the full name and date of birth of all adults attending and an approximate count of minors must be listed on the registration form.

Reimbursement for transportation to and from the ACI for schools requesting it is available through an agreement with the Department of Transportation and corporate and non-profit donations. Those schools requesting reimbursement must submit a bus receipt along with completed evaluations from the session. Parental permissions for students are the responsibility of the schools.

***The Zero Fatalities Project* Reservation Form**

School or Group: _____

City/Town: _____

Contact Person's Name/Title: _____

Contact Person's Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Approximate number in group, (*students and adults*): _____

Date/Session Requested: _____

Please note: *We can accommodate up to 100 at each session, and small groups may be combined. The best way to identify a time slot is to call Tracey E. Zeckhausen, the RIDOC's Chief of Info. and P.R., at (401) 462-2609 or via e-mail at tracey.zeckhausen@doc.ri.gov. The program will be offered Wednesday mornings beginning at 9 a.m. throughout the year. Sessions will last between 2.5 and 3 hours.*

Would you need reimbursement for busing if available? _____

Names and DOB's of adults/chaperones attending:

Please note: In the event that press wish to attend the session, the contact person will be notified in advance if possible. Privacy of visitors will be respected. Student permission slips are the responsibility of the school or group.

Please fax this form to: Tracey E. Zeckhausen at (401) 462-2630

or mail to: Tracey E. Zeckhausen

Rhode Island Department of Corrections
Office of the Director
40 Howard Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920

preferably no later than one week in advance of the requested date.

Thank you for your interest in *The Zero Fatalities Project*.

WHAT IS THE ZERO FATALITIES PROJECT?

The Zero Fatalities Project (ZFP) is a public safety initiative aimed at raising awareness of the devastating consequences of underage drinking and other forms of reckless driving. In April of 2008, a letter signed by Rhode Island's Corrections Director A.T. Wall and Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch went to high school principals in the state inviting their schools' participation in the program during the spring 2008 prom and graduation season. The initiative involves busing students from schools across the state to the John J. Moran Medium Security Facility at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) to attend panel sessions of preselected inmates doing long sentences for DUI and reckless driving-related offenses. The panelists speak candidly about their crimes, the effects of their poor choices, and their incarceration. A victim family member speaks at each session about the tragic effects these crashes have upon those whose loved ones are killed or permanently injured.

The model for the presentation is similar to that of the long-running Special Community Outreach Education (S.C.O.R.E.) Program administered through the Rhode Island Family Court under the auspices of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC), with some differences. The focus is on DUI - and reckless driving-related offenses, Assistant Attorney General Jay Sullivan or his designee gives an overview presentation, and students have the opportunity to ask questions of all participants.

Over 40 groups and about 2,900 individuals have heard the sobering message of *The Zero Fatalities Project* since it began in May 2008. The program has been covered extensively by the press, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Due to its success, it will continue to be offered year round. Parent and community groups are invited and encouraged to attend.