

Encouraging Safety in Teen Driving

By Charity Sturgeon

Community Traffic Safety Program Coordinator



Recently, while dining out for dinner, I saw a group of teenagers dressed up for their prom. It made me think back to my high school years. For my senior prom, my boyfriend & I rode in his best friend's 1966 Chevelle SS. However, so many young drivers never have the chance to attend a prom or graduation because of carelessness behind the wheel. Or, these celebrations turn tragic when they get behind the wheel impaired.

In Oregon approximately 13% of all licensed drivers are between the ages of 16-24 yet nearly 30% of all crashes had a young driver behind the wheel. All too often young drivers get behind the wheel inexperienced or impaired or have too many distractions like cell phones, MP3 players and too many passengers.

In 2000, Oregon passed graduated licensing laws for drivers under 18. Since this law went into effect, crashes with young drivers are down 30%. While we are making positive changes, there are still too many young people being injured and killed on Oregon's roads.



I recently attended a crash reenactment hosted by **Oregon Impact** at Colton High School in Colton. A crash scene was played out in front of the student body and they demonstrated the response from police, medical and fire response teams in real time. Oregon Impact volunteers who are DUII crash survivors were present to tell their story to the students. It was an impactful program and something that will

leave a lasting memory with those students. For information on teen driving and the Graduated License Law [click here](#).