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Local Students Kick-Off Program in Effort to Save Lives

Hamilton County, IN - Oct. 30, 2009 - With motor vehicle crashes being the number one killer of teens, students from Carmel, Noblesville and Westfield High Schools are kicking off a new program this week in an effort to save lives. The program is called "Buckle Down" and has been developed by Hamilton County's "SNAP into Action, Inc." and other community partners. It is designed to be a student-led program where the students take on the program, make it their own, and use it to promote safe driving behavior among their peers. It focuses teens on maximizing seat belt use by both the driver and passengers in the vehicle, eliminating impaired driving, driver distractions (i.e. cell phones and texting) and traffic violations.

Sadly, there were 1,418 crashes involving teens between the ages of 16 and 18 just in Hamilton County in 2008.

On June 10, 2009, two Hamilton County teens were killed in two separate vehicle crashes. Neither teen nor the other six passengers involved were wearing seatbelts.

"We have created the program and have turned it over to the students to lead. We know that these empowered teens will make a positive impact with their peers in their school community and in Hamilton County," said Lisa Wissman, Buckle Down Program Director from SNAP.

The "Buckle Down" program provides contracts for students to sign, through which they indicate they will focus on making good choices while behind the wheel of an automobile. Participating students can then earn points throughout the year which can be used to redeem various prizes, with ultimately one grand prize being awarded to a student whose school met program criteria. That lucky student whose name is drawn will win a CAR, donated by Don Hinds Ford in Fishers.

Students will register and sign their contracts on the new www.NowThinkNow.com website where they will also have the opportunity to interact with other students participating in the program from all the schools. This social site provides a forum for teens to discuss the choices they make on a daily basis and allows the message to come from their peers.

Partners in the program include, Don Hinds Ford, Legacy Fund, TAG-The Auri Group, Fuel V.M., Priority Risk Management, AAA Hoosier Insurance, Riverview Hospital, Herff Jones, M & I Bank, Fraternal Order of Police, Olinger Distributing Co., and Hamilton County Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs. Any business, organization or individual interested in being a sponsor of the program or making a donation to the program, whether it be financial, in gift cards or other prizes for the students, please contact Beth Gehlhausen, SNAP Director, at 317 432-4187 or Beth@SNAPIntoAction.com for more details.

The program will be officially kicked-off with a press conference on Tuesday, Nov 3rd at 10:00 a.m. at Don Hinds Ford, located at St. Rd. 37 and 126th St.