

# *The JourneySafe Challenge ... for teens.*

*Protect yourself, your friends and others.*



*“I’m so sorry for your loss. I would do anything to give you back your beautiful daughter, Jill, but you don’t know what a difference JourneySafe has made in my life.*

*I drive my little brothers around all the time; I never used to look back to check and see if they were in their seatbelts. I talked on my cell phone and even sent text messages while driving with my friends and my little brothers in the car. Learning about JourneySafe and what happened to Jill and Jon changed everything about the way I drive. I always make sure my brothers are belted in. I never use my cell phone while I’m driving, now. I know how easily I could become distracted and I know what could happen if I do. Because of JourneySafe, I’m a better driver, and when I’m in a car with friends, I’m not afraid to speak up if the driver or someone else is doing something stupid that might cause a crash. I’d rather be a little embarrassed than dead, or responsible for someone else dying.*

*Amanda L. (Age 18) 2006*



# *JourneySafe Teen Challenge: DRIVE and RIDE the JourneySafe way*

## **Student Resource Materials and Strategies for survival**

### **A day in the life ...**

In a teen's world, who knows what might happen in a single day? From the moment you wake up in the morning, you know it could be an average day, a rotten day, or an incredible once-in-a-lifetime day. A lot of your daily routine is typical; you go to school, hang out with your friends. You go to class, do homework. If it's a weekend maybe you'll take in a movie, go to a dance or the mall or just get together with friends. It doesn't matter so much *what* you do as long as you're with friends, right, because your friends are so important, so much a part of everything that happens in your life.

Still, you never know - today might be the day you meet someone new, get introduced to a guy or a girl you really like. Maybe you'll make the winning touchdown, ace that test you worried so much about, be elected for ASB, find that lost \$50.00 your aunt sent you for your birthday. You just never know. Any of those things might happen before you climb back into bed tonight. **Or today ... you might die in a car crash.**

You might be killed or you might kill one of your very best friends.

A day in the life of 17-year-old Jill Sabet included just such things. She went to school, hung out with friends; she got congrats and an "A" from her English teacher for a well written essay and a detention slip in another class for a cell phone violation. She jumped for joy when they announced she'd been elected ASB president, called her mom, sent her dad a text message (probably during class again) to say, "Dad ... I Won!" She got her hair done after school, made plans with her friends to go to the beach over the weekend, met her boyfriend at a friend's house for pre-prom photos ... **and then she died.**



Jill and her boyfriend, Jonathan, were both killed because a friend, a 16-year-old driver, momentarily took her hand off the wheel and her eyes off the road ... just to look for a pack of gum in the door pocket.

### **Today ...**

- **An average of 17 teens will be killed in car crashes.**
- Most of them, like Jill and her boyfriend Jonathan, will die because of some small entirely preventable mistake.
- In crashes that involve a teen driver with passengers, it's more likely a passenger will be killed than the driver.
- If you're like most teens, you don't think this will ever happen to you. If you drive, you probably consider yourself a pretty good driver and think that if you don't drink or do drugs when behind the wheel you'll be safe.

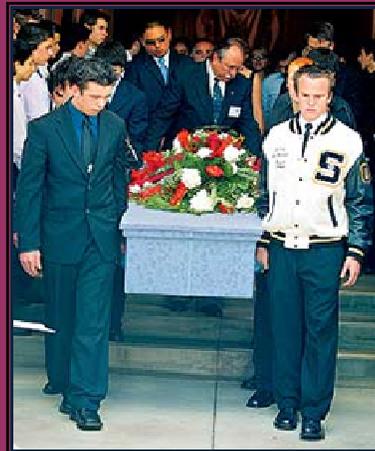


### **Did you Know?**

- **Nearly 6,000 teens who feel just like you do, die every year in car crashes (more than the number who die from drugs, alcohol, violence and suicide combined.)**
- **The number one cause of fatal teen crashes is driver error and speeding which reduces your ability to control your car and gives you less time to make quick decisions.**
- **Driver error is most often caused by simple distractions such as friends in the car, cell phones, loud music, even eating.**
- **Every additional passenger you add into a car driven by a teen increases your risk for a fatal crash by 100%.**
- **Teen drunk driving only causes approximately 1 of every 4 fatal crashes, but it goes without saying that driving drunk or riding along with someone who's under the influence is dangerous.**

## *Attention: Teen drivers and passengers*

### *Automobile crashes*



*are the leading cause death for teenagers.*

**Attitudes** have everything to do with making a difference.

- JourneySafe believes that changing laws to further restrict teen driving privileges will NOT be effective unless teens think and feel differently about driving, about what the right to drive represents and about what's "cool" and definitely "not cool" behind the wheel or while riding in cars with friends.
- Teens are more intelligent than ever before. JourneySafe believes that if teens are provided with the education and tools they need, **most** of them will make safer choices behind the wheel and in the passenger seat(s).
- The most important influences in a teen's life are their friends. As a friend, a teen has tremendous power to affect another's life. Teens often make important decisions based only on a friend's suggestion.
- Teens sincerely care about their friends and about protecting their friends from harm. Teens who know the risks and have the tools to keep themselves and each other safe can and usually will empower each other to reverse the current trends.
- Today's teens are ready and capable to accept the JourneySafe challenge to reduce the astronomical number of their peers being lost each day in senseless and easily preventable automobile crashes.
- Today's teens have the courage and the resourcefulness to stop this epidemic - teen by teen, friend by friend. If given ways to prevent it, **they will not let another friend be put quietly into the grave.**



# *The JourneySafe Teen Challenge*

## *Protect yourself, your friends ... and others.*

### **Step One: Get Real ... and get rid of bad attitudes and misconceptions**

#### **It's NOT all about You!**

That trendy little saying, **"It's all about me,"** may be cute for a 5-year-old's tee-shirt but it's one of the most negative expressions of the "Generation M(e)" mindset. Rather than a sense of healthy self-esteem, it suggests and even promotes a dangerous cultural trend toward selfishness and self-absorbedness. Once you begin to drive and/or your parents allow you to ride in cars with friends, that saying and mindset belongs in the "DO NOT USE" category or the recycle bin of your brain. **Think about it ... how is it ALL ABOUT YOU if:**

- You crash and hurt or kill a friend or family member who is riding with you?
- You crash and hurt or kill an innocent stranger, someone in another car or a pedestrian?
- You crash and hurt or kill yourself? (How do you suppose your family will be affected?)
- Your teen driver friend was speeding or doing something stupid before the crash and you didn't say anything?
- Your friends who were killed forgot their seatbelts and you didn't remind them?

Being loved and knowing you're special to your friends and family is wonderful and the way things should be for every teen. But the moment you're old enough to get your driver's license or ride in cars with other teens you need to completely get rid of the selfish and spoiled "It's all about me," attitude. People with a healthy sense of self-esteem and integrity **don't** put self first when they're behind the wheel. They're smart enough to know better.

Behind the wheel, the only way the "it's all about me" mindset works is if you turn it around to mean:

**"It's all about me ... protecting what matters."**

#### **It won't happen to me ...**

If your analytical antennae are up, or if you're all about playing the odds with your life, maybe you're right. There are approximately 30,000,000 teens (13-19) in the U.S. today and **only** approximately 6,000 will die in car crashes this year. Maybe you're willing to risk that not one of those 6,000 will be you or anyone you know and love. Maybe you figure that because you're a pretty straight edge kid, the risks are even less. Maybe you don't care about anyone that exists outside your own circle of friends or maybe you think your superior driving skills will protect you. Maybe you're just sure that God or fate has something better in mind for you than a premature death on the highway because of some stupid easily preventable mistake made by you or one of your friends behind the wheel.

Think again ... and consider this:

- Jill Sabet's family had already lost one child to cancer; what were the odds of losing another ... by any means?
- How do you explain the odds of one family losing **both** of their teens (their only children) **in the same crash** (example: Kiara (17) & Jameel (15) Pearse - November 14, 2006, Mississippi)
- Remember the stats. Sober and straight edge kids account for **almost 70%** of all teens killed in automobile crashes.
- Over **300,000** teens are **seriously** injured in car crashes every year. We're talking quadriplegia, permanent brain damage, wheel chairs and long term rehab. **Do the math ... that 's 10%.**
- Every one of the approximate 6,000 teens killed last year thought about the same things you're thinking now and supposed the same thing: It won't happen to me ... **BUT IT DID.**

It boils down to this: Tempting fate is a deadly game. Don't depend on the odds. Just because they suggest that you'll survive ... doesn't mean you'll reach adulthood alive or healthy and whole. Reducing your risks depends on your own actions and attitudes.

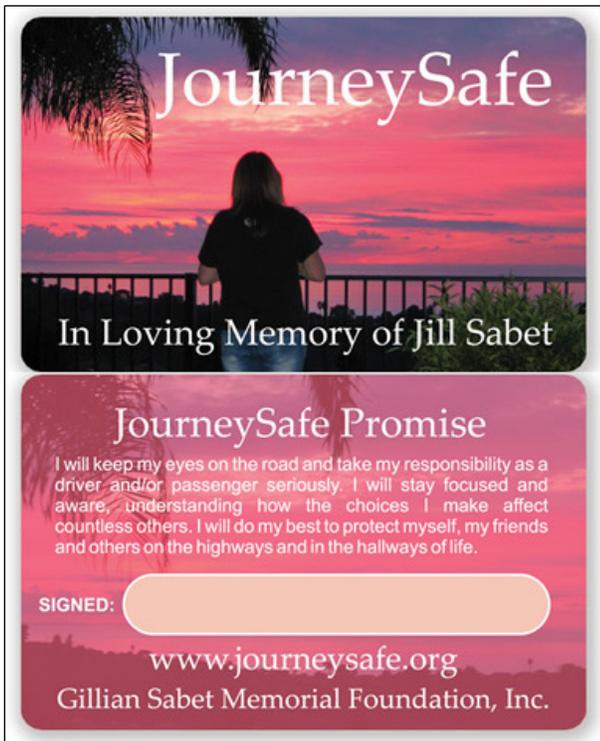
# The JourneySafe Teen Challenge

Protect yourself, your friends ... and others.

## Step Two: Make the JourneySafe Promise - For yourself & for your friends

A good friend is a responsible driver and a good passenger.

You already know how many fatal teen car crashes involve driver error due to distraction, and you know that passengers are the primary cause of teen driver distraction. By making the JourneySafe pledge, you acknowledge that you understand that countless others may be affected by the choices you make and you **promise** to take your responsibilities as a driver and/or a passenger seriously.



### The JourneySafe Promise

- I will keep my eyes on the road and take my responsibility as a driver and/or a passenger seriously.
- I will stay focused and aware, understanding how the choices I make affect countless others.
- I will do my best to protect myself, my friends and others on the highways and in the hallways of life.

**Don't take this promise lightly.** Your teacher may have given you a card, or you may have picked one up while visiting a JourneySafe exhibit. Just having it in hand doesn't count. **You must believe it, embrace it and live it for the promise to have real value.**

**If you're sincere,** sign it, keep it in your wallet or hole punch it and keep it on a key chain or a lanyard to remind you of your commitment.

**The card is just a symbol - it's the promise that counts.** If you don't have a plastic card, you can download a copy from the JourneySafe website or contact us about how to obtain one.

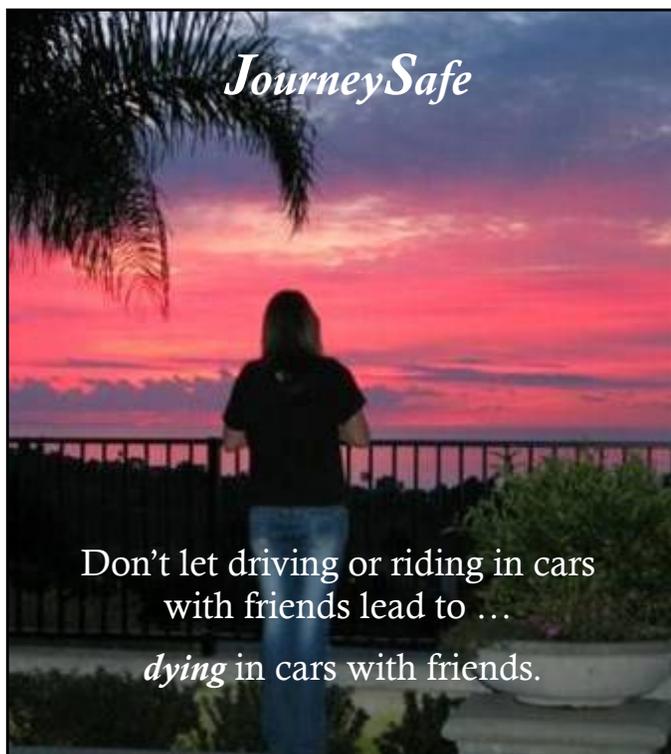


What would *you* do ...  
to keep *this* from being your own  
or your best friend's last ride?

# *The JourneySafe Teen Challenge*

## *Protect yourself, your friends ... and others.*

**Step Three: Fulfilling the JourneySafe Promise - Remembering these 5 things ...**  
*(Every time you drive or ride in a car with friends)*



### **Remember the Five**

- **Everybody wears a seat belt ... at all times.**
- **Turn off your cell phone—don't text while driving**
- **Reduce distractions in the car.** Put away the stuff like make up and iPods. Don't eat while driving.
- **Limit the number of passengers** and choose a "designated passenger" (when you drive or ride with friends.) **Be a good friend and passenger;** double check for seatbelts, answer the driver's cell, control the radio and help keep commotion in the car to a minimum, **so the driver can stay focused on driving only.**
- **Find your voice.** Speak up for your own safety and the safety of others.

It doesn't matter in what order you remember them or how you say it, just **Remember the Five** rules that may help keep you alive.

### ***What else can you do to be safe behind the wheel?***

- **Slow down!** The speed limit is the LIMIT (as fast as you're supposed to go). Don't believe it if someone says you can get pulled over for "not keeping up with the flow of traffic" when the cars around you are breaking the law by going too fast.
- Remember that driving anytime can be dangerous but **half** of all fatal car crashes involving teens in 2005 happened between **3:00 p.m. and midnight**. Even driving home from school or to an after-school job can be deadly.
- **Turn off your cell.** Talking on your cell phone while driving gives you the reaction time of a 70-year-old. Texting is like getting in line just waiting for **your turn** to crash.
- **Be defensive.** Leave room between you and the cars around you. Ask yourself what would happen if the car in front of you slammed on the brakes, like right now?
- **Have a contingency agreement with your parents.** If for **any** reason you might miss your curfew and/or don't feel comfortable about driving home (whatever the reason, whether you're drowsy, the weather's bad, you've had a drink, it doesn't matter), it's okay to call home. Have your mom or dad pick you up and promise not to give you a hard time about making a smart decision. (Discussing the underlying reasons or an ongoing problem is only fair ... the next morning.)

# *The JourneySafe Teen Challenge*

## *Protect yourself, your friends ... and others.*

### *Risk Taking - It's normal and important.*

*(Except when you're inside a 5,000 pound lethal weapon, in which case it's just plain stupid.)*



So, you're a risk taker. You like going fast, living on the edge, seeking out the next thrill, taking your chances. Well, good for you; that just means you're a normal healthy teen.

Physiologically, you're in your prime risk-taking, thrill seeking years ... and right on schedule, too. In fact, the part of the brain that controls risk taking behavior (the part that causes you to calculate consequences against the adrenaline rush that accompanies extreme or potentially dangerous actions) doesn't fully develop until you reach your mid-twenties. Biologically, there are good reasons for this delay in development. If your caution and fear factors were fully functioning at age 18, you might not ever leave home and go off on your own.

**There's nothing unusual or wrong about teenage risk taking, *UNLESS* you do your risk taking on the road.**

Even an immature brain can calculate the odds against a human being coming out unscathed in *any* collision involving a 3,000–5,000 pound mass of metal machinery crashing at high speed. Unless you're a professional race car driver on a track all by yourself or with other trained professionals, ***you do not have the right*** to take unnecessary risks or behave in a reckless manner behind the wheel. It doesn't matter if you have passengers or not; on the highway, stupidity always puts others, as well as yourself, at risk.

### *Positive Peer Pressure - What is it and how to use it.*

*It's NOT "cool" to risk what matters most ... your life, your friends, your future.*

**Peer pressure is tough ... teens live and die by it every day, literally.** You don't have to think long and hard to come up with examples. In reality, that old saying of your mother's, "So ... if your friends all jumped off the bridge, would you just jump right off after them?" isn't that far off the mark. Understanding peer pressure is sort of like realizing that **if** your friends all **did** jump off the bridge, while you definitely might not want to jump, definitely might actually decide not to jump, you wouldn't mind being last in line so nobody would be left behind to call you "chicken".

The truth and the irony is that everybody wrestles with peer pressure; the jocks and the popular kids as well as the nerds and geeks. Even adults worry about what their friends and neighbors think about them. True, it's never harder than during adolescence, but never more important to **"find your voice"** and your own way of using peer pressure in a positive way, especially if you feel unsafe or at risk. Even if you're normally the quiet one, believe it ... your words and your suggestions have the same power to affect the actions and behavior of your friends, as their suggestions affect what you do and how you act.

"Positive peer pressure" is just what it sounds like - using peer pressure in a positive way, or to affect a positive outcome. The concept is simple, but not necessarily easy. It takes courage and practice; it means constantly reminding yourself of your own worth and what matters most: it means understanding that you're not the only one out there on a limb worrying about what to say and do. It means realizing that other kids in the car may also be concerned about protecting what matters most and knowing that the person who speaks up first usually sways the whole crowd. Don't let the idiot in the bunch be the one who opens his or her mouth first to suggest something stupid.

# The JourneySafe Teen Challenge - Finding Your Voice

## To Speak or Not to Speak ...

Chances are, if you're in a car with friends and you're feeling uncomfortable about something the driver is doing, you're not the only one. Even if others act like they're having fun and don't seem to mind, don't be so sure you're in the minority.

- 67% of teens admit to having sometimes felt unsafe while traveling in cars with friends; only 45% said they might say something about it to the driver.

**You have a right to feel safe when you're with friends**, and a responsibility as a friend, to let others (the driver or rowdy passengers) know how their actions could affect you all. If it's just you and the driver, remember your life is in that person's hands; they need to value your trust and your safety as much as you do, or you need to get out of the car and think twice before riding with him or her again.



## Choosing to speak up ... so what do you say?

Nobody wants to come off sounding like someone's mom or dad. You don't need to cite the statistics or give your friends a lecture. For your own physical and emotional well being, it's important to find ways of saying how you feel and what you want without giving offense or getting hysterical (behaviors that might cause the driver to escalate the very behavior that bothers you.) That's what "finding your own voice" is all about. Following are some suggestions from teens who've tried and now practice positive peer pressure in the car on a regular basis. Try them out or just practice and see what feels right for you. Write down your ideas and memorize phrases you like. Have a ready collection of "catch phrases" so it becomes automatic for you to come up with the right one at the right time.

With some friends you can use the gentle approach and honestly say something like, "Hey, I love you, **I don't want to die and I don't want you to die ... please** (slow down, put your seat belt on, shut off your cell phone, whatever is appropriate) but when that won't work humor is always a good way to ease the tension.

### Suggestions

- "Whoa .. Slow down there, Jeff Gordon. We're not in any kind of big hurry are we? A car crash isn't exactly in my plans for the day."
- "Dude, don't speed. Last time I checked this ain't no Nascar vehicle. I don't want to end up being scraped off the asphalt or in a wheel chair for the rest of my life."
- "Hey man, I don't know about you, but **I'm busy**. I've got a life; I still have **stuff** to do ... **Don't kill me ... please!**"
- "What'd you wake up this morning and decide being cool means acting like a moron? (Quit zigzagging in an out of lanes or cutting people off, riding on that guys bumper, texting, whatever the situation). I've got a date with destiny and her/his name isn't Highway 405."
- "Hey, shut off the cell phone; my life's more important than your boyfriend/girlfriend's 15th call of the day."
- "What? You never heard of voice mail? I would at least like to check *mine* once more ... before I die. Give over and just drive the car."
- "Hey dude (girlfriend), buckle your seatbelt; it takes two seconds. Is that so hard?"
- "Like, uh if I was in to **mass transportation**, I'd take the bus; it's safer. Thanks for the offer, but I'll catch another ride."

Sure, they may sound pretty lame at the moment, but you get the idea; use your own technique, whatever it takes to make your point without getting nasty or self-righteous. If someone occasionally gives you a hard time, it's cool to remind them that just because you choose to drive and ride smart doesn't make you some kind of goody-goody who always follows the rules and colors inside the lines. You choose to **drive smart and ride smart** because you want to keep and protect what matters most - your life, your friends' lives and your future..

# The JourneySafe Teen Challenge

*Take the Next Step: Get involved - Have a lasting impact on others.*



## Start or join a JourneySafe “Task Force” at your school or youth

Seventeen of your peers die every day; 6,000 die every year. You have the power to do something about it. Don't wait for adults to make more laws, raise the driving age, or give you more driving restrictions. *Change your attitudes* about driving, remember the risks and help convince your friends and peers to do the same. JourneySafe is about protecting yourself, your friends and others. It's up to you to “create a buzz” around campus or among your youth group. Here are some ideas to help get you started. Use your own imagination to come up with others.

- Visit and use the [journeysafe.org](http://www.journeysafe.org) website often. Sign up to receive e-mail newsletter and updates.
- Use some of the staggering statistics to create posters, flyers, postcards and other creative stuff you can distribute around campus.
- **Start an e-mail campaign to raise curiosity - How hard is that?**  
Paste this link ( <http://www.journeysafe.org/Links/index.asp> ) into an e-mail and send it to 5 friends with a note asking them to forward the same e-mail and link to 5 more friends who will do the same and so on.  
In your e-mail encourage your friends to visit [www.gilliansabet.com](http://www.gilliansabet.com) and/or [www.journeysafe.org](http://www.journeysafe.org). You never know, opening that e-mail might startle someone into changing something about their own unsafe driving or passenger habits. ***You may save someone's life without ever leaving your keyboard***
- Get your school newspaper to do a story or series of stories about JourneySafe and the teen driving crisis. Share tips to keep the whole school safe.
- Encourage your ASB and faculty to include the JourneySafe logo or materials such as a copy of “Remember the Five” when selling tickets for events like prom, winter formal or grad night.
- Write, produce and broadcast information about JourneySafe and teen driver and passenger safety on your school's television broadcast system.
- Make cell phone charms that encourage teens to pull over before making or receiving a call.
- Form a team to monitor the entrances and exits on your campus and try to tally the number of risky behaviors you see happening on your own campus in a single afternoon or over the course of a week. Report your finding to faculty and administration to generate more support for the JourneySafe program at your school.
- Organize an official JourneySafe Club that meets to discuss real issues and solutions for the teen driving crisis and other serious problems teens struggle with. Contact [www.journeysafe.org](http://www.journeysafe.org) for a complete JourneySafe Club Handbook and guide full of ideas which will show you how to start, help you plan your goals and activities, even give you tips on how to fundraise to support your ongoing efforts. Every resource you might need is included.
- Get permission to plant a JourneySafe tree somewhere on your campus (church yard, community park, etc). Make an event of it; get as many students, parents and teachers involved as possible. Let the community know that you're planting it, perhaps in memory of local teens killed in car crashes, but also to honor the memory of the **6,000 teens killed in car crashes every year**. Your tree can be a symbol of how the three main branches of the JourneySafe program (teens, parents, educators and leaders) work together and support each other in your efforts to reduce teen automobile fatalities. It can be a lasting reminder of your combined commitment to make a difference and an inspiration for others to follow in your footsteps.

