



Special Interest

"W82TXT"

By Deb Hanson

It can happen in an instant. You take your eyes off the road for what feels like a millisecond then BAM everything goes black. OK, this might be worst case scenario, but something to think about when we pick up our phone to answer a text we just received while driving.

Unfortunately, texting and driving has become almost the norm. According to a July 2007 survey of 1,000 teens conducted by AAA, 46 percent text while driving. Conjunctively a study by Virginia Tech Driving Institute revealed that those who resort to texting while driving are 23 times more likely to meet with an accident.

As a text-messaging driver, that's all it takes. A few seconds of seemingly innocent distraction to type out a few simple letters. A decision that can leave you filled with regret and everlasting consequences.

Skybrook resident Shawn Fogle Principi and her family are owners of Fogle Insurance Group of Huntersville and they are making it their mission to teach high school students to learn this lesson before tragedy strikes. Fogle Insurance, in partnership with Auto Owners Insurance and in cooperation with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, is marketing a "W82TXT" campaign to deliver directly to local driver's education students.

The featured presenter of the campaign is Michele Fogle-Sizemore, sister to Shawn, and the insurance company's director of group benefits/marketing. But all the Foggles at me family-run

firm, including President George D. Fogle and Vice Presidents Shawn Fogle Principi and Doug Fogle, have united in this team effort to help future drivers understand the ramifications of texting while driving.

"The goal is to catch the young drivers before they develop the habit," Fogle-Sizemore says. "The kids seem to be taking an interest and I think the message is getting through."

One of Shawn's insurance companies, Auto-Owners worked with AT&T to create a video, and they offer to their agency as a way to present the material to young teens. The video taps on the hazards of texting while driving by using real life stories of those that have been touched by the consequences of the act. "From there," Fogle-Sizemore says, "I let them take over the discussion."

Year to date Fogle Insurance representatives have already introduced students at Hopewell, Hough, Mallard Creek, North Meck, and The Cannon School to the "Wait to Text" campaign. The firm says they expect the company to continue "W82TXT" presentations throughout the school year, possibly as often as once a

month at high schools as new driver's education classes begin.

They would also like to reach others with the program. "We have just touched the tip of the iceberg with the public, private, and charter schools," says Shawn. "We would like to incorporate church groups and civic clubs as well. And it would really be a nice program for school PTA's and PTO's too."

Shawn and her husband Craig Principi have been residents of Skybrook for nearly 9 years and have two sons Nicolas (13) and Jackson (12).

If you would like more information the the W82TXT campaign or how you can get in touch with Shawn and Fogle Insurance, please visit their website at www.foglegroup.com and click on the W82TXT tap at the top.

As the folks at Fogle like to say: Be Smart, Be in control, Be caring, and Be a BFF - Friends don't let Friends text and drive, because it is better to lose one minute of your life, not texting then to lose your life in one minute!