

## **The Race to Arrive Alive!**

Vroooooom!!!! Drivers exchange menacing glances. Vroom!! The motors rev a little more! Drivers grip the wheel. Passengers laugh. The light turns green. Screech! The tires squawk and two cars peel off the line. Motors rev higher and higher with each shift. 60, 70, 80 miles per hour. The Honda Civic shoots in front of the Toyota and the two metal cannons barrel down the street and into the darkness of the back road destined for the finish line 2 miles away. Moments later, the sounds of twisting metal and screeching tires fill the air as the Honda loses control and the Toyota. Crunch! Bang! Screech! Screams of young voices fill the night. Soon, the only sounds are the slight hissing of a broken radiator and the faint sound of sirens... Later the screams of heart broken parents pierce the still night as 8 moms and dads learn their son or daughter will not be coming home ever again.

The above is a made up story about a scene that happens more often than we think. Many media campaigns and school programs have taught us for years about the dangers of driving impaired, distracted, or tired. However, no one seems to talk about the real dangers of driving too fast and racing! No one seems to understand how easy it is to lose control of a car and kill or injure yourself or others in the process.

How do I know how easy it is? I have been racing since I was 8 years old. First for 10 years in a Go-Kart, and most recently I moved up to cars. But the difference is I race on a racetrack in a car that is built for racing and safety and not in the street. Throughout my years of racing I have learned that it's very easy to lose control of a car when you are going too fast for conditions. I have also learned how much it hurts when you hit something at a high rate of speed. Even in a racecar, strapped in with 5 point harnesses and surrounded by a durable roll cage, it still hurts a lot. I cannot imagine crashing with a simple lap belt in a car made of plastic and light tin at a high rate of speed.

I have friends who drive too fast all the time. Sometimes they even race each other to different locations. I have two friends who have been in minor accidents already as a result of driving too fast. In both cases they were lucky enough to get slowed down so it was only minor fender benders. They are even worse in snow and I am fearful that they will hurt or kill someone.

They feel like they are under control, but I know they are not. I am going to college to major in criminal justice and I am not looking forward to the day I have to knock on the door of an unsuspecting parent at 3am to tell them their little boy has been in an accident. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention teen drivers, especially males, are most likely to underestimate hazardous conditions and drive too fast and get distracted by their passengers. In 2010, crashes caused by teen drivers injured 282,000 teens and killed almost 300 more. Even I was surprised when I first started driving how easy it was to lose control, especially in the snow.

So, I say we save the racing and speeding for the racetrack.. The road is no place to risk the lives of others. Let's create the race to arrive alive!!