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NATIONAL OFFICE

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Dear Parents,

The school will be hosting a MADD Canada *School Program* presentation on:

\_\_\_\_\_ April 10 \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_ 25 \_\_\_\_\_.

On average, every year in Canada **hundreds** of people are killed and **thousands** are seriously injured as a result of crashes involving alcohol and/or drugs. Impaired driving is a leading cause of death in Canada. The devastating impact on victims/survivors and their families is immeasurable. In an instant, their lives are changed forever.

Road and other crash deaths were amongst the leading causes of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years in 2022. Based on various statistics and reports, MADD Canada estimates more than half of those crash deaths involved alcohol and/or drugs.

Almost 45% of fatally injured drivers aged 16 – 19 tested positive for drugs between 2017 and 2021. This number was even higher amongst drivers aged 20 – 34, with almost two-thirds (61.1%) of fatally injured drivers in this age bracket testing positive for drugs during this time period.

While young people are significantly overrepresented in alcohol-related deaths as drivers, they are overrepresented to an even greater extent as passengers. The problem of impaired driving among youth in Canada is very real.

It's **never too early** to teach our youth about the dangers of impaired driving and of getting in a vehicle with an impaired driver. The *School Program* is proven-effective at encouraging responsible decision-making among youth – both immediately after the presentation and longer term. In the 2022-2023 evaluation survey among participating students, 92% said the program makes them want to make the right decision when it comes to impaired driving and 82% said that they were likely to make a plan for getting home safely when going out with friends. The majority of students felt that consuming cannabis would cause one to drive “a lot worse” with 86% saying this after the presentation and 91% 3-months post presentation. Furthermore, three months after the presentation, half of respondents were more likely to think that cannabis use has a negative effect on the ability to drive.

Our trained facilitators deliver the presentation which includes the new film: ***One Last Dance***. The film's fictional story illustrates the tragic consequences of driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. Throughout the film, students are shown times when the tragedy could have been prevented by making different choices. The presentation also includes the sharing of key messages and an interactive and educational quiz.



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**So why is it important for students in grades 7-12 to view MADD Canada's *School Program presentations*?** Although your child might not be driving yet, he or she will soon be thinking about the possibility of driving. They may already find themselves in situations where alcohol and/or drugs are present. As well, they may have opportunities to ride with an inexperienced young driver. As they learn to be more independent, they need to know the facts and be ready to avoid dangerous situations involving impaired driving.

Did you know that the 2021-2022 *Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey* indicates that alcohol remains the substance with the highest prevalence of use among students in grades 7 to 12? In the past 12 months before the survey, 39% reported consuming alcohol. On average, students reported trying their first alcoholic beverage at 13 years of age and were, on average 14 years old when they first used cannabis. In fact, 18% of students in grades 7 to 12 reported using cannabis in the year before the survey. Those percentages represent thousands of young people, therefore before students even reach high school and/or begin to drive, many are already exposed to or participating in risky behaviors that could lead to impaired driving, among other harmful consequences, in later years.

Here are some of the testimonials we have received from Grade 7-12 educators who have hosted our *School Program*:

*"This was an amazing video! Very moving and many of the students and teachers in the room were touched and became emotional. Even at this young age of 11 for the grade 7s it is very important to begin the important though process that goes along with the decisions around drinking and driving. The presenter did an amazing job! Her tone and voice was excellent and engaging. The personal story made it more memorable and I feel all students will reflect on her and this film. Thank you so much."*

- Pearce Regional Jr. High

*"I am very glad we went ahead with the decision to show this presentation to our grade 7 and 8 students. They are at the age when they begin to need to make serious decisions and this film will impact what they do and how they think. All students and staff were engrossed with the film. The presenter did an excellent job speaking to the students before and after the presentation. She was also very good with our volunteers, making them feel needed and valued!"*

- Harkins Middle School

*"GREAT SHOW. Good program for junior high aged students as in a few years they will be of age to drink or drive. Important for the students to know the possible consequences of drinking and driving. Students need to know the options that they can have when faced with friends, family that have been drinking and thinking about driving. The presenter did a great job at asking questions and having the students involved. True stories including the loss of his mother. It can happen to anyone of us. The entire program is extremely worthwhile as it helps the students be responsible citizens of society."*

- Cardinal Leger Jr. High



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Delivered through Canadian schools since 1994, MADD Canada's *School Program* has an enormous impact on Canadian students and will influence their own decision-making for years to come.

We hope that after your child sees this presentation that you will be able to have a family discussion about what they have learned. By educating our future generation about impaired driving, lives will be saved and injuries prevented. Impaired driving is a totally senseless crime and is 100% preventable.

Sincerely,

MADD Canada

**P.S.**

For additional information and resources for parents go to:

<https://maddyouth.ca/school-program/>