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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2021

Michigan teen safe driving program empowers students to share life-saving traffic safety messages with peers, community

Applications being accepted for teen-led traffic safety awareness campaign

Students at every Michigan high school have a chance to make a difference in their communities and help their fellow teens become better drivers by participating in this year's *Strive for a Safer Drive* (S4SD) campaign.

Entering its 11th year, S4SD is a joint effort between the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning and Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford. The goal of the campaign is to reduce the leading cause of death for teens: traffic crashes. In 2020, teens and young adults age 15 to 20 accounted for 7.3 percent (79) of all traffic deaths in Michigan, with 51.9 percent (41) of those deaths being the driver.

Risky and dangerous behavior — such as speeding or distracted driving — and inexperience are the primary factors contributing to teen driver fatalities.

The S4SD campaign encourages teens to talk to other teens and community members about making safe driving choices. Schools will develop and implement a student-led, peer-to-peer traffic safety awareness campaign. Campaign topics may include speeding, seat belts, pedestrian, bicyclist and passenger safety as well as impaired, distracted, night-time and winter driving.

Participating schools will each receive \$1,000 to conduct their campaign. Once the projects are completed, student teams at each school will submit a video or PowerPoint outlining their campaign. Schools with the top-five winning campaigns will receive cash prizes ranging from \$500 to \$1,500.

As part of Ford Fund's commitment to the campaign, all participating schools will have the opportunity to send students to a free Ford Driving Skills for Life hands-on driving clinic next spring. Professional driving instructors from across the country will teach teens key skills such as hazard recognition, speed and space management, and vehicle handling with hands-on instruction. A station highlighting the dangers of distracted and impaired driving also will be taught.

Since the 2011 creation of S4SD, 173 different Michigan high schools have participated in the program.

The OHSP has partnered with the Transportation Improvement Association to coordinate activities of the S4SD program. For more information about S4SD, please visit Michigan.gov/S4SD.

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In 2020, there were 473,443 licensed drivers age 15 to 20, which represents 6.7 percent of Michigan drivers.

Source: University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute

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