



## Driving home a safety message to teens

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NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (WIVB) - In today's age of social networking, people try to stay connected at all times. At a traffic safety fair in Niagara County, students discovered that texting and driving can cause serious problems.

It's an obstacle course that most licensed drivers should be able to breeze through. But how do you think you would do if part of the challenge involved texting while driving?

Michael Cuddahee and Thomas Burley of Lewiston Porter were among the hundreds of students who took part in the annual Niagara County Traffic Safety Fair. Calspan sponsored a vehicle crash demonstration at the fair on the Niagara Falls Air Base. Nowadays, there's a strong emphasis on the dangers of texting while driving.

But this event offered more than just a lesson about texting. Students also heard from people whose lives were changed by drunk drivers. Dennis Gleason considers himself lucky to be alive.

Gleason said, "We don't want these graduates graduation and not making it to their future."

Teens also heard some hard facts, such as 6,000 people are killed each year mostly because of distracting driving. They then watched in horror as a car flew into a van. The staged event, which used crash test dummies, showed the impact of a 30 mile an hour collision.

Back on the course, Burley refused to answer a text. Cuddahee tried, and paid the price in sloppy driving.

Niagara County Sheriff's Capt. Greg Schuey said, "What they do is similar to a drunk driver. Their speed fluctuates. They're swerving. Anything can happen in a blink of an eye."

Burley said, "Don't pay attention to the phone, especially if traffic is like that."

In real world traffic, the cone could have been a pole, or possibly a pedestrian.

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