



Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Speaker Contact Information

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Steering Committee

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Keynote Speaker

“The Adolescent Brain: Traffic Safety & Risk taking”

Adolescence is a period of significant brain development. How we understand and respond to adolescent behavior, including risk taking, can be informed by an appreciation of the maturation processes that occur in the adolescent brain. Safety-related decisions and behaviors during adolescence may be highly influenced by brain development.

Ken Winters, Ph. D.

Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research
Professor, Department of Psychiatry - University of Minnesota
Senior Scientist, Treatment Research Institute - Philadelphia
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Ken Winters, Ph.D. received his B.A. from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the State University of New York/Stony Brook. His primary research interests are the assessment and treatment of addictions, including adolescent drug abuse and problem gambling. Dr. Winters has published numerous research articles in these areas, and has received several research grants from the National Institute of Health and various foundations.

Southeast Minnesota TZD Update – Regional Traffic Safety Statistics & Statewide TZD Updates

Cheri Marti, Director, Office of Traffic Safety, Dept of Public Safety, 444 Cedar St., Suite #150, St. Paul, MN 55101, cheri.marti@state.mn.us

Sue Groth, Director, Office of Traffic Safety Operations, Dept. of Transportation, 395 John Ireland Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55155, sue.groth@dot.state.mn.us

“Seatbelt Safety” Austin Pacelli High School Program

Lynn Spainhower, Mower County Safe Communities coordinator;

lynnspainhower@msn.com

Colin Sheehan and **Ji Hoon Kim** are seniors at Austin Pacelli High School, (507) 437-3278; www.austincatholic.org.

Regional TZD Updates

Diane Beck, Public Affairs Coordinator/Administrative Assistant, Mn/DOT District 8, Southwest Minnesota TZD region; diane.beck@dot.state.mn.us



“Remember Britney and Buckle up”

Tammie Becher, Britney’s mother, lives in St. Charles with her husband, Jerry, who is Britney’s stepfather and two sons, Jesse (24) and Jeremy (14). Tammie currently is an education supervisor for St. Mary’s Hospital, Mayo Clinic. Her daughter Britney loved to be involved in activities. Along with playing the flute, Britney was a member of the peer help group and played in many sports including, volleyball, basketball, softball and golf. She tried not to let her size take over her dream to play sports. Tammie recalls comments coming from the opposing team, "look out, that’s their secret weapon" when Britney would be warming up just before a game.

She was a very petite girl with a very big heart. Britney worked after school and during the summer months at the Assisted Living Center in St. Charles. She loved to be around the elderly people to help make them smile. She always made the comment, "Mom, they are so cute!" when talking about the residents living there. She was all set to attend Winona State University to obtain a degree in nursing or teaching.

On Monday, February 4, 2008, school had been called off early in anticipation a snow storm was headed our way. Tammie was parked in the school parking lot just as school was getting let out, waiting for her youngest son to give him a ride home. She watched Britney and her friends pile into Britney’s car, as they would normally do, to get a ride home from school. Tammie remembers watching Britney and her friends having a small snowball fight with the little accumulation from the roof of her car. Britney had dropped off her friends and was headed home when she lost control of her car and hit another oncoming vehicle. Because of her small size and not wearing a seatbelt, Britney was thrown to the passenger side of the car and was killed.

It felt like the entire world had stopped that day for Tammie, her family, and all who knew Britney.

Winona County Deputy Bill Spitzer is a good friend of the Bechers and was one of the first responders on the scene of Britney’s crash.

Bill graduated from John Marshall High School in Rochester. Bill and his wife Debbie have lived in the city of St. Charles for the past 24 years. They have two grown children, Laura a pharmacy technician, along with Nick, a civil engineer in Milwaukee.



Bill’s law enforcement career started with the St. Charles Police Department, where he worked as a police officer for 4 1/2 years. In addition to this role, Bill started a youth safety program in the community called the Safety Awareness Project dealing issues of seatbelts and other safety issues.

In 1990, he became a deputy sheriff for Winona County. Within a year, he returned to the classroom to teach a new program called D.A.R.E. Bill has taught this program to students throughout the county for more than 15 years. Since 2005, Bill has served as the Mayor of St. Charles. Currently, he is serving his third term and enjoys community service.