



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

GEORGIA TRAFFIC INJURY PREVENTION INSTITUTE

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OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

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UGA and GOHS - Partners in Traffic Safety for 20 Years

Two united forces continue striving to protect Georgians from the dangers of ever-congested highways and by-ways. The Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) and the University of Georgia's Traffic Injury Prevention Institute (GTIPI) are entering their 20th year of partnering to make a difference in the lives across the state.

The University of Georgia's Traffic Injury Prevention Institute was recently awarded a \$987,800 grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety to continue its education and training programs in the use of safety belts, child safety seats, and safer teen driving. The grant will also explore a new initiative for mature drivers called CarFit.

The institute was established in 1986 to help reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities statewide. The grant will allow the institute to enhance its educational impact in the areas of passenger safety, young driver education and community programming.

Onsite training will be conducted at the institute's facilities in Conyers, as well as regional locations across the state. Programs will include the 32-hour Child Passenger Safety Training advanced class, recertification for existing CPST's and specialized training for Georgia's childcare facilities.

Law Enforcement, EMS, Health Departments and Fire Departments across the state directly benefit from the training. By becoming certified, they are an instant and much-needed resource in their community. Parents and their children will then be able to receive free life-saving information from these trained technicians. And training is just the beginning.

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GTIPI's Resource Center continues to be the primary source statewide for print and electronic traffic safety resources for consumers, educators and other professionals. Supporting statewide initiatives such as "Click It or Ticket" and "Operation Zero Tolerance", GTIPI works directly with law enforcement officers and their Traffic Enforcement Network.

The partnership between the two agencies grew stronger last year with a joint project, "The Online Safety Store." GTIPI manages distribution of materials from the GOHS website, www.georgiahighwaysafety.org

"This program is the primary resource in the state for public information and professional training on the use of safety belts and child safety seats," said Dr. Don Bower, a UGA Extension Service human development specialist. Bower serves as Project Director for GTIPI.

The program reaches virtually every Georgian with media information encouraging the correct and consistent use of these safety devices. In 2001, educators in the program conducted 280 child safety seat checks and provided more than 18,000 hours of training, helping to increase child safety seat use by Georgians to 85 percent.

"Buckle Up!" is older than the program itself, but there is much, much more work to be done.

Car crashes are the number one killer of teens. And vehicle crashes cost society more than \$150 billion annually, according to GOHS. This year's grant will continue funding vital prevention for teens.

The January 1, 2007, change in Georgia's teen driver education laws puts new emphasis on parents and teens partnering to complete driver training. Parents and their new teen driver must work together to complete 40 hours of supervised driving.

"Most of the parents we survey report they don't feel adequately prepared to teach their teenager to drive," Jones said. "This course is designed to help fill this void. Both parent and teen learn what they need to do during those 40 hours of driving time—and how to stay safe out there. Our ultimate goal is to reduce teen crashes in Georgia."

For more information, please visit GTIPI's website at www.ridesafegeorgia.org or call GTIPI at 678-413-4281, or toll free at 1-800-342-9819.

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