

UGA TARGETS PARENTS WITH NEW TEEN DRIVER EDUCATION FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Is your teen's life worth two hours of your time?

That's the question Frankie Jones is asking Rockdale County parents preparing their 14-, 15- and 16-year-olds to drive. Jones, with the Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute (GTIPI), is offering a 2-hour seminar for parents and teens called Georgia Teens Ride with P.R.I.D.E. (Parents Reducing Incidents of Driver Error). GTIPI is a University of Georgia program funded by a grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

The January 2002 change in the teen driving laws puts parents squarely in the passenger's seat. It requires that anyone who applies for a permanent driver's license must have a parent, legal guardian or responsible adult sign a verification form affirming that the candidate has completed either 40 hours of supervised driving experience or 20 hours if the candidate has successfully completed an approved driver education course.

"No parents surveyed reported that they felt adequately prepared to teach their teenager to drive. This course is designed to help fill this void. It will help parents and their new teen driver learn what they need to do during those 40 hours of driving time," says Frankie Jones, head of GTIPI's Parent-Youth Program.

More than 200 teens are killed in crashes each year, making it the leading cause of death for teens. "The statistics are sobering, frightening and, since many of the deaths are preventable, totally unacceptable," says Jones. "Our ultimate goal is to reduce the risk of youth related car crashes."

The Georgia Teens Ride with P.R.I.D.E. classes will complement the Rockdale County driver's education program and will:

- help parents and guardians become more aware of their own driving behaviors,
- teach parents and guardians how to help their teens become safe drivers,
- help parents, guardians and teens learn what they need to do during the supervised practice driving time and
- alter attitudes and driving behaviors of novice teen drivers.

The evening seminar will be offered Wednesday, February 18 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the GTIPI State Office located at 1070 Culpepper Drive, Suite 300 in Conyers. A teen and at least one parent or guardian must register to attend. Call GTIPI at (678) 413-4281 or email gtipi@uga.edu and request a registration form. Or stop by the GTIPI office and pick up a form. Additional dates and times for Conyers and other classes across the state can be found on the GTIPI website:

www.ridesafegeorgia.org

"Rockdale County is a metro area, which offers unique driving situations and problems for first-time drivers," Jones said. "We are also pleased to be collaborating with the county and the schools on this project. They have been very interested and helpful with P.R.I.D.E."