NATIONAL OFFICE
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Dear Parents,

At their school, your child may have viewed MADD Canada's School Assembly Program entitled: ***Over the Edge***.

On average, every day in Canada up to **4** people are killed and **over 100** are seriously injured as a result of crashes involving alcohol and/or drugs. Impaired driving is the number 1 criminal cause of death in Canada. The devastating impact on victims/survivors and their families is immeasurable. In an instant, their lives are changed forever.

It's never too early to teach our youth about the dangers of impaired driving and getting in a vehicle with an impaired driver. Traffic crashes remain by far the largest single cause of death among 16-25 year olds. Amongst the age group, more than half of those motor vehicle fatalities are alcohol and/or drug-related. While young people are significantly overrepresented in alcohol-related deaths as drivers, they are overrepresented to an even greater extent as passengers. The problem of impaired driving among youth in Canada is very real.

You may not have been aware that Canadians between the ages of 14 and 25 have one of the highest rates of cannabis use in the world. Therefore, the combination of drugs and driving is also a major concern for our young people.

The film being shown this year is called ***Over the Edge*** and it opens with a fictional story that illustrates the tragic consequences of driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. Throughout the film, students are shown times when this tragedy could have been prevented by making different choices. The second half of the movie contains real testimonials from victims/survivors of impaired driving. These are very emotional and powerful.

So why is it important for students in grades 7 & 8 to view *Over the Edge?* Although your child isn't driving yet, he or she will soon be thinking about the future possibility of driving. They may already find themselves in situations where alcohol and drugs are present. As well, they may have opportunities to ride with an inexperienced teen driver. As they learn to be more independent, they need to know the facts and be ready to avoid dangerous situations involving impaired driving.

Did you know that the 2015 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey published by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health indicates that 15.5% of grade 8 students drank alcohol within the last year? Those percentages represent thousands of young people. So before students even reach high school and begin to drive, many are already exposed to or participating in risky behaviors that could lead to impaired driving, among other harmful consequences, in later years.

Here are some of the testimonials we have received from Grade 7 & 8 educators who have recent hosted our School Assembly presentations:

> *"This was an amazing video! Very moving and many of the students and teachers in the room were touched and became emotional. Even at this young age of 11 for the grade 7s it is very important to begin the important though process that goes along with the decisions around drinking*

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and driving. The presenter did an amazing job! Her tone and voice was excellent and engaging. The personal story made it more memorable and I feel all students will reflect on her and this film. Thank you so much."

- Pearce Regional Jr. High

"I am very glad we went ahead with the decision to show this presentation to our grade 7 and 8 students. They are at the age when they begin to need to make serious decisions and this film will impact what they do and how they think. All students and staff were engrossed with the film. The presenter did an excellent job speaking to the students before and after the presentation. She was also very good with our volunteers, making them feel needed and valued!"

- Harkins Middle School

"GREAT SHOW. Good program for junior high aged students as in a few years they will be of age to drink or drive. Important for the students to know the possible consequences of drinking and driving. Students need to know the options that they can have when faced with friends, family that have been drinking and thinking about driving. The presenter did a great job at asking questions and having the students involved. True stories including the loss of his mother. It can happen to anyone of us. The entire program is extremely worthwhile as it helps the students be responsible citizens of society."

- Cardinal Leger Jr. High

Delivered through Canadian schools since 1994, MADD Canada's School Assembly Program presents students with solid information and best practices to help them understand the issue of impaired driving from alcohol and drugs. The hi-tech presentation has proved to be an effective method to raise awareness and for providing safety strategies.

Over the Edge has an enormous impact on Canadian students and will influence their own decision-making for years to come. We hope that after your child sees this presentation that you will be able to have a family discussion about what they have learned. By educating our future generation about impaired driving, lives will be saved and injuries prevented. Impaired driving is a totally senseless crime and is 100% preventable.

Sincerely,

MADD Canada

P.S.

If you would like to view a preview of ***Over the Edge***, it is on our web site**:**
https://madd.ca/pages/programs/youth-services/school-programs

For additional information and resources for parents go to:
http://madd.ca/pages/programs/youth-services/information-for-parents/