

## 2019-2020 U Got Brains Champion Schools Program

### Student Survey Report

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) is a recipient of a New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHST) Comprehensive Traffic Safety Grant. In 2010, to address the issue of teen driving safety, BIANJ created the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. This statewide peer-to-peer program challenges teams of students, guided by a faculty advisor, to create a teen safe driving campaign in their school and community. The Champion Schools Program has been a part of the BIANJ Comprehensive Traffic Safety Grant since 2010 and has grown every year both in the number of participating schools as well as the number of corporate and non-profit sponsors.

In 2014, the fourth year of the program, BIANJ partnered with The Research Institute at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to create a student survey to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Champion Schools Program. BIANJ posted the student survey online and gave the link to the student faculty advisors for distribution within their school. CHOP then analyzed the results of the completed surveys and created a report of their findings.

For the 2019-2020 program, BIANJ used an amended version of the CHOP student survey to evaluate the effectiveness of this year's program from the perspective of the student team members. BIANJ staff posted the survey online, tallied the results and wrote the following summary report of their findings: *\*(Complete tally results are included with this summary report)*

The 2019-2020 school year was the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. 63 high schools (public, private and technical) from 19 counties of the state participated in the program. As a prerequisite for being chosen, schools signed a participation agreement which stated that they would participate, to the best of their ability, in a survey of the Champion Schools Program. BIANJ Champion Schools technical support staff informed the faculty advisors of the survey at their technical support visits, in emails to the faculty advisors and during technical support conference calls. The online student survey was posted in May, and emails went out to the faculty advisors in May and June reminding them to ask their student team members to complete the survey.

This year, due to COVID-19 and the corresponding early closing of schools, response to our surveys were down from previous years. Despite this, respondents from 20 schools out of the 63 participating schools completed the online survey (44%). Of the 20 schools that responded, a total of 121 students completed the survey (Bound Brook HS-10; Camden Charter Academy-12; Clearview Regional HS-6; Colts Neck HS-1; Columbia HS-2; Delaware Valley Regional HS-3; Immaculate Hear Academy-8; Indian Hills HS-8; JP Stevens HS-5; Kittatinny Regional HS-5; Lindenwold HS-7; Matawan Regional HS-1; Palisades Park Jr./Sr. HS-1; Rae Kushner Yeshiva HS-8; Red Bank Catholic HS-10; Red Bank Regional HS-6; Robbinsville HS-5; West Orange HS-6; Westwood HS-13; Woodbridge-4). **1%** of the respondents were in **9<sup>th</sup> grade**; **36%** in **tenth grade**; **44%** were in **11<sup>th</sup> grade** and **20%** were in **12<sup>th</sup> grade**. The survey consisted of 10 questions regarding the Champion Schools Program and 3 demographic questions. Below is a summary of the findings of the student surveys. For complete results, a copy of the survey along with the tallied answers from the respondents is attached.

### General Conclusions from the Student Survey Evaluations:

#### Advantages of the Champion Schools Program

- An overwhelming majority of the students agree that **they and their friends are safer drivers (Strongly Agree=69%; Agree=11%, Somewhat Agree=10%=90% Total)** because of their U Got Brains Champion Schools Project.
- An equally large majority of the students think that **they and their friends are safer passengers (Strongly Agree=73%; Agree=15%; Somewhat Agree=5%=93% Total)** because of their U Got Brains Champion Schools Project.

- Champion Schools Program offers students the opportunity to talk about the **importance of safe driving** in their schools and promote safe driving practices. **(99% of the students agree with this statement)**
- The Champion Schools Program had a large impact on the safe driving behavior of the students:
  - **Using the phone while driving (talk, text, search, games, music): (Never-78%)** after the program vs. **(Never-42%)** before the program
  - **Driving focused by keeping eyes on the road at all times: (Always-67%)** after the program vs. **(Always-42%)** before the program
  - **Driving over the speed limit: (Never-74%)** after the program vs. **(Never-43%)** before the program
  - **Following NJ Laws for new drivers: (Always-77%)** after the program vs. **(Always-63%)** before the program
  - **Wearing their seatbelts when driving: (Always-86%)** after the program vs. **(Always-79%)** before the program
  - **Wearing their seatbelts when a passenger: (Always-83%)** after the program vs. **(Always-62%)** before the program
  - **Driving with one passenger in the car (when there is no adult in the car): (Always-63%)** after the program vs. **(Always-46%)** before the program
- The Champion Schools Program helps to bring about a change in both student and community behavior when it came to teen driving safety.
- The Champion Schools Program is a student-centered and student driven peer-to-peer program.
- Students are given the opportunity to speak as advocates for teen driving safety.
- Students experience a sense of pride that comes from accomplishing something important.

Overall, the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program was found to be an effective tool to engage students to help raise awareness in their schools and communities about teen driving safety and to help change both teen driver and teen passenger behaviors. Feedback from the participating faculty advisors and students will help the Brain Injury Alliance of NJ to continually improve the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program* and allows us to offer a proven, effective statewide peer-to-peer teen driving safety program. By partnering with the NJ Division of Highway Safety and our corporate sponsors, we can continue to help keep our roadways safer for New Jersey's newest drivers and their passengers.