

Stay Alert, Stay Alive: Because Every Road Leads to Someone's Home



Matawan Regional High School
SADD



Advisor: Maria Ciaravino

Our Objective

To expand Stay Alert, Stay Alive from a safe-driving awareness campaign into a student-led roadway safety advocacy movement.

This year, our goal was to make roads safer for everyone who shares them: students, pedestrians, families, drivers, and community members. We focused on prevention, education, and advocacy by addressing distracted driving, impaired driving, speeding, pedestrian safety, brain injury awareness, and school-zone safety.

Because slowing down is more than following the law — it is protecting a life.



Campaign Focus: Two Connected Goals

Two Communities. One Mission.

Last year, Stay Alert, Stay Alive: Because Community Knows No Borders began with a painful lesson: tragedy can happen anywhere, and roadway safety is everyone's responsibility.

This year, we carried that lesson forward through two connected advocacy goals:

- ★ In **Howell**: Continue the fight to lower the speed limit on Aldrich Road after a preventable tragedy exposed the dangers of speeding on residential roads.
- ★ In **Matawan-Aberdeen**: Advocate for flashing school-zone speed limit signs near MRHS after close calls and a serious crash showed that static signs are not enough.

Our campaign continued beyond our borders and strengthened the safety work right outside our own school.

★ When Safe Roads Became Personal



In spring 2025, two MRHS students were hit by a speeding driver while leaving the high school parking lot 5 minutes after dismissal. Their vehicle overturned near our campus, making the danger of speeding around school impossible to ignore.

Instead of allowing that moment to end in fear, both students joined SADD and helped inspire the push for flashing school-zone speed limit signs on Atlantic Avenue.

A close call became a call to action.



Above: Actual accident photo.

A Yearlong Safety Campaign

SADD and Civic Leaders implemented a yearlong campaign designed to address roadway safety from multiple angles: distracted driving, impaired driving, speeding, pedestrian safety, brain injury awareness, substance prevention, and prom-season decision-making.

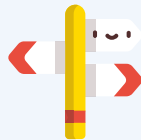
Our campaign included schoolwide activities, classroom presentations, parent outreach, police partnerships, student-created media, petitions, research, and direct communication with local



OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
Week of Respect Red Ribbon pledges OPRA + flashing sign research	"Don't Get Vaped In" Health class presentations	Distracted Driving Awareness Week 19 posters + 19 morning reasons "Who Do You Drive Safe For?" banner	NJM Share the Keys Parent Night
FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Aberdeen Police safe-driving presentation Local crash footage + lunch activity	Brain Injury Awareness Month Posters sent to elementary + middle schools	Junior Prom safety Tigger Stavola speaker Crashed car display	Senior Prom safety Donna Setaro Move Over Law presentation



Two Roads, One Campaign



This year, Stay Alert, Stay Alive was carried out through two connected advocacy efforts: continuing the push for a safer Aldrich Road in Howell and beginning a new campaign for flashing school-zone signs on Atlantic Avenue outside MRHS.

In both communities, we used the same process:



Identify the danger

Speeding, crashes, close calls, and unsafe road conditions



Gather evidence

OPRA requests, local concerns, traffic safety research, and legal guidance



Listen to the community

Petitions, resident comments, parent concerns, and student experiences



Advocate for change

Communication with local officials, public awareness, and continued follow-through



Whether the road was beyond our borders or outside our school doors, the goal was the same: make the roads safer before another tragedy happens.

School Engagement: Reaching Students Where They Are

Our campaign was designed to become part of students' everyday school experience — not just a one-time assembly. We brought safe-driving and prevention messages into cafeterias, classrooms, hallways, morning announcements, spirit days, and schoolwide events. +

Cafeteria Outreach

Red Ribbon pledges, lunch activities, and the “Who Do You Drive Safe For?” banner



Classroom connections

“Don’t Get Vaped In” health presentations and brain injury awareness education

Schoolwide visibility

Distracted driving posters, spirit week themes, Scoop/Spork segments, and prom safety displays



Prevention at key moments

Parent Night, homecoming & prom-season speakers, and the crashed car display before prom

✧ ✖ By placing the message where students already gather, learn, and listen, we made roadway safety part of the culture of MRHS.



Community Engagement: Building a Community Safety

Network

Our campaign reached beyond the student body by connecting with families, local officials, safety organizations, younger schools, and community members. We worked with partners who helped strengthen our message and expand our impact:

Safety & Prevention Partners

NJM Share the Keys
Tigger Stavola Foundation
Donna Setaro/Move Over Law
Monmouth County Sheriff's Office
Aberdeen Police Department

Government & Community Leaders

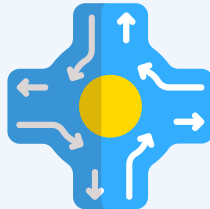
Aberdeen Mayor & Town Council
Howell Mayor & Town Council
Howell NJ First
Howell /Aberdeen residents & petition supporters

School & Family Outreach



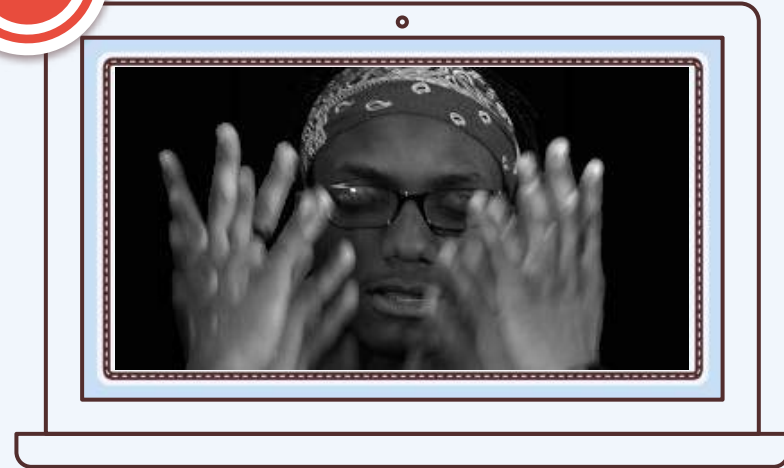
District parents, guardians, and staff
Civic Leaders, NHS, Key club, student government, thespian society, video club
Art, business and health classes
Elementary and middle schools

By building partnerships across schools, families, police, government, and community organizations, we showed that roadway safety is a shared responsibility.



Creativity: More +

Our campaign used creativity to make roadway safety visible, personal, and actionable. Students did not rely on one method or one message; they used art, school spirit, personal reflection, peer-to-peer outreach, and civic problem-solving to keep safety at the center of the conversation.



2026 PSA



Student-created visuals

Distracted driving posters, brain injury awareness posters, and hallway displays made the message visible throughout the school and beyond.

Schoolwide participation

Spirit Week themes gave students simple, memorable ways to join the campaign and start conversations.



Personal connection

The “Who Do You Drive Safe For?” banner asked students to connect + safe driving to the people they love.

Creative advocacy

When awareness alone was not enough, students used petitions, public comments, research, media, and local government outreach to turn concern into action.

Our creativity was not just about how the campaign looked — it was about finding every possible way to make people slow down, pay attention, and care.

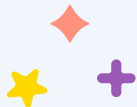
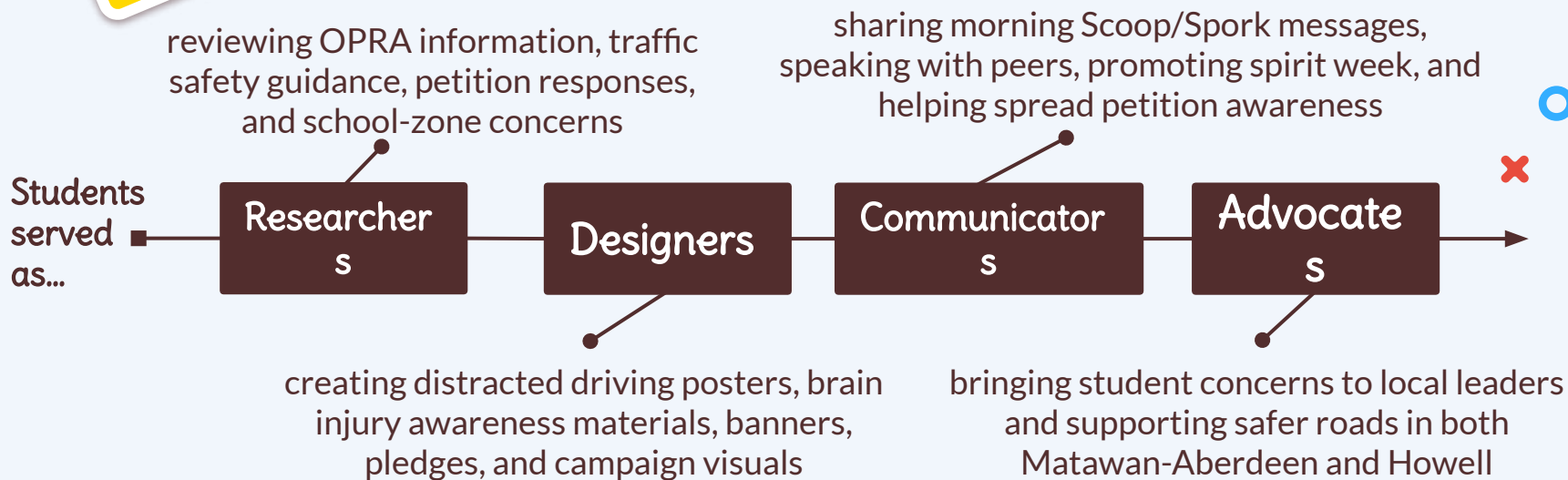
Art → Voice → Participation → Advocacy



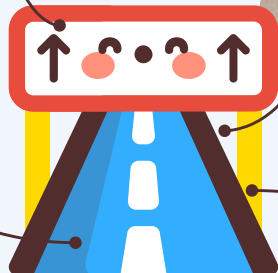
Teamwork



This campaign worked because SADD members did not work alone. We collaborated with student leaders across the school, including Civic Leaders, National Honor Society, Key Club, Student Government, Thespian Society, and Video Club, to plan activities, create materials, spread awareness, and support schoolwide participation. Together, everyone helped turn Stay Alert, Stay Alive into a shared MRHS effort rather than a single-club project.



Every part of the campaign from posters to petitions depended on us working together to turn concern into action.



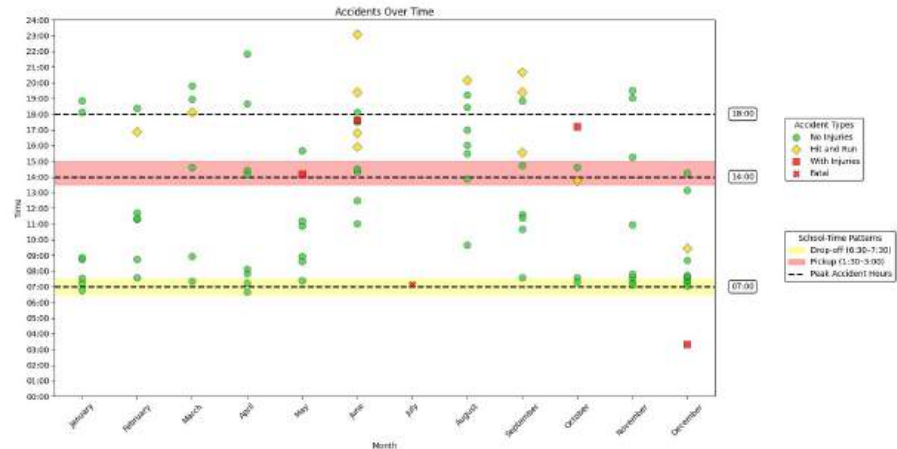
Research Turned Concern Into

Accident Data - ~~Accuracy~~ **Credibility**

- 88 total accidents with and without injuries - That's **1.83 accidents per month**
- 12 accidents classified as hit and runs
- 5 accidents with injuries
- 1 accident resulting in death

14.7% of crashes occur during our school drop-off times (6:30-7:30) and **12.5%** of crashes occur during our school pick up times (1:30-3:00)

2022-2025
(half-mile stretch in front of the high school)





Gregory Cannon <gregory.cannon@aberdeentwp.org>

to Margaret, Concetta, Robert, Pedro, Cathy, Bryan, Eric, Danny, Arthur, me

Feb 19, 2025, 4:31 PM



Dear Students and Mrs. Ciaravino,

Thank you very much for your correspondence, and more importantly, the work you've put into reviewing the underlying traffic/police data relevant to this public safety issue.

Although I cannot claim to have put in the same depth of research, my home is at [REDACTED] Street across from MRHS), so I can certainly anecdotally concur with your conclusions below.

At our Council meeting tonight, our Township Council will discuss your correspondence to determine how best to move forward with traffic safety improvements along Atlantic Avenue, including the school zone/speed limit warning lights proposed below. Atlantic Avenue is municipal roadway, and therefore, direct approvals from higher levels of government are not required.

However, the Township must still comply with the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Code and the United States Department of Transportation's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices ("MUTCD"). The MUTCD sets all standards and requirements for traffic safety and control devices for all levels of government.

The next step will involve the review and approval of the Township Engineer. Indeed, the Township may only place traffic markings, signage and improvements in compliance with the MUTCD. That is, any improvements ultimately purchased, installed, or placed by our municipal government on Atlantic Avenue must be approved by the Township Engineer in accordance with the standards established by the state and federal governments in the MUTCD.

If you'd like to check out the actual regulations the Township Engineer would use to review your proposal, the MUTCD is available at this website for free for your reference:

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_11th_Edition.htm

Following this evening's Council meeting discussion, I will follow up to let you know the next step(s) and outcome. Thank you again for reaching out and please do not hesitate to contact me anytime!

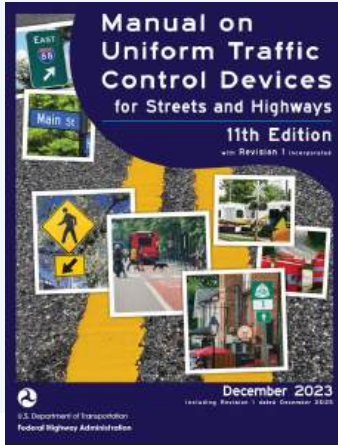
Sincerely,

Greg Cannon

Mayor, Aberdeen Twp



Research & Data



MUTCD 11th Edition

Page 753

Section 4S.04 Speed Limit Sign Beacon

Standard:

- 01 A Speed Limit Sign Beacon shall be used only to supplement a Speed Limit sign.
- 02 A Speed Limit Sign Beacon shall consist of one or more signal sections of a standard traffic control signal face, with a flashing CIRCULAR YELLOW signal indication in each signal section. If two or more signal indications are used, they shall be alternately flashed.

Option:

- 03 A Speed Limit Sign Beacon may be used with a fixed or variable Speed Limit sign. If applicable, a flashing Speed Limit Sign Beacon (with an appropriate accompanying sign) may be used to indicate that the displayed speed limit is in effect.

Research helped us turn personal concern into a stronger, more persuasive call for safer roads.



Use of media

We continue to use our X and Instagram accounts to promote safe driving using both the Jersey Drives social media posts & creating our own. Our members wrote press releases throughout the year to be included on our newsletter (see picture right). We continue to forward materials to our school's PR firm and district office for addition to the district website. We continue to write articles that appeared in our district newsletter and newspaper. And because it worked well last year, we have continued using our district blast system via email and text to promote safe driving. Lastly, we have our TV Studio youtube channel.



✕ Post Analytics

MRHSSADD @mrhssadd · Feb 11

BUCKLE UP, BUTTERCUP

SADD member Rylee has a reminder for us all!
#buckleupbuttercup

Impressions
438



Destructive Decisions)
Counselor's Corner



SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions)

The MRHS SADD Club (Students Against Destructive Decisions) is leading an important safety initiative to protect our students and families. The club has launched a community petition asking the Aberdeen Town Council to install flashing speed limit signs near all district schools, including along Atlantic Avenue. These signs are a proven, effective way to slow traffic and prevent accidents during arrival and dismissal.

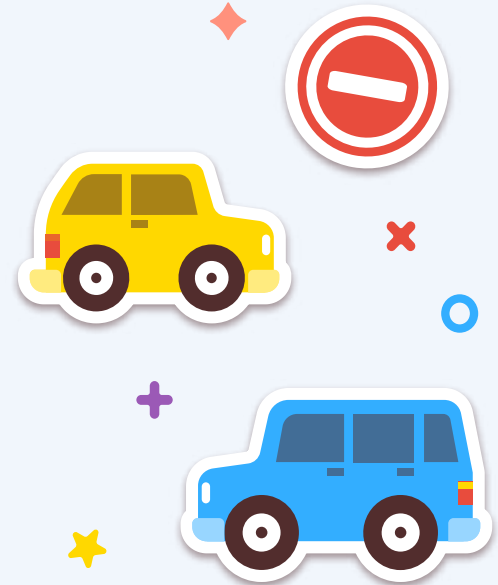
Please take a moment to support our students' advocacy by signing and sharing the petition:

<https://c.org/TMZZsRRJmM>

Evaluation & Impact



First of all, we want to address what we did with our money from last year- It has been our advisor's dream (Ms. Ciaravino -pictured left at the unboxing) to purchase a top of the line driving simulator- with last year's winnings and our winnings from 2020, we were able to finally get this 17K piece of equipment. It's being used in our driver's ed program!



Evaluation & Impact



We measured impact through official action, community response, participation, and continued public attention. Pictured here is the petition we started with to see if the community also thought there was a need for safer signage with comments from verified community members.

“

The amount of accidents and incidents that have happened here already are truly frightening. All of our local children have no choice but to walk. Subscription busing was taken away. Our current town mayor and council members allowed this area to become swarmed with more vehicles and traffic due to overdevelopment less than a...

[Show full text](#)

Louro, Old Bridge

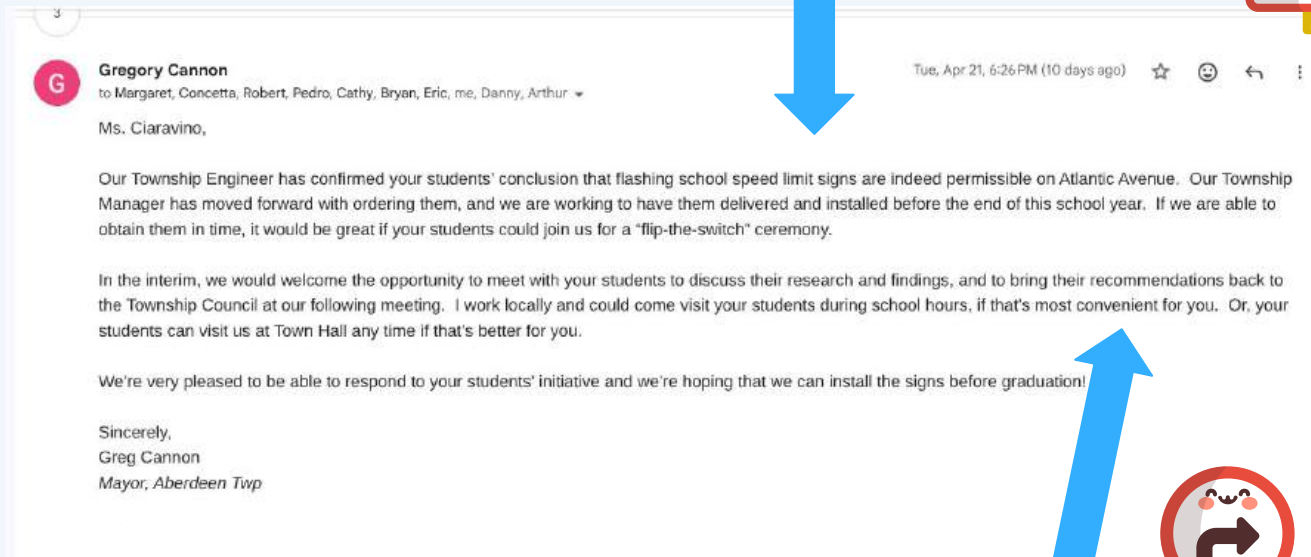
“

I live on Atlantic Ave next to HS and see this on a regular basis. When my children were in the school system we had many close calls on Atlantic Ave. Drivers going by school bus with red lights and stop sign out. My wife got the license plate, saw a female driver and signed complaint against driver, went to court only to be told by judge the...

[Show full text](#)

Albert, Aberdeen Township

Evaluation & Impact



Not only did we succeed in showing need for the flashing speed signs, but our thoroughness and approach earned us the opportunity to continue working with our town's leadership to make the roads safer for all!



Evaluation & Impact: Advocacy Does Not End at “No”

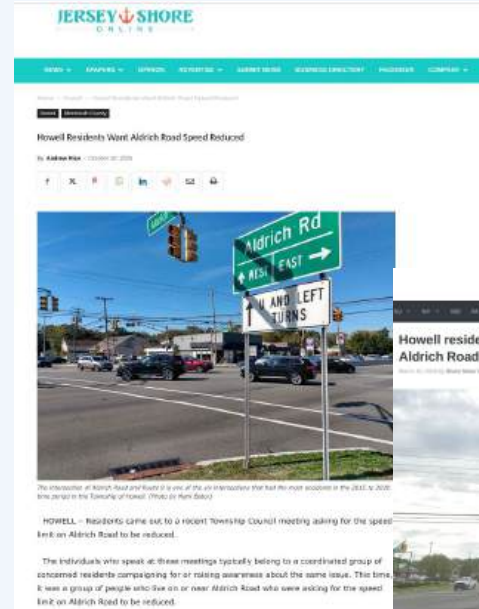
Keeping Aldrich Road in the Public Eye

Last year’s campaign helped bring attention to dangerous speeding and crash concerns on Aldrich Road in Howell.

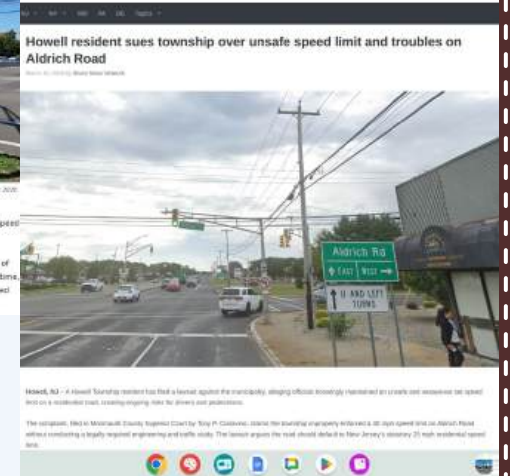
Although Howell officials initially indicated support for lowering the speed limit, the township attorney later denied that position. Rather than allowing the issue to end there, the Ciaravino family filed a pro-se lawsuit seeking to compel an engineering study of Aldrich Road.

Local news coverage continued to highlight the issue, showing that the campaign created lasting public awareness and kept pressure on officials to address roadway safety.

Advocacy does not always move in a straight line — but impact can be seen in persistence, visibility, and accountability.



Local media coverage helped keep Aldrich Road safety concerns visible beyond the original campaign.





Sustainability

Stay Alert, Stay Alive was designed to continue beyond one school year, one event, or one presentation. Each part of the campaign created something that future students, families, and community members can continue to use. **Our campaign is sustainable because it created traditions, tools, partnerships, and physical safety changes that will outlast this year's team.**

One of the main issues that residents along Aldrich Road have with the current speed limits is that they affect their ability to leave their driveways. One resident mentioned how he fears for his life every time he leaves his driveway because of how fast people come down the road.



The intersection of Aldrich Road and U.S. Highway 9 is one of the most dangerous intersections in Howell. (Photo by Mark Bator)

Screenshot above from: "Howell Residents Want Aldrich Road Speed Reduced" By Andrew Rice
-October 10, 2025 Shore News Network

Sustainability



Permanent Safety Change

The flashing school-zone signs on Atlantic Avenue will create a lasting reminder for drivers to slow down when students are arriving and leaving school.



Hands-On Driver Education

The driving simulator gives future students an interactive way to experience the risks of distracted, impaired, or unsafe driving in a safe learning environment.



Reusable Student-Created Materials

Posters, banners, Scoop/Spork segments, spirit week themes, research, and petition materials can be reused or updated by future SADD members.



Sustainability

Annual Prevention Programming

SADD can continue the campaign each year through Red Ribbon Week, Distracted Driving Awareness Week, NJM Share the Keys Parent Night, prom-season speakers, the crashed car display, and Move Over Law education.



Younger Student Outreach

Brain injury awareness posters sent to elementary and middle schools help build safety awareness before students become drivers. Now that we know our elementary principals will allow us to send materials down, we will continue to do so every year.

Ongoing Community Advocacy

The Aldrich Road effort continues through media attention, Howell NJ First support, and the pending lawsuit seeking an engineering study and possible speed-limit review.



Unexpected Lessons Learned

Last year, we learned that tragedy does not have to define us. This year, we learned that change does not always happen in a straight line. In Aberdeen, our research, petition, and communication with local leaders helped move the flashing school-zone signs forward. In Howell, the fight for Aldrich Road became more complicated, teaching us that advocacy can include setbacks, legal questions, and the need for continued persistence.

We also learned that students can turn painful experiences into leadership. After two MRHS students were hit by a speeding driver, they joined SADD and helped push for safer roads around our school. The unexpected lesson was that advocacy is not just about having a good idea. It is about staying committed long enough for people to listen.

Safe roads do not happen by accident. They happen
when people care enough to keep going.



Thank you to everyone who helped us turn concern into action and awareness into change.

We are grateful to:

BIANJ / Jersey Drives
NJM Insurance / Share the Keys
Aberdeen Mayor and Town Council
Howell Mayor and Town Council
Aberdeen Police Department
Monmouth County Sheriff's Office
Tigger Stavola Foundation
Donna Setaro / Move Over Law
Howell NJ First
MRHS administration, staff, students, and families
Civic Leaders, NHS, Key Club, Student Government,
Thespian Society, and Video Club
Elementary and middle school partners
Howell residents and petition supporters
The Matawan-Aberdeen community

Thank You



And to our advisor, Mrs. Ciaravino, thank you for guiding us, believing in us, and inspiring us to turn compassion into action.

CREDITS : This presentation template was created by Slidesgo , and includes icons by Flaticon , and infographics & images by Freepik

Slow down. Stay alert. Protect every road we share. Stay Alert, Stay Alive: Because Every Road Leads to Someone's Home

