

What Is A Ghost Out?



A GHOST OUT is a week-long alcohol and drug awareness program aimed at teenagers because traffic crashes are the number one killer of teens and over one-third of teen traffic deaths are alcohol-related nationwide. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

Monday through Thursday, members from the student organization coordinating the Ghost Out (SADD, FCA, Student Council, etc.) distribute literature concerning teenage drivers. These brochures include information on the hazards and consequences of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence and the importance of wearing safety belts.

Facts concerning alcohol and drug related crashes are read each day during school announcements. On Thursday each student receives a GHOST OUT Trivia Quiz (see pg. 10). Prizes are awarded to students correctly answering all trivia questions. Depending on how many prizes you receive, you may either give each student a prize, or draw names for the number of prizes.

Friday morning, a guest dressed as the Grim Reaper stalks the hallways of the school and selects 15 “victims.” These “victims” represent the average number of people killed in alcohol or drug related crashes during a school day and are declared dead. The climax is an assembly during the last hour of school at which guest speakers address the dangers of driving while impaired. Prizes for the trivia quiz are awarded and a memorial service is conducted for the 15 “victims” selected by the Grim Reaper. This is a very emotional and powerful program with a strong impact on the students.

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Time Frame for GHOST OUT Preparations

Six Weeks before the GHOST OUT:

Meet with the officers of the club you have chosen and explain their responsibilities. Form a committee of students from the participating club. Please remember the main emphasis of a GHOST OUT is the element of surprise. No one outside your group needs to know what is going on until the assembly. The following items are the responsibility of the club:

1. Determine your participants. Contact your Grim Reaper, guest speakers, law enforcement, and paramedics/fire fighters to help with the main assembly:

The Grim Reaper: This person should be fairly tall and willing to get into a costume with a mask. He/She needs to wear black pants, black socks, and black shoes. The Grim Reaper must arrive at the school 30 minutes before classes begin and be able to stay throughout the school day. **The Office of Highway Safety provides the Grim Reaper outfit.**

Guest Speaker #1: This person should be highway safety orientated, such as a local dignitary, police officer, paramedic/fire fighter, etc. For a list of speakers, you may contact the Office of Highway Safety at 1-888-374-8768. Another option is a state or local representative from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). MADD Kentucky Office: 1-800-944-6233.

Guest Speaker #2 (optional): This person could be a local celebrity, perhaps a co-anchor from local television or a popular radio personality, or someone the students would recognize that has been affected by impaired driving.

Poem Readers #1 and #2: These students should be highly respected with strong voices, possibly from SADD, FCA, Student Council, etc. We recommend having a male read one and female read the other. **(Enclosed)**

Paramedics/ Fire Fighters Police: You need three to four people to help with the assembly. Please see the agenda for the breakdown of jobs that need to be done during the program.

Minister: This should be a local minister that is well known in the community to read the student obituaries during the ceremony. You may have more than one if you choose.

2. **Optional Coffin and Mirror:** Contact a local funeral home to place a coffin at the entrance of the school on the day of the GHOST OUT. The coffin will also be used for the assembly. You may put a mirror inside the coffin so when the students look inside they see their own face.
3. Begin asking for donations from area merchants and businesses to use as trivia prizes. Just remember the more prizes, and the more exciting the prizes are, the more interest you will generate. If no single businesses can offer a "Grand Prize," perhaps two or three donations could be combined for this purpose. Suggestions for the grand prize: "Cash Prize of \$100 or \$200," "Dinner for Two" at a nice restaurant, gift certificate for a "Shopping Spree" at a local music store or other retail establishment, etc.

4. Determine if you want to print your own poster with your school name and the GHOST OUT date. Students are responsible for hanging and displaying the posters throughout the school on the day of the GHOST OUT. Usually about 20 of these are enough. **The Office of Highway Safety will provide posters if you choose not to have any made. A sample is enclosed.**
5. Determine if you want to print your own GHOST OUT t-shirts. Shirts are needed for the club members involved and 15 shirts for the “victims” selected by the Grim Reaper. The typical t-shirt is solid black or gray with red lettering on the front or back with GHOST OUT, the name of the school, and the year. A wise choice is to order all large and extra large shirts. **The Office of Highway Safety will provide 15 shirts for the student victims if you choose not to have any made.**

Four Weeks before the GHOST OUT:

Send out invitations to special guests and a media advisory to your local newspaper, radio, and television outlets. **The Office of Highway Safety will send a media advisory and press release. Samples are enclosed.** Suggested guests include the superintendent, mayor, county judge, school board members, local legislatures, law enforcement, emergency responders, etc. **A sample letter is enclosed.**

1. Select a room to keep the “victims” after being removed from the classroom. Other students cannot see these “victims” so make sure all windows are covered and no classes will be taking place in that location during this time period.
2. Begin selecting students to be “victims” of the Grim Reaper. (Make sure to select a diverse group of students.) Choose 15 with a couple of alternates in case a student is absent or does not want to participate. Obtain each student’s class schedule and select a route through the school for the Grim Reaper to easily follow.

Two Weeks before the Ghost Out:

1. Select one or two students to man an informational table during all lunch periods Monday through Thursday prior to the GHOST OUT with the Alcohol Fact Sheet, Impaired Driving Fact Sheet (**Enclosed**), and any other impaired driving related materials. Also have blank GHOST OUT Trivia quiz sheets available. Determine if this is the only time trivia sheets will be available, or if you want to distribute the sheets to each student (possibly through the homerooms).
2. Select students to read the announcements each morning before classes begin. (**Enclosed**) Announcements of the trivia contest should be made as well. Be sure to tell about the prizes! A rule that the winners must be present to win will assure you a large turnout for the assembly at the end of program.

3. Select one student to escort the Grim Reaper to the “victims” classrooms. The person selected to be the Grim Reaper may not know all of the students, so have a member of your sponsoring club walk with him/her to point out the student “victim.” You may also want a law enforcement officer to help escort the Grim Reaper through the halls and into the classrooms.
4. Select three students for back stage assistance during the GHOST OUT. If they are not from the club organizing the event, just tell them you need their assistance during the assembly. Do not fill them in on the details until the day of the GHOST OUT.
5. Give one student the responsibility of having a box placed in the office for students to turn in their completed trivia quiz sheets. This needs to be in place by Monday morning.
6. Pick out music to be played as the students enter the gym for the program **or Office of Highway Safety can provide the music.** Talk to your club members and get some song requests, keeping in mind to get a mixture of music such as country, rock, etc.

One Week before the GHOST OUT:

1. Assemble all materials to be used during the week, such as:
 - Make sure t-shirts and/or posters are delivered, if you chose to do your own.
 - Pick up all prizes to give away at the assembly.
 - Purchase 15 black or white candles and a roll of foil wrap to keep the candles from dripping (small paper plates work as well) **or Office of Highway Safety can provide the candles.**
 - Verify that your guest speakers and all emergency personnel will be in attendance.
 - Select the best place to set up the information table and trivia box.
 - Print blank trivia sheets. Have enough so there is one for each student at the school.

GHOST OUT WEEK:

Monday to Thursday:

Open information table during all lunch periods.
Hand out blank trivia quiz sheets and fact sheets.
Read morning announcements.

Thursday:

Trivia quiz sheets must be turned in before school is dismissed.
Pick up the trivia box with the completed quiz sheets.
Check through the entries and discard sheets with any incorrect answers.

GHOST OUT DAY:

1. Make a morning announcement telling students there is a special guest in the school today. Ask them to cooperate with the guest and they will find out the details during the assembly. Let them know the time of the assembly and remind them of the prizes.
2. Make sure your Grim Reaper and escorts arrive at the school 30 minutes prior to the beginning of classes. Once inside the classroom, the Grim Reaper will slowly make his/her way to the selected student and either point to the “victim” or give a tap on the shoulder. At that point an announcement is read by either an escort or Office of Highway Safety representative stating the student is now declared dead and will be removed from the classroom for part of class or the whole day (**Enclosed**). Remember, the Grim Reaper represents death so he/she must move slow and creepy and not say a word!
3. Once the students are removed from class, they stay with the Office of Highway Safety team the rest of the day and write their own obituaries to be read that afternoon during the assembly. If the students cannot leave class, they may write their obituaries during their lunch period but they must sit at a table marked “VICTIM TABLE.” THESE STUDENTS CANNOT SPEAK TO ANYONE BESIDES THE PEOPLE THAT ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE GHOST OUT!

Gymnasium or Auditorium Set-up

1. Designate an area to place the student victims so they cannot be seen during the first part of the GHOST OUT ceremony.
2. Get your sound system set up as soon as possible and check your levels for sound.
The Office of Highway Safety can provide the PA/Sound System.
3. Make your candleholders from either foil wrap or paper plates.
4. Place the victim’s sheets in place where the students stand during the ceremony.
5. Have a designated V.I.P. seating area for the special guests you invited.

Assembly Agenda

After lunch, usually around 1:30 p.m., the principal calls for everyone to attend the assembly. As the students enter the gymnasium, upbeat music is played to get all of the kids in a good mood and to let them know this is not going to be a boring assembly.

After everyone is seated, the principal welcomes community guests and asks everyone to listen to the invited speakers. Now is a good time for you to give away your door prizes for the students that got all of the answers correct.

Introduce Poem Reader #1

Speaker #1 (15 - 20 minutes)

Introduce Poem #2

Speaker #2 (*optional*) (5 - 10 minutes)

After the poems and speaker(s) the lights will dim and the ceremony will begin. There are several different songs that you can choose from to be played as the students walk out. You may select your own or Office of Highway Safety has several songs to choose from.

As the music continues, the Grim Reaper will escort the victims into place behind their designated sheet. Once all victims are in place, the Grim Reaper makes his/her way to the first victim. As the Grim Reaper places his/her hand on the shoulder of the victim, the minister starts reading that student's obituary as emergency personnel lie the victim down and cover them with a sheet. (**Sample obituaries on pgs. 16 – 17**)

After all but one victim has been laid to rest, the Grim Reaper will ease his/her way over to the last victim. However, this student is not a victim but a survivor that made the right choice and yells "NO" at the Grim Reaper. The Grim Reaper walks away. (This student should be a very vocal person and not timid.)

Acknowledgments are given thanking those who helped make the program possible.

Principal gives closing remarks.

Students will be dismissed to music.

Sample Invite Letter

Date

Title & Full Name
Organization/Company
Address #1
Address #2
City, State & Zip

Dear **Title & Last Name**,

On behalf of the **(School's Sponsoring Organization)**, we cordially invite you to a GHOST OUT program for students at **(School Name)** on **(Date)** at **(time)**. This impaired driving prevention event is sponsored by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Office of Highway Safety.

Fifteen students previously selected by school administrators are removed from their classrooms throughout the morning, each representing a victim in an alcohol related crash. The afternoon assembly includes guest speakers and a mock funeral for these victims. The "funeral" assembly sends a powerful message to all students about the dangers of impaired driving.

We would like to encourage you to attend your community's GHOST OUT. Through your support, the Office of Highway Safety team hopes to educate all students on making correct decisions during prom and graduation season. If you have any questions, please feel free to call (phone number.)

We hope to see you at our GHOST OUT!

Sincerely,

Alcohol Fact Sheet

Alcohol is a DRUG. It is a central nervous system depressant and not a stimulant as commonly believed. It acts by moving directly into the bloodstream. All alcoholic drinks are basically the same. The following drinks contain equal amounts of alcohol.

- A 12-ounce bottle of beer
- A 5-ounce glass of wine, 12-ounce wine cooler
- A mixed drink with 1 - 1 ½ ounces of 80 proof liquor

Alcohol's effects vary according to the rate at which alcohol is consumed, the presence of food in the stomach during consumption, and the individual's weight, mood, and previous drinking experience.

- Moderate drinking may cause a person to experience flushing, dizziness, dulling of senses and impairment of coordination, reflexes, memory, and judgement.
- According to the American Medical Society, "Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive, and potentially fatal disease."
- Too much drinking can lead to malnutrition, lowered resistance to infections and the increased risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, and liver. Other dangers to the body include the possibility of irreversible damage to the brain and the central nervous system, and severe damage to the heart, lungs, pancreas, and liver.
- Approximately 30 percent of boys and 22 percent of girls classify themselves as "Drinkers" by the age of 13.
- In the United States, 4.6 million teenagers experience serious problems with alcohol.
- One-third of American adults play it safe and do NOT drink alcohol at all. About one-third have a drink from time to time.
- Despite the dangers of driving after drinking, 12 percent of adults in the United States said that they drove their cars at least once in the past year knowing in full that they had too much to drink.
- The body takes about two hours to eliminate the alcohol that has been consumed in an average drink (1/2-ounce of pure alcohol).

Impaired Driving Fact Sheet

- Two million drinking and driving crashes occur every year.
- Someone is killed in an alcohol-related traffic crash every 30 minutes.
- In some parts of the country, during the weekends between the hours of 10 p.m. and 3 a.m., one out of ten cars is driven by a drunk driver.
- The leading killer of teenagers is motor vehicle crashes. Each week, 133 teenagers die due to these crashes. Over one-third of these traffic deaths are alcohol-related.
- Every year, over 3,000 teenagers are killed in drinking/driving crashes. Another 85,000 are injured; 6,500 of them are seriously injured.
- Although teenagers comprise less than 10 percent of licensed drivers, they account for 20 percent of all fatal crashes. Drunk drivers kill their friends as well as others. Most of the teenage passenger deaths are a result of teenage drivers.
- Two out of every five people will be involved in an alcohol-related crash in their lifetime.
- Data indicates that drugs are detected in 10 percent to 22 percent of crash-involved drivers (drugs or drugs combined with alcohol) at the time of the crash.
- Alcohol poses the greatest hazard to highway safety. Drugs (other than alcohol) that appear to have the most potential to be serious highway safety hazards are marijuana, tranquilizers, and barbiturates.
- All 50 states have drinking and driving laws (Driving Under the Influence) with a variety of penalties. Most of these laws are based on a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of .08 percent. This level has been established as the point of intoxication; however, drivers have been shown to be “impaired” at much lower levels.
- Kentucky established a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of .08 percent as the point of intoxication effective October 1, 2000.

Announcements for GHOST OUT week

Monday:

Traffic crashes are the number one killer of teens. Over one-third of these traffic deaths are alcohol-related. This week we will make an announcement every morning giving you statistics concerning drinking and driving. Please listen carefully for these facts so that you can answer the questions on the trivia quiz sheet being passed out in your homeroom. Not only will you be learning what it means to be safe and sober, but you may also have the chance to be eligible for the Ghost Out Trivia Quiz “GRAND PRIZE” drawing on Friday. For more information, please visit our table set up in the cafeteria during lunch.

The Ghost Out facts for today are:

- 1) The leading killer of teenagers is automobile crashes.
- 2) 133 teenagers die every week in traffic crashes.

Tuesday:

The Ghost Out facts for today are:

- 1) Alcohol is a depressant.
- 2) Only time will help you become sober.

****Don't forget - You can't win the Ghost Out trivia grand prize if you don't enter. A few trivia quiz sheets are still available in the cafeteria during lunch today!

Wednesday:

The Ghost Out facts for today are:

- 1) Someone is killed in an alcohol related car crash every 30 minutes.
- 2) The first driving ability to be affected by alcohol is judgment.
- 3) Speed is a factor in 43% of all fatal alcohol related crashes.

Thursday:

The Ghost Out facts for today are:

- 1) There are 9 alcohol pedestrian deaths every day.
- 2) The best time to prevent drinking and driving is before the drinking starts.
- 3) The use of safety belts in your car can help reduce the risk of fatal or serious injury by 55%.

Please remember that you must turn in your completed trivia quiz sheets by the end of lunch today in order to be eligible for tomorrow's “Grand Prize” drawing.

Friday:

There will be a special Ghost Out guest in the building today. We ask that you cooperate with the guest and be respectful. You will find out all you need to know at today's assembly at _____ p.m. Thank you.

GHOST OUT TRIVIA

1. **Someone is killed in an alcohol related car crash every _____?**
A. 50 minutes B. 40 minutes C. 30 minutes
2. **The leading killer of teens is _____?**
A. suicide B. drug related C. auto crashes
3. **How many teenagers die every week in traffic crashes?**
A. 94 B. 133 C. 85
4. **Which of the following will help you become sober?**
A. cold shower B. time C. coffee
5. **The first driving ability to be affected by alcohol is _____?**
A. coordination B. depressant C. judgment
6. **Alcohol is a _____?**
A. stimulant B. depressant C. hallucinogen
7. **The use of safety belts in your car can help reduce the risk of fatal or serious injury?**
A. 10% B. 33% C. 55%
8. **Speed is a factor in what percentage of fatal alcohol related crashes _____?**
A. 25% B. 33% C. 43%
9. **There are _____ alcohol related pedestrian deaths every day?**
A. 6 B. 7 C. 9
10. **The best time to prevent drinking and driving is _____?**
A. before the drinking starts B. during the drinking C. when it's time to drive

NAME: _____ **GRADE:** _____

Answers to Trivia Questions

1) C

2) C

3) B

4) B

5) C

6) B

7) C

8) C

9) C

10) A

Removal of Student Victim Classroom Announcement

(If student does not return to class)

This student has just been selected by the Grim Reaper as another victim of an alcohol and/or drug related crash. Because this student no longer exists, he/she will not be returning to class.

The loss of this student represents the fact that someone dies in an alcohol related crash EVERY 30 MINUTES. Did you know that teenagers are twice as likely as adult drivers to be killed in an automobile crash?

Please give one of the victim's friends his/her homework assignment.

Thank you for your help and consideration.

Student Victim Classroom Assignment

(If student returns to class)

Dear Student,

You have been chosen as a “VICTIM” in our GHOST OUT. If you do not want to participate please tell us now.

The loss of this student represents the fact that someone dies in an alcohol related crash EVERY 30 MINUTES. Did you know that teenagers are twice as likely to be killed in an automobile crash as an adult?

The Grim Reaper has given you a litter bag with a tee shirt inside. Please put the tee shirt on and wear it for the remainder of the school day. You will be asked to observe the following rules.

1. You represent a victim of an alcohol related crash, you do not exist. Please do not talk or socialize with anyone the rest of the day.
2. Please respond to your teachers and staff in class and do your regular school work.
3. Sit at the designated table for all victims in the cafeteria during your lunch period.
4. Report to _____(designated meeting spot for assembly) at (time). You will receive instructions on what to do during the Ghost Out Assembly. (Make sure you have your Ghost Out shirt on at this time)

Thank you for your help in making this program a success.

DEAD AT SEVENTEEN

Poem #1

BY JOHN BERRIO

The day I died was an ordinary school day. How I wish I would have taken the bus! But I was too cool for the bus. I remember how I used to talk mom out of the car. “Special favor,” I pleaded. “All the kids drive.” When the 2:50 p.m. bell rang, I threw my books in the locker... free until tomorrow morning! I ran to the parking lot, excited at the thought of driving a car and being my own boss.

It doesn't matter how the accident happened. I was goofing off, going too fast, taking chances. The last thing I remember was passing an old lady who seemed to be going awfully slow. I heard a crash and felt a terrific jolt. Glass and steel flew everywhere. My whole body seemed to be turning inside out. I heard myself scream.

Suddenly, I awakened. A police officer was standing over me. I saw a doctor. My body was mangled. I was saturated with blood. Pieces of jagged glass were sticking out all over. Strange that I couldn't feel anything.

Hey, don't pull that sheet over my head. I can't be dead. I am only 17. I haven't lived yet.

Later, I was placed in a drawer. My folks came to identify me. Why did they have to see me like this? Why did I have to look at my mom's eyes when she faced the most terrible ordeal of her life? Dad suddenly looked very old. He told the man in charge, “Yes, he's our son.”

The funeral was weird. I saw all of our relatives and friends walk toward the casket. They looked at me with the saddest eyes I've ever seen. Some of my buddies were crying. A few of the girls touched my hand and sobbed as they walked by.

Please, somebody-wake me up! Get me out of here. I can't bear to see my mom and dad in such pain. My grandparents are so weak from the grief they can barely walk. My brother and sister are like zombies. No one can believe this. I can't believe it either.

Please don't bury me! I'm not DEAD. I have a lot of living to do! I want to laugh and run again. Please don't put me in the ground! I promise if you just give me one more chance, God, I'll be the most careful driver in the world. All I want is one more chance. Please, God, I am only 17!

PARTY POEM #2

I went to a party and remembered what you said.
You told me not to drink, Mom, so I had Sprite instead.

I felt proud of myself, the way you said I would,
That I didn't drink and drive, though some friends said I should.

I made a healthy choice, and your advice to me was right.
The party finally ended, and the kids drove out of sight.

I got into my car, sure to get home in one piece.
I never knew what was coming, Mom, something I expected least.

Now I am lying on the pavement, and I hear the policeman say,
The kid that caused this wreck was drunk, Mom, his voice seems far away.

My own blood is all around me, as I try hard not to cry.
I can hear the paramedic say, this girl is going to die.

I'm sure the guy had no idea, while he was flying high.
Because he chose to drink and drive, now I would have to die.

So why do people do it, Mom, knowing that it ruins lives?
And now the pain is cutting me, like a hundred stabbing knives.

Tell sister not to be afraid, Mom, tell daddy to be brave,
And when I go to heaven, Mom, put daddy's girl on my grave.

Someone should have taught him, that it's wrong to drink and drive.
Maybe if his parents had, I'd still be alive.

My breath is getting shorter, Mom, I'm getting really scared.
These are my final moments, and I am so unprepared.

I wish that you could hold me, Mom, while I lie here and die.
To say these final words, Mom, I love you and goodbye.

How To Write An Obituary

- 1. State your name, age, grade, school and time or date of death.** (Ex: Brandon Muravchick, 18 year old senior at Franklin Co. High School, killed last night)
- 2. State how you were killed.** (Ex. Brandon was at a party with all of his friends after a local football game. They were celebrating the team's biggest win against arch rival Frankfort High School. Brandon had one to many drinks and had to make it home in time for his curfew *or* Brandon did not take the keys and got in the car with a friend who had been drinking, etc.)
- 3. Briefly describe the wreck and injuries.** (Ex. Brandon's car crossed the center line and collided with a tree. Brandon was ejected due to not wearing his seat belt and landed against the tree. He broke his neck and several other bones *or* Brandon was ejected and died upon impact.)
- 4. Describe when you died (*if not immediately upon impact*).** (Ex: Brandon died while in flight to the hospital *or* Brandon was in a coma for weeks before succumbing to his injuries, etc.)
- 5. Describe your dreams.** (Ex. Brandon had dreams of attending college and majoring in criminal justice. He wanted to become police officer.)
- 6. Describe who you leave behind.** (Immediate family or girl/boyfriend only) (Ex. Mother-Kim, Father-Gregg, Brother-Justin, and 2 sisters-Montana and Jaylin.)
- 7. End it with a quote about you that people would recognize.** (Ex. Brandon's humor and smile will never come down the halls again.)

Once all of the above information is put together the obituary will look like this:

Brandon Muravchick, an 18 year old senior at Franklin County High School, was killed last night while traveling on US 460. He was attending a celebration party with his friends after winning the biggest football game of the year against arch rival Frankfort High School.

Brandon had one too many drinks and had to make it home in time for his curfew. He thought he was good enough to drive, but his car crossed the center line and collided with a tree. Brandon was ejected due to not wearing his seat belt and landed against the tree. He broke his neck and several other bones. Brandon was flown to UK hospital by helicopter where he died in mid-flight.

Brandon had dreams of attending college and majoring in criminal justice. He wanted to become a police officer just like his father. Brandon leaves behind his Mother-Kim, Father-Gregg, Brother-Justin, and two sisters- Montana and Jaylin. His humor and smile will never walk the halls of Franklin County High School again.

Obituary Ideas

(Jane Doe), a drama student, was an aspiring actress who always dreamed of her name being in lights. Now, her name is etched in stone.

(John Doe) was indeed the class clown. No one is laughing now.

(Jane Doe) would have graduated as the Valedictorian of her class. Just how smart was she?

(John Doe) was the high school quarterback. His last game had no interceptions.

(Jane Doe) was a senior on the high school's track team. She will never cross the finish line again.

(Jane Doe) was a varsity cheerleader. She will never dance to her high school's fight song or cheer for the **(school mascot)** again.

(John Doe) was a member of the school band. For him, the marching has stopped.

(Jane Doe) was heading to a party with her date after the Senior Prom. Unfortunately, she died before her prom flowers.

(John Doe) was Student Council President. He will lead no one in the future.



MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT NAME
PHONE
E-MAIL

“Ghost Out” Coming to [Insert School Name]

Program Seeks to Educate Students on the Dangers of Impaired Driving

FRANKFORT, Ky. (**Month Day, Year**)-- The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Office of Highway Safety is coordinating a “Ghost Out” **[School Name]** on **[Date]**. This program utilizes the Grim Reaper to select fifteen students throughout the morning; each representing a victim in an alcohol or drug related crash. Once removed from their peers, victims write their own obituary. A mock funeral for these victims is held during an afternoon assembly, with classmates watching as each one is laid to rest.

WHO: Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Office of Highway Safety

WHAT: Ghost Out impaired driving awareness program

WHEN: **[Date, time of funeral]**

WHERE: **[School name, city name]**

WHY: Impaired driving is one of America’s most-often-committed and deadliest crimes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, every 30 minutes an American dies because of an impaired driver and every two minutes someone is injured. The risk of crashing rises dramatically with blood alcohol content at any age, and the effects are higher for drivers ages 16 to 20 than for those ages 35 to 49.

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Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Office of Public Affairs

CONTACT NAME
PHONE
E-MAIL

For Immediate Release
[Date]

It's A "Grim" Day At [School Name]

Ghost Out Program Educates Students on the Consequences of Impaired Driving

[CITY NAME], Ky. (Month Day, Year)-- With **[prom, graduation, etc.]** coming soon, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Office of Highway Safety partnered with **[Sponsoring Student Organization]** to coordinate an alcohol and drug awareness program known as a "Ghost Out" today at **[School Name]**.

"We want to encourage students to use good judgment when faced with peer pressure to drink or do drugs at parties or other social events," said **[Department Representative]**. "Most importantly, we want them to realize that getting behind the wheel while impaired is dangerous and often deadly."

Throughout the day, the grim reaper selected 15 students from class to represent victims of an alcohol or drug related crash. During an afternoon assembly, **[Name of guest speaker(s)]** testified on their experiences with impaired driving. As the victims' obituaries were read, a mock funeral was held. Classmates watched as each victim was covered with a sheet and laid to rest.

"This powerful program sent a strong message to our students on the consequences of impaired driving," said **[School Administrator]**. "We hope this will encourage them to make correct choices in life, and realize that one bad decision can mean this funeral becomes reality."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, on average, someone dies every 30 minutes due to impaired driving and someone is injured about every two minutes. The risk of crashing rises dramatically with blood alcohol content at any age, and the effects are higher for drivers ages 16 to 20 than for those ages 35 to 49. All states have a zero tolerance law, meaning it is illegal for people under 21 to drive after drinking any amount of alcohol. In Kentucky from 2005 to 2007, there were more than 2,000 injuries and 65 fatalities due to impaired driving by those in the same age group.

For more information, please visit highwaysafety.ky.gov.

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Sample Poster

