

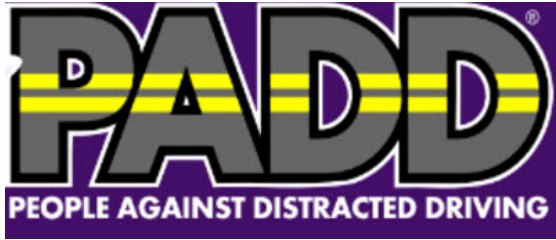


## We Can Make Distracted Driving Uncommon



“10 people a day die because of Distracted Driving (Aubato & Kelleny, 2016).” Distracted Driving is a huge problem in our world, people have become less concerned about driving and it has cost the lives of many people around the world. “A recent survey by Nationwide Insurance quantified some of the trend’s scary dimensions. More than 80 percent of drivers surveyed identified themselves as multitaskers. Sixty-eight percent eat while driving; texting or instant-messaging while driving, or fixing hair, is practiced by 19 percent of drivers; 14 percent comfort or discipline children while behind the wheel; and 8 percent drive with a pet in their laps (Kiesbye, 2012).”

This zine’s purpose is to fully inform you about the dangers and consequences of Distracted Driving. Nothing that you can possibly do while driving is worth your life or someone else’s life. Two different tragic accidents changed the lives of Joanne Higgins and Shelley Russell, inspiring these women to work to stop Distracted Driving. People Against Distracted Driving is one of the most active organizations fighting Distracted Driving and is currently working to stop it from happening. There are many ways to stop the numerous amount of distraction that can be present. All of these things will be discussed at length throughout this zine.



People Against Distracted Driving also known as PADD is a nonprofit organization that works towards stopping distracted driving. This organization was created by Mike Kelleny. Mike didn't initially want to be involved in this issue but after a tragic accident his life changed forever.

Mike's Daughter Nikki Kelleny was killed in an automatic accident that happened because of distracted driving. Nikki's friend was talking on the phone and ran a stop sign then got T-boned by a truck. Nikki was the only one in the car wearing a seatbelt and ending up being the only one killed in the accident. Nikki's organs were crushed when the truck hit the car and there was nothing the paramedics could do to save Nikki's life. 30 seconds of driving distracted took away a promising life of a beautiful 18 year old woman.

PADD is an organization that educates teenagers and adults about the dangers and risks of driving distracted. PADD works with schools and organizations to spread awareness about this issue. PADD is doing all of this by donating "Stay Alive Don't Text and Drive" signs to schools and towns. These signs are being placed along busy roads, on billboards, by businesses, around schools, and anywhere that the organization thinks signs could impact people in motor vehicles. Another avenue PADD explores is working along side policy makers to pass laws to educate motor vehicle drivers about

distractive driving and for stricter enforcement and punishment for distracted driving offenses. Along with working along side policy makers, PADD also is spreading awareness of the dangers of Distracted Driving could end up saving the lives of countless number of people; and giving support to families that have been affected by distracted driving tragedies is huge because families are in a fragile state losing a loved one. PADD is a great organization for helping families deal with loss because this organization was created when Nikki Kelleny tragically died because of a distracted driver (Nikki's Foundation to End Distracted Driving, 2012).

One of the most successful outreach programs to stop Distracted Driving by PADD is the mobile app created called Drive Beehive. This was created when Apls Ventures, LLC, partnered with People Against Driving Distracted (PADD) to help raise awareness for all drivers on the dangers of driving distracted in February 13, 2015. Drive Beehive is an app that allows people to put down their phones while driving. This app takes away attributes your phone is capable when driving.



Using this app, people are showing their support of PADD and focusing on the road instead of their phone. Which in turn makes people be safer drivers and less likely to be involved in a tragic accident caused by distracted driving. The use of this app has the potential to save countless amount lives (Apls Ventures, LLC & People Against Distracted Driving, 2015).



Distracted Driving like multitasking has become a huge problem all over America. More drivers than ever are trying to do multiple things while driving.

Long commutes to work, cell phones, video entertainment, putting on makeup, drinking beverages, reading a book, and changing radio stations are all things that can tempt drivers from fully paying attention to driving. This is scary because that means if people let in to one of those temptations an accident could occur.

Although many people believe they are good at multitasking, this isn't true when it comes to driving. "Roughly 80% of all crashes are related to some form of distracted driving, according to the U.S. government (Kiesbye, 2012)." Take this picture above for example, there is no possible way for this distracted to be able to avoid hitting that child on the bicycle.

Although multitasking isn't always a bad thing, it is when it comes to driving. People including yourself can get hurt or even die because of your multitasking. Take the story of Joanne losing her Godson Tyler tragically because he was driving distracted. The interview of Joanne sheds a lot of light of the potential effects of distracted driving.



As I was researching about tragic deaths that have occurred from Distracted Driving, I came across Tyler Smedley's story and the inspiring work that Joanne Higgins is doing to try to put an end to Distracted Driving. I ended up reaching out to Joanne to find about more information and she agreed to be interviewed.

The question I asked her was to tell me a little bit about Tyler. Joanne responded by stating, "Tyler was my husband and mine Godson and my Nephew. He was more of a son to my family. It's a long story. His loss has killed my family to its core, he was the father of twin 4 year old boys. My life has forever changed since his loss. I hurt for a son."

After learning more about Tyler, Joanne started to explain what the cause of Tyler's accident. "My nephew Tyler thought it was ok for him to video tape himself. He took his eyes off the road for one second. It takes one second for life as you knew it to change by

using your phone. Snap chatting, texting, talking on your phone is one of the biggest killers out there along with drunk driving. Kids and adults need to stay off their phones. Put it away. It can wait. Every call, text, video making, snap chatting all can wait. Your life won't."

Hearing of what caused Tyler's death shook me to the core. I have to admit I have done similar acts like Tyler did and never for a second thought anything was going to happen to me. That story helped me realize everything can wait, making it safely to my destination while driving is most important.

I then asked Joanne to elaborate on why she thinks distracted driving is such a big problem in our society. She responded by saying, "It's a big problem for so many reasons. Kids don't think anything will happen to them. Fines and our laws threw out this country are too weak. Higher fines are needed. Big jail time is needed. More parent involvement is needed. Parents need to set an example to their kids while they drive. Schools need to have more programs for our young drivers."

After hearing her response, I decided to ask her about any of her current involvement with organizations working to stop Distracted Driving. Joanne told me she has been working with PADD and is currently working Impact Teen Drivers. She started to describe to me about a great program that is currently being implemented saying, "Our Calif highway patrol has a great program for young drivers and court order drivers to attend. It's called every 15 mins and what do you consider lethal. Impact teen drivers work alongside with them on this program. Impact teen drivers is an amazing group that works with EMT's, the fire depts., Sheriffs depts., and police depts. across the country and now started to go around the world."

After hearing about the work that Impact Teen Drivers is doing, I asked what she thinks the main way to stop distracted driving to raise awareness, change legislation or a combination of both. She quickly responded say, "Both. So much is needed to be done. Education is a must in our schools. Laws need to change. Getting awareness out there is key too. I make videos for distracted driving Angels. It's my way of putting faces and stories together. Tyler has 2 PSA with impact teen drivers."

The final question I had for Joanne was, "With all the organizations that you are currently working with, where do you think the problem of distracted driving could be in 5 years?" She stated, "I would hope things are going to be better. Distracted driving is now starting to affect our law makers to do more. But so much more is need to be done. Laws are starting to change. It's a slow uphill climb. State to state. To me it should be across the board. Not state to state. We need to me anyway. If you get stopped it is a 500 plus ticket. If you get stopped again. I think \$1000.00 plus lose your license for 6 months. And so on and so on... Then start putting points towards your license. So your insurance rates go up. But that's me and my ideals on it. Laws are changing but I feel could be better. One day I pray."

The work that Joanne does is saving lives and making the world safer at the same time. She is doing this spreading awareness of the dangers.

Learning about the story of Tyler shows us how dangerous using your phone can be. The amount people use their phones makes phones the one of the biggest distractions while driving.





Texting while driving is dangerous. Countless numbers of people have been hurt or died because of people texting and driving. “Texting while driving is more deadly than driving under the influence of alcohol. Tests show that drivers' braking distances are much worse while texting than being legally drunk, and texting while driving is seventeen times more dangerous than talking on a cell phone (Fumento, 2015). The thing that is needed now for similar Joanne’s opinion is stricter laws that will actually deter people from texting while driving because of the punishments that could ensue. This can be done by having police officers train to spot drivers that are texting and with the use of technology equipment to know if someone actually was texting while driving.

Texting while driving can be more dangerous than driving while drinking from a bottle of alcohol according to some studies. “In a 2009 survey, *Car and Driver* magazine tested two of its staffers under a variety of conditions. It found that on average, driving at 70 mph, one man braking suddenly while legally drunk (0.08 blood alcohol content) traveled 4 feet beyond his baseline

performance. But reading an e-mail while driving sober, he traveled 36 feet beyond the baseline result and 70 feet while sending a text. In the worst case while texting, he traveled 319 feet before stopping (Fumento, 2015).” This is an alarming result because everyone knows how dangerous driving under the influence can be and how it is strictly punished, but driving while texting which can be more dangerous is hardly even penalized for.

Texting is a perfectly fine way to communicate to other people, it just shouldn’t be done while driving. Texting makes you actively take your attention away from the road and put your focus texting characters to friends. Driving Distracted, like texting and driving, is dangerous and has led to numerous preventable deaths. It is all in each one of your control, you can download apps that turn texting off while you are driving preventing you from that temptation. No text message is worth dying for.



Nicholas Russell is one of the many people who have died due to someone Driving Distracted by someone texting and driving. Nicholas’s mother Shelley is extremely active working to stop Distracted Driving and she agreed to be interviewed by me.



The first question I decided to ask Shelley was why she thinks Distracted Driving is such a big problem in our society. She replied saying, “Well because we live in such a fast pass society now and the technology has advanced to make our lives easier to keep up with the pressures. However, we are using common sense when and how to use the technology and we are basically killing ourselves.”

The next question I asked Shelley was if she could tell me the story of what happened to her son because I had a hard time finding credible sources on his accident. She stated, “On January 31, 2015 he was called to an accident on Interstate 40 at mile marker 195. An eighteen wheel had jacked knifed, the cab was blocking both west bound lanes and trailer was in the center median. A man who had left Arkansas and was heading west on I-40 had been driving for 2 and a half hours. He killed my only child on his 189th text.”

Hearing about her only son was taken from her far too early was hard to hear, I kept on thinking that the

same thing could happen to me. Nicholas was a victim of Distracted Driving and lost his life because of a guy was texting instead of paying attention.

The next question I asked was what organizations she currently works with to stop Distracted Driving. She responded saying, “No everything I am doing is just on my own. I have a presentation called My Son Gone In Seconds I go to schools and churches. Then I have a memorial run and fundraising items I sale to go into his Scholarship Fund. I was able to give a \$2000 scholarship this year. I am hoping next year I can give 2.”

Working without any organizations other than the one is made, I found it quite important that I ask her, “Do you think the main way to stop distracted driving to raise awareness, change legislation or a combination of both?” She stated, “It took the death of my son to finally get Oklahoma Legislatures to pass a Don't Text and Drive Law, we were the 46th state to do it. Even with a law people will still do it because of today's technologically world we live in. Just like drunk driving it is a law but people still do it. Awareness and education are the only way to show how such an epidemic is causing so much tragedy.

In my presentation I show statistics and let the audience meet and see Nicholas grow up so they can feel my pain and what was taken away from me. I have students cry so if I can save one life and one mom then I am doing my job. I know I will I not impact every person who sees my presentation but I try. Before it is over they know Nicholas and the man he was.

He was such a Christian man, he had an infectious smile, bright eyes, dimples that would just melt your heart, he treated everyone with respect and touched

so many lives in his short 18 months of doing is dream job. He taught me things I wish I could be half of the person he was.

I am so lost without him and struggle every day. I do not sugar coat the story. The first year I wanted to commit suicide, I am on medication and I have now been diagnosed with Broken Heart Syndrome. Yes that is real. I was having numbness on my lips, face and arms and chest tightness and pain. I thought I was having a stroke or heart attack went to a cardiologist, my EKG was perfect. He said I had that and there was nothing that could be done. The deeper the love and grief the more pain and longer it will last and with an only child this will probably be my new norm.”

Hearing about how the loss of her son has affect her broke my heart. It really shows what the effects of Driving Distracted can have on someone. No one should lose one of their loved ones because someone is texting. The final question I had for her is where she hopes the problem of Distracted Driving could be in 5 years. She said, “Well first of all for Oklahoma a higher fine than \$100. But I honestly think it is going to be just like drunk driving we are still going to have deaths by texting and driving I just hope the numbers go down.”

She can be an inspiration to all of us with all the she is doing to stop Distracted Driving. Not only did she created her own organization to raise awareness, she created a scholarship through her organization to give it to someone who is less fortunate. Especially with all the health issues that she has gotten after her son passed it is impressive that she does that much.



You have heard about the dangers and possible consequences that come with Driving Distracted but you are probably wondering how you can help stop yourself from Driving Distracted and how you can help with stopping others from driving distracted.

The steps to making sure others can stop Driving Distracted are supporting police officers and state troopers on their task to catch distracted drivers and discourage people from driving distracted is a key step. This could stop distracted driving in its track because law enforcement could prevent people who are being a danger to other by driving distracted by pulling them over. Paying attention from the moment you turn on your car is another key step.

Making sure you eliminate distractions of messing with your radio by setting it to your favorite station, putting your phone away, making sure passengers understand that you need to remain focus, and wearing your seatbelt. These steps of eliminating distractions when you are driving can be the difference between

making it to a destination safe or getting into a tragic accident. The final key step is supporting advances in technology that can stop the functioning of phones while driving and apps that reward drivers for not using their phones while driving (Nikki's Foundation to End Distracted Driving, 2012).

There are also a lot of things you can do to ensure that you can drive without any distraction or minimize as many distractions as possible. The things you can do are: don't allow your passengers to distract you when you are driving, inform people that you might need to reach you that you are unavailable while you are driving, Put your phone on silent so that you won't hear alerts, and prepare before you leave by setting up your radio and navigation (Glinton, 2012).

This zine has informed you many things include of the major issue of Distracted Driving that is currently going in our society. The PADD is working to the best of the organization to stop Distracted Driving from happening. The interviews of Joanne Higgins and Shelley Russell has shown you the reader and myself that anyone can make a change if you are dedicated enough. Numerous amount of different ways of how to stop others and yourself refrain from Distracted Driving were explained. I want to thank you for reading my zine, I hope you can be inspired to not drive distracted like I know have from researching and writing on this topic.

Written by

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