



MEDIA RELEASE

BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation Remembers Alexa and Other Victims of Road Crashes

Burnaby, BC / November 16, 2009 – On November 18th, the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation will honour those victims who have lost their lives or have been severely injured as a result of a traffic crash.

In May of 2008, Alexa Middelaer died of her injuries after being struck by a vehicle driven by a woman suspected of being impaired by alcohol. Alexa was only four-years old.

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation has joined the Middelaer family in their fight to change the laws and social attitudes concerning impaired driving. The death of Alexa Middelaer was not an accident. It was a predictable consequence of poor choices and negligent behaviour. Allan Lamb, executive director of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation points out that, responsibility is the real issue. “This tragedy has forever changed the Middelaer family’s life and it could have been prevented if the individual in question had acted responsibly.”

“Impaired drivers are killing an average of two people and injuring 60 every week in BC,” stated Lamb commenting on a statistic that has not changed significantly in the past five years. “It’s really not surprising when one in five people in this province admits to driving after drinking.”

According to traffic collision statistics, alcohol was a contributing factor in 31.5% of all fatal collisions in 2007, second only to speed at 41.4%.

While alcohol is still the leading cause of impairment, the ability to drive can also be impaired by the use of drugs, both illicit and prescription. In 2008 the federal government announced Bill C-2 empowering Canadian police who suspect a driver of being impaired by any illegal, prescription or over-the-counter drug, to demand the subject submit to a breathalyzer test, physical coordination tests and an assessment by a Drug Recognition Expert.

There are currently over 1,700 police officers in B.C. trained to recognize drug impairment in drivers.

The deaths of Alexa and others have forever changed the lives of hundreds of families and could have been prevented.

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is calling on all drivers to act responsibly and do not get behind the wheel while impaired or allow anyone in their company to do so.

In memory of Alexa, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation has established the Alexa Middelaer Memorial Fund.

Help promote a change in social responsibility and educate communities and individuals about the dangers of impaired driving. Make a donation to the Alexa Middelaer Memorial Fund by visiting www.bcaatsf.ca or call 604-298-5107.

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Editor's Note:

- Traffic crashes cost the BC economy \$8.8 billion annually.
- Impaired drivers cost the BC economy over \$1.6 billion annually
- The Canadian Global Road Safety Committee, whose membership is made up of Canadian injury prevention and road safety professionals, has dedicated the third Wednesday in November to be the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims. This year's theme is "Raising awareness of the number of deaths on Canadian roads."

About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit www.BCAATSF.ca or call 604-298-5107.

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