

OTTAWA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Public Information Office

715 W. Second Street

Ottawa, Kansas 66067

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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8:00 A.M. BUTLER

Ottawa High School and Ottawa Police Department Partner in Seatbelts Are For Everyone (S.A.F.E.)

This morning, at a 9:45 a.m. school assembly, Ottawa High School Students were informed of a new driver safety initiative titled, Seatbelts are For Everyone (S.A.F.E.).

This goal of this program is to increase seatbelt usage rates among our youth. The program is supported by the Ottawa Police Foundation, Kansas AAA Traffic Safety Fund, State Farm Insurance, and the KDHE Regional Trauma Program.

In mid-January, student leaders conducted an unannounced seatbelt survey at the entrances to the school parking lots on two different days. Overall seatbelt usage on day one was 64% and day two is was 57%. When the final survey is completed in April, we hope to see those numbers much higher, which will mean our students are safer. The student leaders are Jamie Birzer, Frankie Hernandez, and Tabitha McPheron.

As students entered today's assembly they were asked to sign a pledge card promising to wear their seatbelts 100 percent of the time when driving or riding in a vehicle. What they didn't know before the assembly was that four lucky students who signed the pledge would have their names drawn to receive one \$25 Visa gift card each. This monthly drawing will occur through April for all participating students. Today's winners were Brandin Bell, Shania Lamm, Ivy McCurdy, and Sayde Peterson.

During April's final drawing, all participating students will be eligible to win an I Pad or laptop. It is our hope that this entire effort will convince students to consider driving safety as a personal responsibility that they alone control. According to Chief Dennis Butler, "the link between seatbelt usage and less lethal auto crashes is unquestioned, our community should take every opportunity to help our youth avoid the catastrophic results of a vehicle crash."

If you are interested in supporting this program, go to the Ottawa Police Foundation website at www.ottawapolicefoundaiton.org or send your tax-deductible donation to the Ottawa Police Foundation at 715 W. 2nd Street, Ottawa, KS 66067. Your support will help us operate this program again next year.

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