

Alexa Middelaer
BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation Joins Family
in Fight to Stop Impaired Drivers

(Burnaby, BC) – The Facts: On May 17, 2008 at approximately 5:00 p.m. a vehicle left a residential road in Delta, struck two pedestrians, a parked vehicle and finally came to rest on a power pole. One of the pedestrians, four-year-old Alexa Renée Middelaer died of her injuries. Initial indications are that speed and alcohol were contributing factors.

The Feelings: The devastation that gripped Laurel and Michael Middelaer when they arrived on the scene of the crash and saw four of their family members in shock, seriously injured, and in the case of Alexa, lying motionless on the ground, is unimaginable. Only moments before they had heard the fire, ambulance and police sirens roar past their neighbourhood. Who could have imagined that those sirens were signaling the most significant life altering experience that they had ever known?

“There is that moment when you put two and two together and you know the truth,” says Laurel Middelaer. “Michael and I ran toward the sirens already knowing that it was Alexa. I would not wish that feeling on anyone.”

The majority of Canadian drivers believe that drinking and driving is the most serious road safety issue they face. Yet, nearly one in five admit to driving after drinking alcoholic beverages. Crashes where alcohol is a factor are on the rise in BC and measured alcohol impairment levels have also increased.

The death of Alexa Middelaer cannot be called an accident. Quite simply, it was a predictable consequence of poor choices and negligent behaviour. “Responsibility is the issue here,” stated Allan Lamb, executive director of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation. “This tragedy has forever changed the Middelaer family’s life and it could have been prevented if the individual in question had acted responsibly.”

Lamb encourages drivers to plan ahead if they think they may be drinking. Passengers, friends, party hosts, and anyone who comes into contact with an individual that has had too much to drink and is going to get behind the wheel must also act responsibly and stop that person from driving. Laurel Middelaer adds, "Individually and collectively, we all need to be agents of change. As a highly educated society, this behaviour should no longer be tolerated."

In memory of Alexa, the BCAA TSF has established the Alexa Middelaer Memorial Fund with 100 % of all donations used to promote change in social responsibility towards ensuring increased traffic safety for BC. For more information about how you can make a donation to the Alexa Middelaer Memorial Fund contact the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's executive director Allan Lamb at 604-297-2151.

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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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- 30 -

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