

## **BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation Supports National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims**

**(Burnaby, BC)** – On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation’s executive director Allan Lamb will lead a minute of silence during the British Columbia Injury Prevention Conference to honour those victims who have lost their lives or have been severely injured as a result of a traffic crash.

Approximately twenty per cent of all motor vehicle fatalities are alcohol-related. “Impaired drivers are killing two people and injuring an average of 60 every week on BC roads, which is no surprise when one in five people in this province admits to driving after drinking,” says Lamb.

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. 2008 is the first year of recognition in Canada and the focus this year is victims of impaired driving.

While alcohol is still the leading cause of impairment, impaired driving covers a lot of territory. Recently 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 1,100 officers in B.C. trained to recognize drug impairment in drivers, and they will now be present at road checks in communities around the province.

Last spring four-year old Alexa Renée Middelaer died of her injuries after being struck down by a vehicle that left a residential road in Delta, hit her and her aunt, a parked car and came to rest on a power pole. Initial indications are that speed and alcohol were contributing factors.

The deaths of Alexa and others cannot be called accidents. They were predictable consequence of poor choices and negligent behaviour. Responsibility is the issue. These tragedies have forever changed the lives of hundreds of families and could have been prevented if the individuals in question had acted responsibly.

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 drive while impaired.

In memory of Alexa, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation has established the Alexa Middelaer Memorial Fund with 100 % of all donations used to promote change in social responsibility and to educate communities and individuals about the dangers of impaired driving. To make a donation in memory of Alexa visit [www.bcaatsf.ca](http://www.bcaatsf.ca).

# #

**Editor's Note:**

- Traffic crashes cost the BC economy \$8.8 billion annually or a full 4% of our Gross National Product.
- Impaired drivers cost the BC economy over \$1.6 billion annually

**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](http://www.BCAATSF.ca) or call 604-298-5107.

***DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES***

**[www.BCAATSF.ca](http://www.BCAATSF.ca)**

- 30 -

**For further information, contact:**

Lennea Durant  
Media Relations  
BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation  
Tel: 604-875-1182  
E-mail: [lenneadurant@shaw.ca](mailto:lenneadurant@shaw.ca)

Allan Lamb  
Executive Director  
BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation  
Tel: 604-297-2151  
E-mail: [allan.lamb@tsf-bcaa.com](mailto:allan.lamb@tsf-bcaa.com)