



MEDIA RELEASE

BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

Honours Southeastern District Police Officers as Members of "Alexa's Team"

Kelowna, B.C. / May 4, 2010 – Today, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation honoured 39 police officers from Southeastern Region of B.C. as members of "Alexa's Team" in recognition of their diligence in removing impaired drivers from the roads of our communities.

"Alexa's Team" was formed in remembrance of Alexa Renée Middelaer who lost her life in May 2008 at age four and a half after being run down by a vehicle driven by an individual suspected of being impaired at the time. Her grandparents sustained emotional shock and physical injury. Her aunt who was standing with her by the side of the horse paddock continues to recover from life threatening injuries.

A 56-year old Delta woman has been charged with two counts of impaired driving causing bodily harm and death, and two counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm and death.

Membership on "Alexa's Team" recognizes police officers, both RCMP and Municipal Police that have forwarded to Crown a total of 692 full impaired driving charges in addition to issuing 1,303 24-Hour Prohibitions and Administrative Driving Prohibitions under Section 215 of the Motor Vehicle Act in the previous year.

The story of Alexa has inspired police from all regions of British Columbia to prevent the deaths of other innocent people.

"Alexa's Team has been a very inspiring initiative," stated Insp. Ted Emanuels, Operations Officer, R.C.M.P. Lower Mainland District Traffic Services. "The team has raised awareness in the police community and members have responded to the problem of impaired drivers and the challenge of removing them from the roads of their communities."

Insp. Emanuels noted that impaired driving investigations, charges, 24-Hour Prohibitions and Administrative Driving Prohibitions, have increased 50 per cent in 2009 over 2008.

Last year the Foundation honoured 26 officers from Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. This year officers from Vancouver Island and Prince George and Kelowna regions will also be welcomed in to "Alexa's Team" for a total of 174 members.

“Our family had very high expectations of the police, and those expectations have been met with charges being laid against the driver,” stated Laurel Middelaer, the mother of four-year old Alexa. “We are now waiting for due process in the courts, and that continues to be a painful process.”

“I applaud the efforts of these officers for their dedication to enforcing impaired driving laws because it does save lives,” stated Allan Lamb, executive director of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation. “The death of Alexa Middelaer and many others is the result of negligent behaviour. Behaviour that has killed and seriously injured hundreds of people in this province.”

According to the Foundation the majority of impaired drivers come from private functions. “We are all responsible when it comes to impaired drivers,” says Lamb. “If we know that someone has had too much to drink, or has ingested drugs, we must take action to prevent them from getting behind the wheel.” Lamb emphasizes that responsibility is the real issue.

Lamb noted that significantly more people die in traffic crashes than as a result of all homicides and murders, thus the need to have police working on this front as well.

Lamb also cited Transport Canada statistics that show impaired drivers cost the B.C. economy \$1.6 billion per year, not including the cost of police, ambulance or courts.

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is proud to recognize these officers for their exceptional work on the impaired driving front. For more information about the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation and how you can help fight impaired driving visit www.bcaatsf.ca.

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2009 Alexa’s Team Stats:

Team Members	Impaired Drivers Charged	Additional ADPs	Additional 24-Hour Prohibitions	Impaired Drivers Removed from Roads in 2009
175	2,873	1,199	5,028	9,100

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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