



Call To Action: Safe Roads, Safe Rides, Save Lives!

You can help Ollie Otter spread the word about booster seat and seatbelt safety by becoming a volunteer seatbelt safety advocate. According to the Governor's Highway Safety Office, "In 2005, an average of five children, ages 14 and younger were killed and 640 were injured in motor vehicle crashes every single day in the United States." Children ages 4 to 7 who use booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a seatbelt, according to a study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

You can help increase the use of booster seats in Tennessee by volunteering to make safety education presentations with Ollie Otter! Throughout Tennessee, children ride in automobiles everyday without proper restraint. Ollie's mission is to educate every child in Tennessee that the law requires the use of a booster seat until a child is 4-feet-9 inches tall or 9 years old. Get on board with Ollie! Safe roads, safe rides, save lives!

"I thought the program was really good. We found that a lot of our students didn't realize . . . they were supposed to be riding in a booster seat. We know now that they will go home and tell their parents about that. The teachers did not realize that either, so with the information we got, we can help keep our kids safe."

-- Principal Mike Brawner,
Celina Elementary, Clay County

"This is one of the greatest programs we have had here at this school system. I would like to encourage everyone to have Ollie come visit their students. Ollie was very entertaining and informative."

-- Monica Howard, Coordinator
of School Health with the Van Buren
County school system

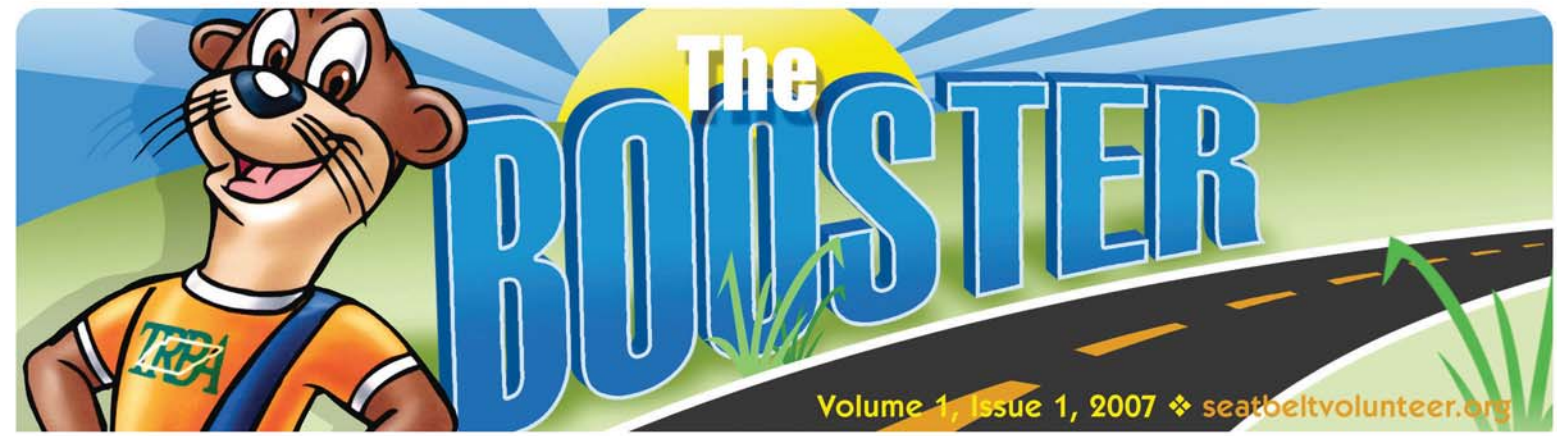
"This has been the most wonderful program. Ollie Otter has helped the second graders learn how important it is for booster seat safety. The kids know it, and they can pass it on to their parents. With the kids putting pressure on the parents this thing will really get started. It will help save a lot of lives."

-- Leidra Hart, second grade
teacher, Philadelphia Elementary, Loudon
County

View video endorsements from Commissioner Dr. Lana Seivers, Tennessee Department of Education and Commissioner David Mitchell, Tennessee Department of Safety at: www.trba.org/ollie.

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The official newsletter of The Ollie Otter Booster Seat and Seatbelt Safety Campaign

Ollie Otter Safety Campaign Earns National Award

Safety mascot Ollie the Otter recently took a quick break from raising seatbelt and booster seat awareness to collect national kudos.

The Ollie Otter Booster Seat and Seatbelt Safety Campaign, sponsored by the Tennessee Transportation Development Foundation (TTDF), took first place in the private outreach category of the 2007 Roadway Workzone Safety Awareness Awards.

The award, administered by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), was issued Oct. 15 during a ceremony in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Carol Coleman, chairwoman of the TTDF and member of the TRBA Ladies Auxiliary, spearheaded the development and implementation of the Ollie Otter campaign. "When we went to Florida to accept the award, it was very humbling. I feel that we are going to make a difference in children's lives in Tennessee, not only now, but hopefully they'll remember Ollie when they start to drive."

The campaign hinges around Ollie Otter, a 7-foot-tall mascot who visits schools to champion seatbelt and booster seat safety. After talking to students, Ollie leaves behind materials such as bookmarks and Ollie Otter measuring boards, which show students whether they need a

booster seat or they're tall enough for a seatbelt.

Tennessee Tech and the Tennessee Technology Centers have been instrumental in the project, Coleman said. "Without the BusinessMedia Center and volunteers from the Tennessee Technology Centers, this never would have happened," she said. "I had the vision, but they had the resources to make it a reality." The program includes an interactive Web site developed and maintained by the Tennessee Tech Business Media Center. The site, www.trba.org/ollie, features safety information for parents and children, students' artwork and testimonials from state officials and school administrators. "We have the infrastructure to take this program statewide, and that's our goal," BusinessMedia Center Director Kevin Liska said.

The award is evidence that the thriving campaign is built to last, Coleman said. "When we go to private businesses and corporations, they'll see that this program will last," Coleman said. "I think others will get involved as a result of the award."

Ollie Otter is available to speak to schools and community groups. More information is available at www.trba.org/ollie.

Ollie Otter Safety Campaign Picking Up Steam



single one has turned us down. Teachers are crazy about Ollie."

Principles such as Trudy Templeton of Meigs North Elementary in Meigs County enthusiastically endorse the assemblies. "I think the program that my children were able to see is very good," Templeton said. "We have a lot of children that come to school that are car riders that are not sitting in booster seats and they are not in their seat belts...after today's program they will see the importance of staying in their seat belts or booster seats."

Tennessee's booster seat law stipulates that children under 4'9" and younger than 9 years old must use a booster seat. Liska said student awareness before Ollie appearances hovers around the 15 percent mark. "After the presentations, kids send in letters and artwork to Ollie through the Web site," Liska said. "There's a tremendous increase in awareness of the law." Using energy-packed presentations in full gymnasiums, Ollie teaches students about seatbelt safety, lets them test their height against a 4-foot-9-inch Ollie cutout and sends them home with a bookmark explaining Tennessee laws and urging parents to log into Ollie's Web site, www.trba.org/ollie. "It's fun, high energy, and really basic," Liska said. "Ollie's in front of a gym full of 400 screaming kids, teaching them about safety. Our goal is to have presentations in all 95 counties within 12 months, and the new suits will help us do that."

Reaching younger students is an important part of the campaign. "We realized early on that safe driving and seatbelts was not just a message for teenagers," Liska said. "We thought about how to make safety so habit-forming that it's not an issue when they get to high school. We realized there was nothing out there to reach children at a young age."

The Otter outfit has been manned by volunteers so far. Organizers have forged an alliance with Tennessee Technology Centers around the state. Those centers have provided about 60 volunteers to supplement TRBA Volunteers and run Ollie assemblies. The Ollie Otter Program Coordinator Julie Brewer said the partnerships are proving mutually beneficial. "The Technology Centers have taken a key role," Brewer said. "Ollie is all over the state every day, and with 26 Technology Centers across the state, they help us get the word out all over the place."

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Governor's Highway Safety Office Awards \$50,000 Grant

The Ollie Otter Booster Seat and Seatbelt Safety program is a pioneering statewide effort to educate every child in Tennessee about the importance of using booster seats and seatbelts. The program strives to conduct presentations in elementary schools in all 95 counties in Tennessee this school year. Initiated by the Tennessee Road Builders Association, the program is a public/private partnership, implemented by hundreds of volunteers across the state. Local organizations champion the cause through supportive alliances while key expert groups, such as the Tennessee Highway Patrol, strengthen the program's message by lending their subject-matter expertise. Ollie Otter's important safety message is driven by business technology through the Tennessee Tech University BusinessMedia Center.