

January 26, 2006

Driving instructors have new teaching tool

Any parent of a 16-year-old knows that modern teenagers have short attention spans, seek out visual stimulation, and learn better by doing. Now Rhode Island Driver Educators can tap into these teen traits when they teach their students how to drive responsibly.

On Saturday, driver educators from all over the state will gather at the Community College of Rhode Island to adopt a new interactive teaching tool entitled DRIVE. Developed by the Illinois-based Moorshire Group, DRIVE includes a quick-paced 67-second video laced with clues—clues revealing common teenage behaviors that put new drivers at risk. It also offers problem-solving exercises in a variety of hazardous driving situations, from road rage to bad weather, that students must solve collaboratively.

One of the biggest hurdles teenage drivers must overcome, says CCRI Director of Community Education Emilio Colantonio, is developing an appropriate attitude.

“Teenagers think they are invincible in all aspects of their life, and that includes behind the wheel,” he says.

“The DRIVE program helps students discover for themselves the value of safe driving habits. DRIVE also shows them how the attitudes they choose can affect their decision-making on the road.”

Automobile safety research demonstrates the importance of driver education programs like DRIVE. Studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that teenage drivers are more likely than older drivers to be involved in automobile crashes, and that those same teenage drivers are more likely to be at fault than their adult counterparts. Moreover, a newly released AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study states that two-thirds of fatalities from teenage driver crashes are not the drivers themselves, but passengers, other drivers and non-motorists.

CCRI coordinates all driver education classes throughout Rhode Island. Students must be a minimum of 15 years and 10 months of age in order to attend classes. For information on available classes, log on to www.ccri.edu and visit the driver education page.

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