



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Burlington and Essex High Schools Receive Teen Driver Safety Investment from Ford Motor Company Fund

- South Burlington and Essex High Schools have been chosen to participate in Ford's national Driving Skills for Life training program
- Students will learn proper driving skills through hands-on driving clinics with professional drivers at their own high school parking lots
- The Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program and other community partners will join Ford Driving Skills for Life activities at both schools

South Burlington and Essex Junction, VT, Sept. 27, 2011 – Ford Motor Company is bringing its national, award-winning teen safe driving program, Ford Driving Skills for Life (Ford DSFL), to South Burlington High School and Essex High School on October 5th and 6th respectively.

In response to growing awareness about teen fatalities and driver distraction, the Ford Motor Company Fund, along with the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), announced in February a \$1,000,000 expansion of Ford DSFL, with a 30-city national tour. The expansion added a new component to Ford DSFL's hands-on programs and web-based training. In Vermont, South Burlington High School and Essex High School were selected to participate in the program.

According to the VT Governor's Highway Safety Program, drivers between the ages of 16 and 24 years old account for only 11.6% of Vermont drivers, yet they accounted for over 26% of all fatal auto accidents that occurred in 2010. They also are more likely to be involved in severe crashes—those involving personal injury or death, proving that there is a direct relationship between the age of the driver and the risk of a crash or injury.

The students at South Burlington and Essex High Schools will participate in hands-on training modules that will equip each student with the fundamental skills necessary for safe driving.

"Getting a driver's license, and the freedom that comes with it is an exciting milestone for our students," said Patrick Burke, South Burlington High School principal. "Often, that excitement overshadows the reality that driving a car takes concentration and skill. Ford's Driving Skills for Life gives them a hands-on experience that shows them the importance of driver safety and responsibility."

"Essex High School is pleased to team up with Ford Motor Company in delivering this very important message about safety and driving to our students," said Principal Robert Reardon. "We are extremely excited to have the Ford team visit us next week to talk about driving safety and responsibility. It is an important message that needs to be shared with our students."

Established in 2003 by the Ford Motor Company Fund, the Governors Highway Safety Association and a panel of safety experts, Ford Driving Skills for Life teaches newly-licensed teens the necessary skills for safe driving beyond what they learn in standard driver education programs.

"Inexperience is the leading cause of crashes in young drivers, and this program delivers the key skill sets that will increase their knowledge, confidence and, ultimately, their safety," said Sue Cischke, Ford's group vice president, Sustainability, Environment and Safety Engineering. "Ford is passionate about helping young drivers learn the rules of the road, better manage distractions behind the wheel and help make America's roads safer for all of us."

Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers throughout the nation. Specifically, the majority of these crashes are attributed to inexperience in four key skills: Distractions, Vehicle Handling, Space Management and Speed Management—all areas of concentration in the Ford DSFL program.

In Vermont, motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for children and youth, ages 1 to 24. Younger Vermont drivers are more likely to be involved in crashes directly related to risk taking behaviors such as speeding, alcohol and marijuana use. In 2010, there were 87 operators involved in 63 fatal crashes and 26% of them were between the ages of 16 and 24. Of the operators between 16 and 24; 70% lost their own life and 35% were under the influence of marijuana.

"The Governor's Highway Safety Program is eager to help young drivers understand the responsibilities that come with a driver's license," said Lt. John Flannigan, Acting Chief of the VT GHSP. "We know that it's fun to get in the car with a group of friends and head for the lake, a basketball game, or a party. But distracted or impaired driving, excessive speed, or not knowing how to handle the vehicle properly can turn a fun time tragic in a matter of seconds. Ford's Driving Skills for Life program is one more way we can educate young drivers against those dangers."

Who: Representatives from Ford Driving Skills for Life
Representatives of VT's GHSP
Local Police Departments
VT State Police

What: Ford Driving Skills for Life

When/Where: **Wednesday, October 5, 2011**
7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
South Burlington High School
550 Dorset Street
South Burlington, VT 05403

Thursday, October 6, 2011
7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Essex High School
2 Educational Drive
Essex Junction, VT 05452

Ford DSFL will accommodate requests to ride in a training vehicle with the drivers and students. Please send requests.

Follow at:
www.facebook.com/FordDrivingSkillsForLife
www.drivingskillsforlife.com

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About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works with community partners to advance driving safety, education and American heritage and community life. The Ford Motor Company Fund has operated for more than 60 years with ongoing funding from Ford Motor Company. The award-winning Ford Driving Skills for Life program teaches new drivers through a variety of hands-on and interactive methods. Innovation in education is encouraged through national programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. Through the Ford Volunteer Corps, more than 20,000 Ford employees and retirees work on projects that better their communities in dozens of countries. For more information, visit www.community.ford.com