

## **Accident Re-enactment Promotes Teen Driver Safety with Graphic Realism**

**(Bradenton, FL—March 30, 2011)** Two cars slammed into each other head on, crushed metal, broken glass, and a bloodied teen emerging from one of the vehicles in total shock and hysteria—that was the opening scene at an accident re-enactment yesterday at Manatee Technical Institute.

SkillsUSA high school students at MTI-East worked with local public service agencies to re-enact an accident scene to promote teen driver safety to about 100 Lakewood Ranch High School students yesterday. With funding from State Farm, they are using this Project Ignition / SkillsUSA project that they call “We Don’t Want to Meet You by Accident” to try to convince their peers of the dangers of distracted driving, such as driving while intoxicated or texting.

### PHOTOS:

**Photo 1:** High school students in the Emergency Medical Technician and Fire Fighter programs at MTI created a very realistic enactment of a teen driver accident with help from Manatee County EMS and EMS Auxiliary, East Manatee Fire Rescue, Florida Highway Patrol, and Bayflite.

**Photo 2:** Lakewood Ranch High School students were the primary audience. The MTI public service students are working to convince their peers of the dangers of distracted driving. In a debriefing afterwards, students learned that a driver who **talks on a mobile phone is four times more likely** to be involved in a serious crash, regardless of whether the driver uses a hands-free cell phone.

**Photo 3:** Four students played the roles of two fatally injured and one critically injured victims and the driver who caused the accident because he was drunk and texting. According to FHP Trooper Lucy Papp, who was first on the scene, the majority of traffic fatalities in our area are caused by speeding and distracted driving.

**Photo 4:** Bayflite crew members transport the “critically injured” teen from the scene of the mock accident.

**Photo 5:** Fire fighters remove the victims of the mock fatal crash. Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death of teenagers in the United States. The MTI student team hopes to make a difference in Manatee with their driver safety campaign.

**Photo 6:** Local State Farm Agents Kim Vole and Susie Jackson, Florida Highway Patrol Officer Lucy Papp, MTI EMT students Sasha Wirth, Eduardo Campos and Sarah Shields, and State Farm Team Member Jennifer Godfrey pose together after the re-enactment. Project Ignition, sponsored by State Farm® and coordinated by the National Youth Leadership Council®, is a service-learning competition designed to help teens spread their own messages about driver safety and win grant money for their schools.

## **Project Ignition Contacts**

Jose Soto, State Farm, 305-421-0213

Michael VanKeulen, National Youth Leadership Council, 888-856-7026

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### **About National Youth Leadership Council®:**

NYLC has been at the center of service-learning program and policy development since 1983. It convenes the annual National Service-Learning Conference, offers adult and youth trainings, and develops service-learning resources. Service learning is a teaching method that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service to their schools and communities. It integrates service with established learning objectives, emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving, and tackles real issues such as hunger, ecological concerns, diversity and teen driver safety. For more information, please visit [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org).

### **About Manatee Technical Institute:**

Manatee Technical Institute is fully accredited by the Council on Occupational Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It is a postsecondary career and technical education center under the School District of Manatee County offering over 40 career preparation programs. The mission of Manatee Technical Institute is to meet and exceed our community's training and educational expectations. MTI is a 2007 Tampa Bay Business of the Year, and its students have won more SkillsUSA medals than any other school in the nation for the past seven years.

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