



MEMORIES
OF
YOU

2019 - 2020 Teen Memoriam



We would like to thank all the courageous families for sharing their stories to help prevent others from dying in motor vehicle crashes.

It's impossible to portray a complete picture of the young lives lost on Utah's roadways. Even for the teens within this memorial, a small glimpse is all you'll see.

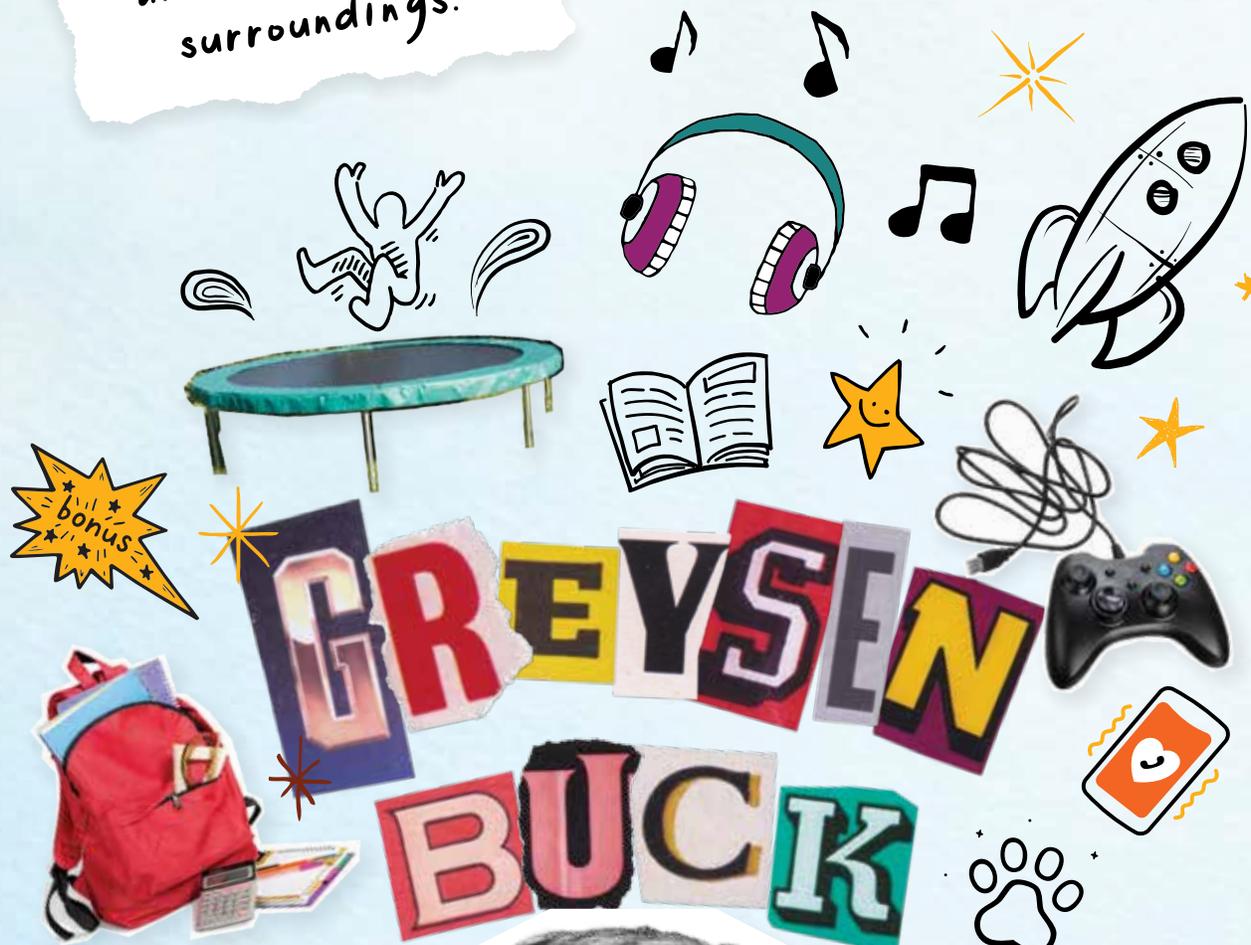
For their families, the memories make a collage that they'll carry in their hearts forever. But those memories will always remain incomplete, as their stories ended far too soon.

The tragedy of it all is that their lives were lost because of one wrong decision. We highlight these tragedies not to lay blame, but as a reminder of the importance of safe driving. One bad decision on our roadways can lead to the loss of a precious life.

Please, don't let your choices end up as a tragic memory of another teen life lost.

Please be careful
and look at your
surroundings.

October is my favorite time of the year. That is until
October 29, 2020. That morning is burned into my
memory. I remember every single thing that happened
that day. It was in super slow motion.



GREYSEN BUCK



13 years old

Greysen was the best son a mom could ever have. He was the peacemaker, the sweetest soul. He was a typical 13-year-old kid. He is the fourth child out of five. He was born with a heart condition that never ever slowed him down. You would never know he had a problem by looking at him. He was super close in age to his little brother, Milo. They were best friends. He was Milo's voice. If anyone asked Milo a question, he'd look at Greysen for him to answer. He loved to hang out with his friends, be outside, play video games, and tell the funniest jokes.

He always had something clever to say. He was loud and opinionated. He would get into trouble talking to his friends on the phone past curfew. He, we later found out, was talking his friends out of suicide. He would be there for anyone. He loved his friends so much. The pandemic was really hard for him because he couldn't be with them as often as he wanted to. He was often outside with them before the pandemic jumping on the trampoline. He was the best back-flipper there is and he loved to show it off.

He loved to go to school, not because he was a great student, but because he could be with his friends. He would often go to school early just to have the most time possible with them. He was an active member of our church. He had the cutest lisp and a dimple in his cheek. He loved animals, especially the family dogs.

October 29, 2020, Greysen headed out to school that morning. An hour later, I was awoken to police pounding on our door. They politely asked to speak to my husband and me. They said that they needed to speak to us about Greysen. I never imagined that I'd ever hear the words that they were about to say.

They informed us that Greysen had been hit by a car and we needed to get to the hospital right away. My heart instantly went numb. I couldn't believe what they were telling me. They told us that we needed to follow behind the police car and that the other police car would be behind us. We made the three-mile drive to the hospital where we were escorted into the building by the officers. They took us up to the intensive care floor and ushered us immediately into a small room. There were police lining both sides of the room. It was like a movie.

When we got into the room, they told us that Greysen was in surgery and that it was pretty bad. They said something about brain damage, but nothing definitive.

We were also met by another policeman that we hadn't previously spoken to. He informed us that he witnessed the accident. Greysen was crossing Redwood Road, a very busy 45 mph road, and he was struck by a car. He wasn't in a crosswalk. He didn't use the skybridge that would have safely gotten him to the other side to the school. He told us that the driver immediately got out of the car and administered CPR while calling 911.

Greysen did not have a heartbeat. He landed hard on his jaw, which broke immediately, so the EMTs couldn't get an airway. They had to do a tracheotomy to gain an airway. His heart didn't beat again until they got him to the hospital. It was still touchy and they immediately took him into surgery. He had a broken jaw, ruptured spleen, a head injury and a spinal fracture. The doctors told us that there was a 1% chance of survival. He was out of surgery and on life support and was very unstable. They let us come in and be with him. Words can't adequately express what I saw—my sweet baby lying there connected to machines. We held his hand and talked to him.

When the doctors thought we had enough time with him, they told us that they would be taking him off life support. We were visited by a transplant team who asked if we would consider donating his organs. Without hesitation, we agreed. We knew the kind of giving person he was and we knew it was something that he would have wanted to do. They took him off life support and immediately took him to the transplant surgery. That whole day seemed like it was five minutes long.

I lost my son that day. In an instant, because of a stupid decision on his part, he was gone. My life has not been the same since. My heart is shattered. I long to hear his jokes, see his dimple and listen to that lisp. The only solace I have is that through organ donation, he saved the lives of three people.

Please be careful and look at your surroundings. Make good decisions when crossing a street. If there are safer ways to get across the street, please use them. Even though it may take longer to go that way, it could save your life. It could save another mother from the crippling pain of losing their precious child. Please learn a lesson from Greysen. He was the best kid. Even the best kids make mistakes. Unfortunately, his cost him his life.



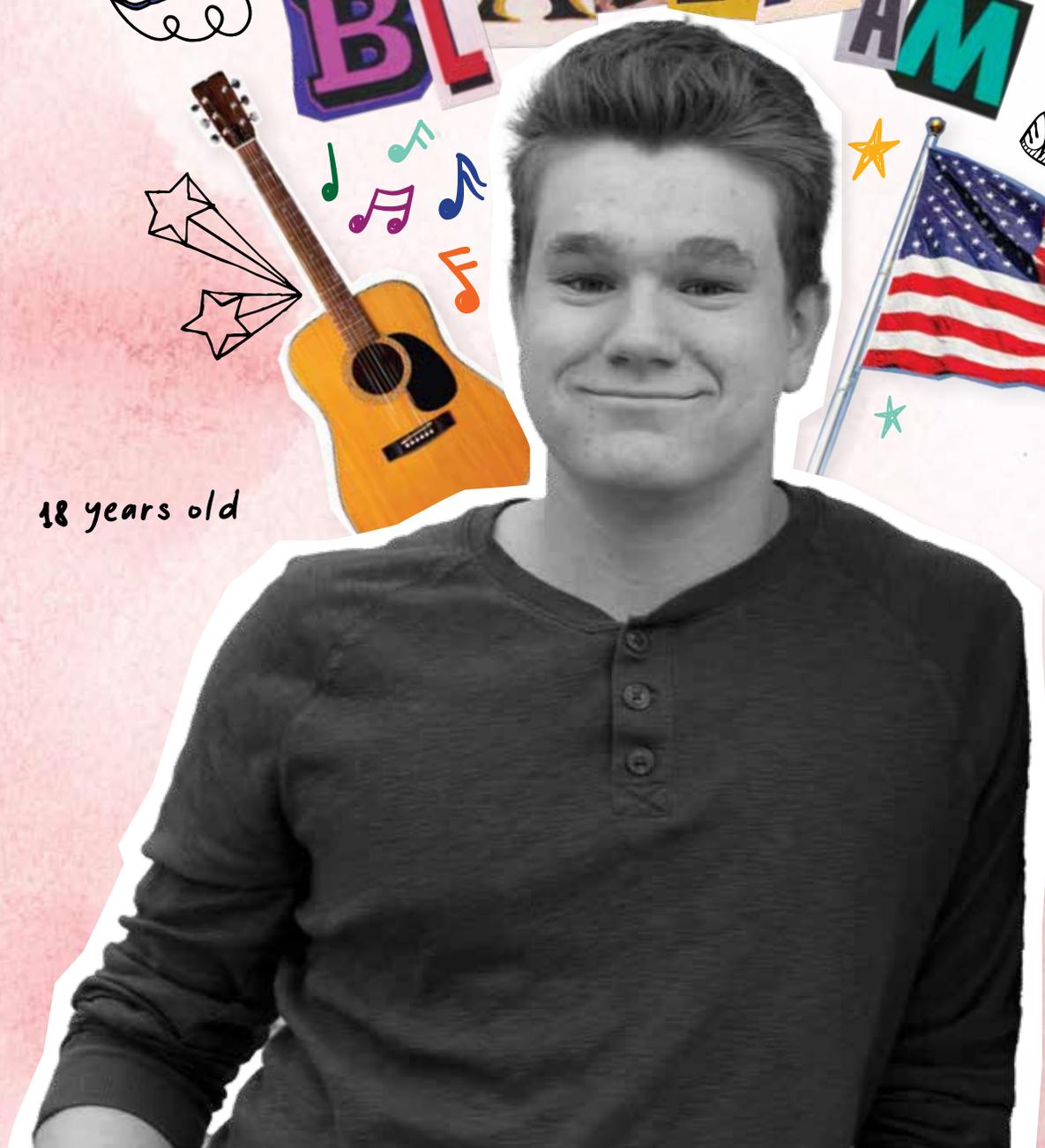
EJ



BLACKHAM



18 years old



Oct 7th, 2019, at 5:14 p.m., our lives were permanently altered because of road rage and bad choices. The earth lost a ray of sunshine that afternoon. EJ Blackham was driving home on State Road 147 near Payson, Utah. He had finished a fun afternoon of target practice with one of his best friends at West Mountain. EJ was scheduled to leave for Marine Corps Bootcamp in six days and was out enjoying his free time doing the things he loved. Things like spending time with friends, driving his old, blue 1975 Ford F250 named Rex and making memories with his family, girlfriend, and his cattle dog named Jinx.

On his drive home on Oct 7th, he and his buddy were listening to Toby Keith with the windows down and going the speed limit, when they noticed a white truck that flew past them. This truck then pulled in front of my son and hit their brakes. This caused EJ to swerve to avoid hitting them. EJ then made the choice to speed up and pass this other truck.

As he tried passing, the other vehicle swerved to block him. A sideswipe occurred and EJ lost control. He overcorrected and his truck rolled twice before hitting a cement fence pole and then turned over landing on the passenger side. EJ was not wearing a seat belt and was ejected. He passed on impact. His 18-year-old passenger was wearing a seat belt and he walked away with minor injury and a forever broken heart.

Please buckle up for the ones you love, and if someone drives erratically or aggressively, please remember road rage kills. Just let it go and do not encourage or engage with a reckless driver. Speeding kills. Not wearing a seat belt kills.

My son's life was taken too soon and the entire event was 100% preventable.

EJ's mom (Kimberly Harter)

My son's life was taken too soon and the entire event was 100% preventable.

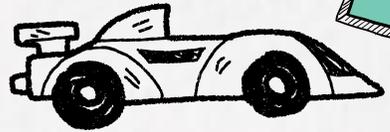
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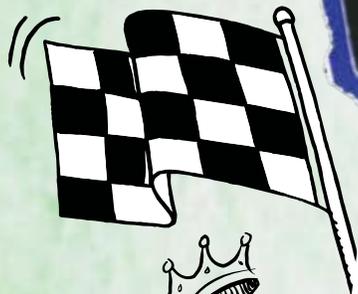
CHAZ



#1



GROAT



17 years old

With his decision to speed, he paid the ultimate price by losing his life and injuring the other driver.

Friday, December 31, 2020, started off as a normal day, but subsequently turned into the worst day of our lives. Chaz left the house early afternoon to meet a friend for lunch. He was full of life and extremely happy as he walked out the door saying: "Love you! See you later!"

We had just gotten home from a bowling tournament in Las Vegas the night before, and ironically, during the drive home, we discussed driving habits more in depth as Chaz recently bought a new car. We discussed increased insurance costs related to speeding violations, getting in a wreck, etc. More so, how a few moments of adrenaline from speeding, or the consequences from aggressive or distracted driving wasn't worth his life. Or as we stated many times, "people who get in your car put their lives in your hands." I told him our worst nightmare was seeing him in jail, the hospital, or morgue due to a bad driving decision. Regardless of how much we talked to him, he would always tell us, "Don't worry! I'm a good driver."

Less than 24 hours later, our nightmare became a reality when a police officer knocked on our door at 3:15 that afternoon. He told us Chaz was in a bad car accident and had been rushed to the hospital in critical condition. I fell to the floor. By the time we arrived at the hospital, he was basically gone due to a traumatic brain injury. The root cause of the accident

appears to be speeding around a corner and losing control of the car, which resulted in him swerving into oncoming traffic and colliding into another vehicle at an excessive speed. With his decision to speed, he paid the ultimate price by losing his life and injuring the other driver.

To any teenager who may be reading this, your parents aren't just nagging at you, or trying to control you. You are at a point in your life where you start to gain more freedoms. We are merely just trying to make you understand the consequences of bad decisions. Obey the laws and rules of the road! They are there to protect you and others from being injured—or worse, a tragic loss. As grieving parents, please listen! Don't be a Chaz—your life depends on it.

For only being 17, Chaz made a huge impact on those around him. He was known by his sense of humor and quick wit, but mostly by his goofiness. He loved making people laugh and was someone who would light up a room whenever he entered. He had a way of cheering people up, even during the most difficult times. Even in death, Chaz continued giving to others by choosing to be an organ donor. Chaz is talked about constantly and will always be remembered. The void we (parents), family and friends feel will never go away. We love and miss him so very much!

Groat Family

Please, let this be a reminder that drowsy driving is as bad as impaired driving and it's just not worth it.



13 years old

Angelina was my Glowworm. That's the nickname I would use because of her big, beautiful eyes and the way she was wrapped in her blanket the day she was born. It all reminded me of the kids' old glowworm toy looking the same way.

Lots of parents claim to have the perfect child, but I can honestly say that my little girl was as close as you can get to being there. She had and made friends wherever she went and was a social butterfly just like me and her mom were. She always was the center of whatever group she was around.

Angelina loved school and never wanted to miss a day—not even for a doctor's appointment and even in the subjects she struggled with. She still wanted to be there. Her glowing personality made her stand out with her teachers as well. I guess her friends were so impressed with the way she carried herself and how happy she always appeared that they wanted to be part of that. She always had sleepovers, every weekend if possible, or friends invited her to their house.

In July of 2019, she went with her cousin who was also her best friend to Maui for the trip of a lifetime. She had so much fun and looking back on it now I'm so glad I allowed her to go.

Everyone would tease me and call her a "Daddy's Girl" because of how close we were or how everyone thought she could pull the wool over my eyes but we were so in sync from the day she was born, that maybe she could. I kept her grounded by having her donate her old toys and clothes to the homeless shelter for mothers with children to instill in her to always give when you can.

Angelina's mom lived in Bountiful, Utah, and Angelina and I lived in Las Vegas. She was going to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with her mom that year. She was all packed and had just got her hair done and was waiting for her mom who was running a little late because she got started on the drive to Vegas

a little later than expected. Her mom and her mom's friend, who made the trip down with her, showed up and we chatted a bit before they got on the road. I remembered telling Angelina to make sure she kept her seat belt on and I took a photo of her with her Mom and her dog "Misty" before they got on the road.

I don't remember sleeping particularly well that night and started texting and calling them as soon as I woke up, but didn't receive any answer from either Angelina or her mom, so I was a little worried. Around 9:30 a.m., I received a call from Angelina's grandfather on her mother's side asking me if I'm sitting down. He proceeded to tell me that there was an accident and no one survived. I still remember screaming and dropping to the floor in disbelief. Apparently, her mom fell asleep at the wheel, and over-corrected, and had a rollover that ejected Angelina from the vehicle.

Through social media, I was contacted by the woman who witnessed the accident. She gave me details I so badly needed by telling me that she stayed with Angelina, who at the time was still breathing, and held her hand the whole time until paramedics arrived. They couldn't revive her.

Angelina had just turned 13 on October 6th and was gone a month later on November 23, 2019, along with her mother and another passenger. Angelina was my only child and I miss her every day and wish her mom would have pulled over to rest or to change places with the other driver. My life will never be the same and as much as I try to live a normal life, the pain and anguish shows on my face.

Please, let this be a reminder that drowsy driving is as bad as impaired driving and it's just not worth it.



17 years old

On October 10, 2020, our world would be forever changed in the most devastating way imaginable.

Peyton was born on August 10, 2003. He was a twin. He had a sister and a little brother. He loved us all so much. He was his siblings' best friend, giving them all his love in his special way. He loved late night runs to McDonald's for his Frappe and cheeseburgers. He was a light to all who knew him. He stood up for the bullied, he made you laugh, and he would annoy you until you smiled if you were sad. Or if you were in a bad mood, he would work harder to make you smile.

He loved adventure and he was always looking to do more things. He loved ice climbing, hikes, to repel off cliffs with no fear. He was a catcher in baseball until he was 14; he decided to give that up and to pursue other adventures. He was an amazing wrestler, winning a state title at five years old. He had just gotten into mountain biking before he died. His plan was to practice hard his junior year and for his senior year wanted to join the team.

The mountain he was on, he and his friends drove on the daily to get to the bike trail, so it was comfortable to all of his friends. The night of the 10th, a friend came to get him so they could go grab a couple of friends who needed their help. The driver on the way down the narrow, steep road decided to show off and became reckless. On one of the corners, he fish-tailed around it. The back tire hit the edge of the mountain side and the truck rolled. Peyton was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown from the vehicle. He rolled down the cliff and he ended up underneath the truck.

His brother received a call that Peyton had been in an accident and he needed to get up there. We thought he was ok. So, we headed out to go get him. As I was walking out of the house I received the most dreaded phone call a parent could imagine. I will never forget the officer saying "your son" has been involved in a car accident. I asked if he was ok and he said "let me have you speak with the doctor". He was barely alive, he was bleeding internally and he was not awake. They were taking him in for surgery, and they called for Life Flight. He lay in a hospital bed at Primary Children's Hospital in a coma for eight days before they told us Peyton was brain dead.

This all happened because of a reckless moment, because he wasn't wearing a seat belt. If you have read this far, understand if you are a driver and you have passengers, they are precious cargo. Their life has been placed in your hands. One moment destroyed the lives of all who knew Peyton.

Wear your seat belt, and know as a driver, passengers place their lives in your hands. Those passengers have a family who loves and cherishes them. Death changes everything. Death is unchangeable. Our lives are forever changed. We are missing a link in our chain.

Peyton leaves behind a lesson. Live without fear, forgive quickly and love with all of your heart.

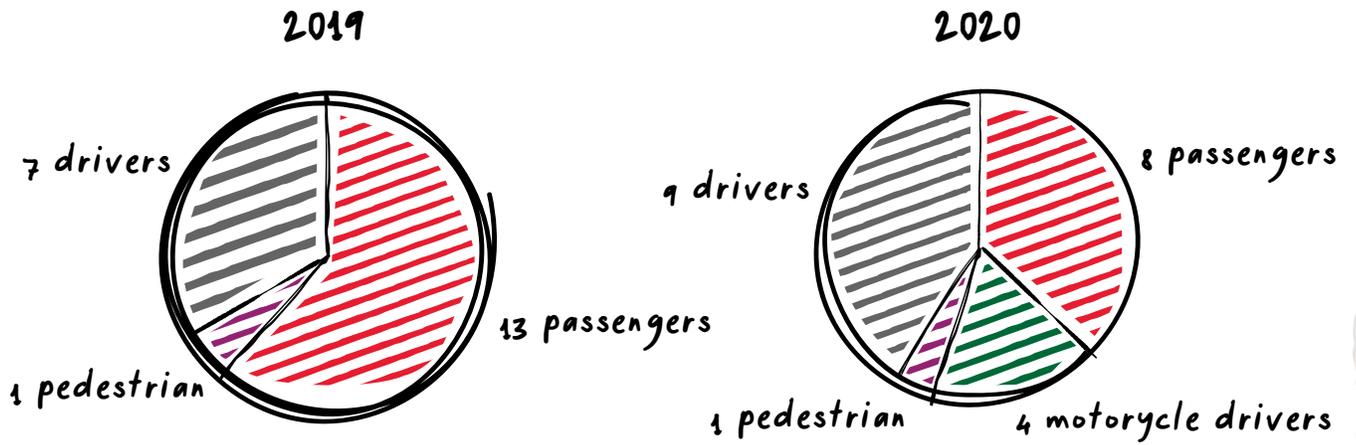
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2019 - 2020
TEEN CRASH
STATISTICS

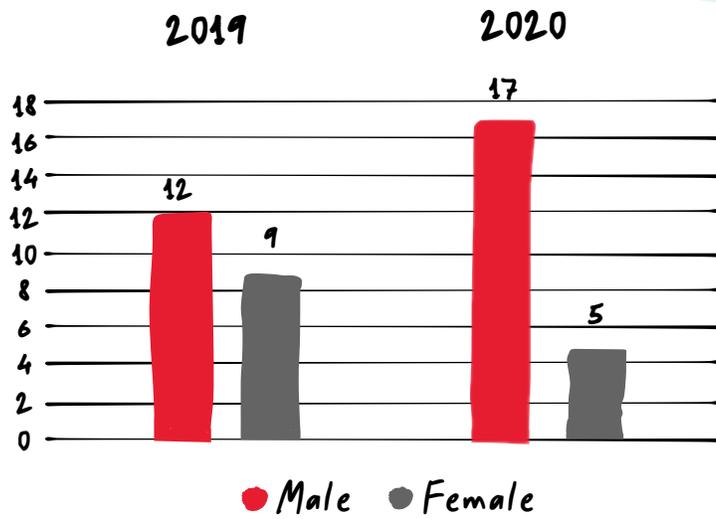
43 teens lost their lives
on Utah roads.

*A fatal crash is defined as a crash involving a motor vehicle
traveling on a traffic way resulting in the death of at least
one person within 30 days of the crash
(Utah Department of Public Safety)*

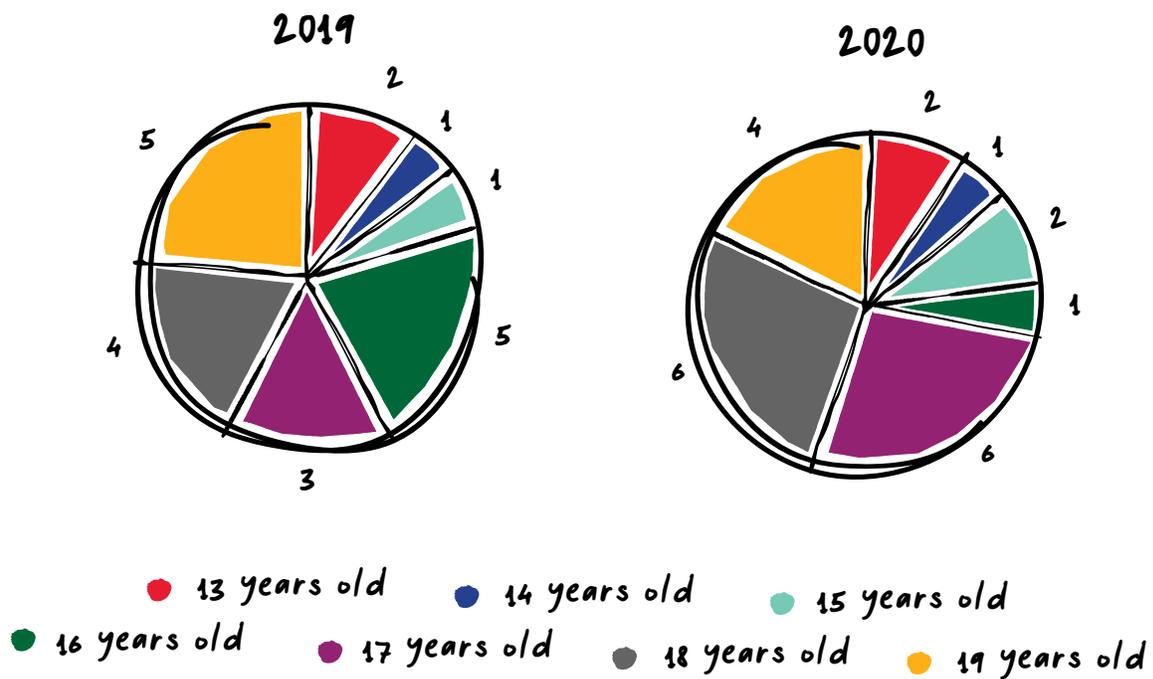
Person Type



Gender

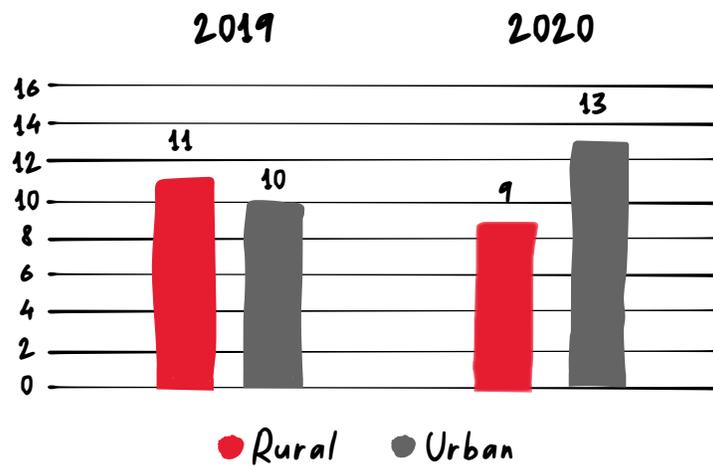


Age of Teen Deaths



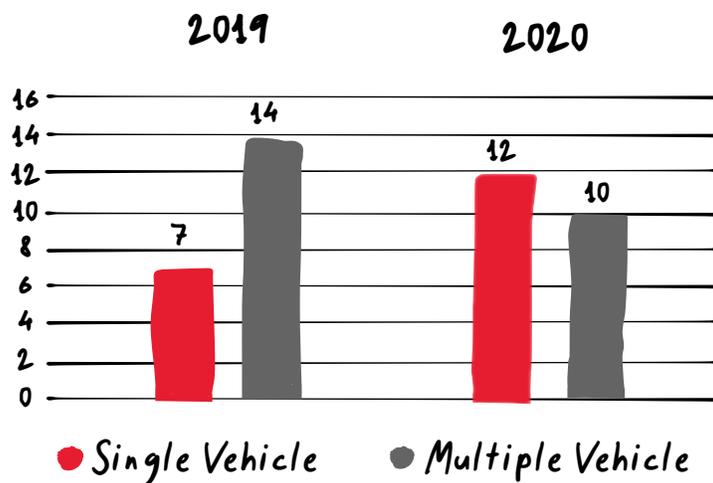
The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers aged 16-19 were nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. And among teens aged 16-17, the fatal crash rate per mile driven was nearly twice as high as it was for 18- to 19-year-olds (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute).

Teens Who Died in Rural vs Urban Areas*

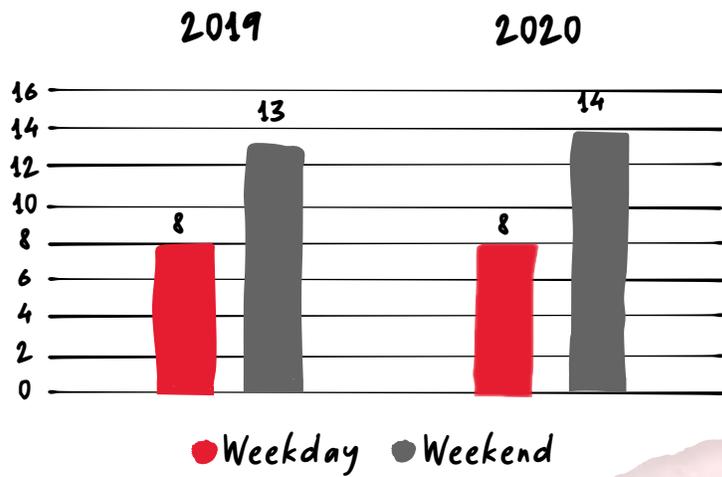


*Statistics based on roadway

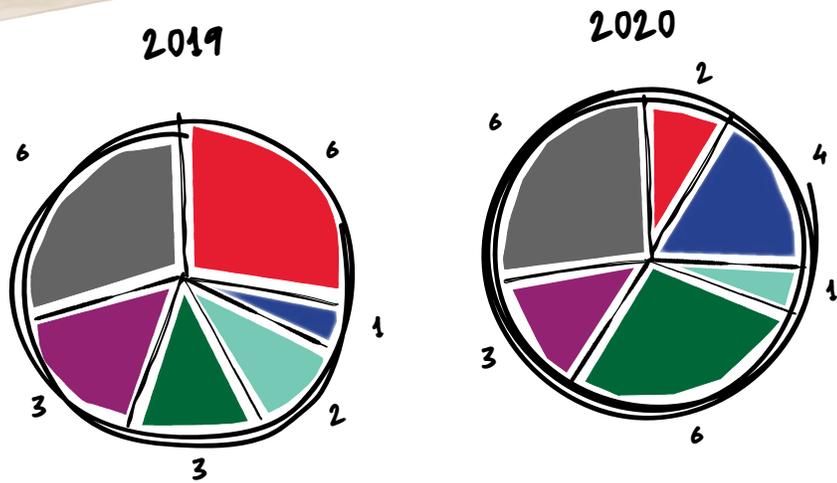
Teens Who Died in Single Vehicle vs Multiple Vehicle Crashes



Time of Week

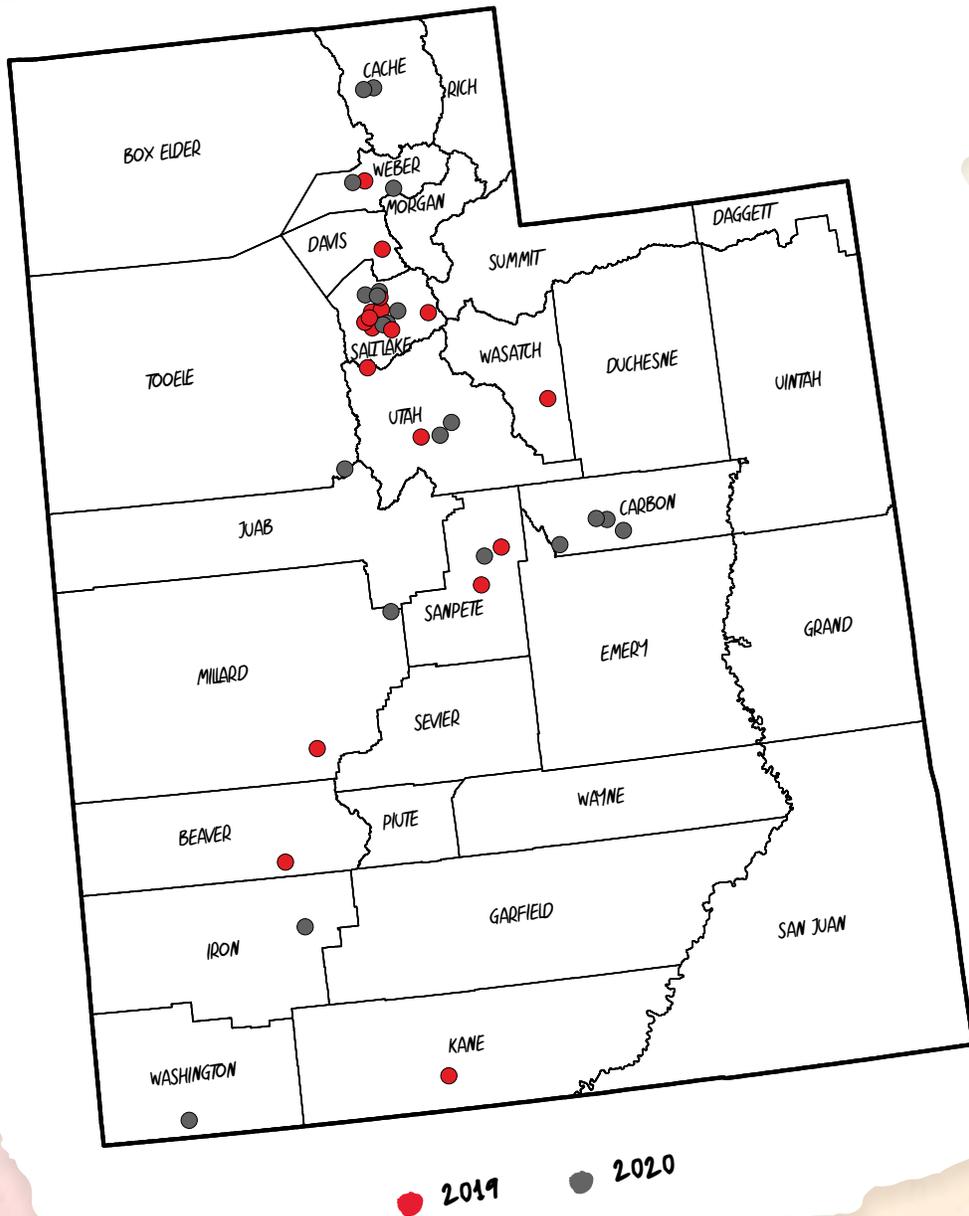


Time of Day



- midnight - 4am
- 4am - 8am
- 8am - noon
- noon - 4pm
- 4pm - 8pm
- 8pm - midnight

2019 - 2020 Utah Teen Motor Vehicle Fatalities



Since the Utah Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws went into effect in 1999, there has been a 69% decrease in the rate of teens ages 15 - 17 killed in motor vehicle crashes (Utah Department of Health.)

2019 - 2020

TEEN DRIVER

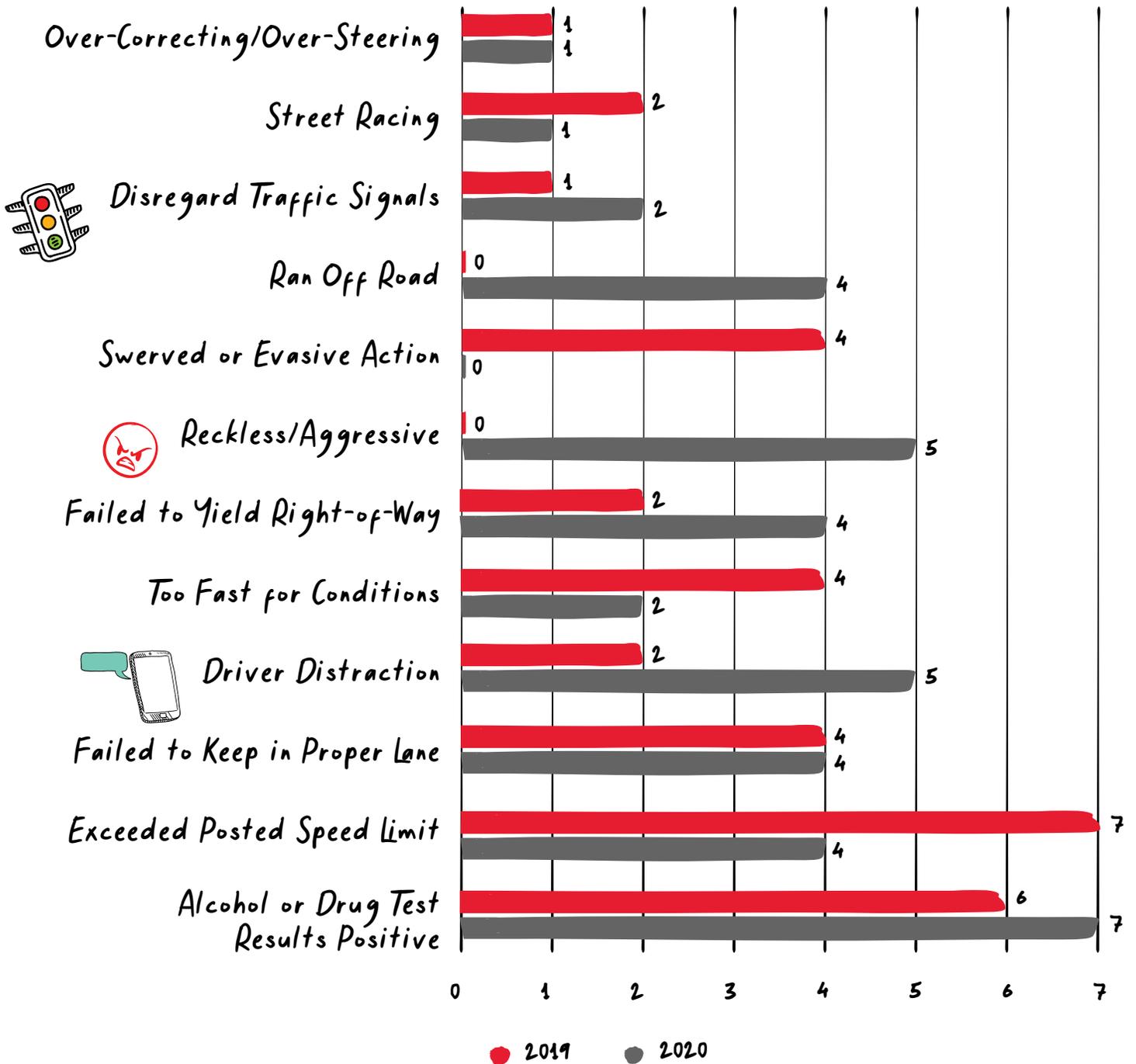
STATISTICS

In 2019 and 2020, 62 teen drivers were involved in a fatal crash; a total of 62 people were killed in these crashes, including 20 of the 62 teen drivers.



Contributing Factors*

*Each crash may have more than one contributing factor



USE THIS

BOOK

TO

SAVE

LIVES

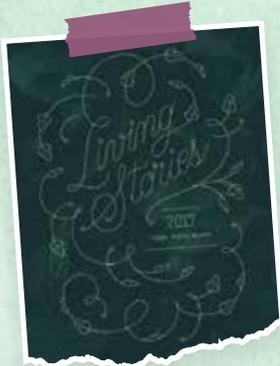
For the past 13 years, families have courageously shared their stories about how they lost their teen on a Utah road. Their hope in sharing these stories is that others never have to feel the pain of losing a loved one in a car crash. Please learn from these stories. Talk with your loved ones, friends, classmates and students about these tragic stories and set rules for your car and whenever you ride in a car. When reading these stories, please consider the following questions:

What caused the crash?

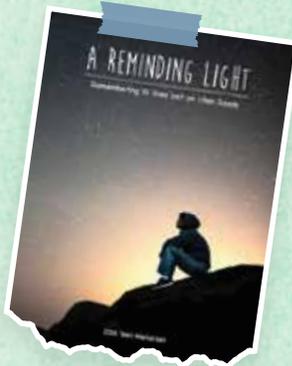
Could it have been prevented?

What rules can you set while you are driving or riding in a car that can help avoid this type of crash?

Remember to be sensitive and not to place blame on any one person. Rather, focus on the principles that can be applied to encourage safe driving. Point out actions that are dangerous and should be avoided.



2017



2016



2015



2014

To view Teen Memoriams from previous years, visit zerofatalities.com/teen-memoriam-books/

This book would not be possible without support from the following organizations:



Utah Teen Driving Task Force

ZERO Fatalities

Zero Fatalities[®]

A Goal We Can All Live With

