

One Collective Movement to End Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driving

by Paige Carbone

Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is a national nonprofit leading the movement to end impaired driving for good. Since 1980, MADD has helped reduce drunk driving deaths in America by more than 40%, saved nearly 500,000 lives, and served nearly one million victims and survivors.

Impaired Driving Prevention Month is a timely reminder to make safe choices on the road amid heightened impaired driving risks during the holidays. During Impaired Driving Prevention Month, MADD, along with our community and law enforcement partners, is encouraging everyone to spread the message — never drive impaired and plan a safe ride home to ensure a joyous holiday season.

Ending impaired driving requires a collective movement, with each of us playing a part. It is MADD's mission to put an end to impaired driving for good. The loss of life caused by impaired driving isn't just a statistic, it's families and communities changed forever. As the holiday season kicks into high gear, MADD is calling on everyone to prevent impaired driving by prioritizing safety.

Impaired driving is a worsening public health crisis. Two out of three people will be impacted by drunk driving in their lifetime. Impaired driving isn't just limited to alcohol. Drugged Driving is a growing and complex problem. MADD works with key law enforcement and traffic safety and research experts to study the potential effects of marijuana legalization, the national opioid crisis, and the prevalence prescription drugs could have on impaired driving. We've learned that more research, more data, and better testing are needed to fully understand the impact of marijuana legalization and other drugs on traffic safety and the under-21 population. A critical step in this battle is understanding Americans' attitudes and awareness toward marijuana, laws regulating its use, and the risks of consuming and driving. MADD serves drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors every day. We are working hard to stop these senseless and 100 percent preventable crimes.

As holiday travel picks up and winter weather sets in, the roadways become even more dangerous, especially when impaired driving is added to the mix. Here are a few safety tips to keep top of mind:

- **Plan Ahead:** Never drive impaired. Roadways are particularly hazardous in December and January due to factors including holiday festivities, seasonal travel, and winter weather conditions, but impaired driving is completely preventable. If you plan to drink during holiday festivities, plan before the night begins. Use a rideshare, designate a sober driver, or take public transit. Impaired driving includes cars, bikes, golf carts, and ATVs.
- **Be a Responsible Host:** If you're hosting a holiday party, MADD encourages hosts to play an active role in keeping everyone safe. By helping guests plan a safe way home or offering them a place to stay, hosts can significantly reduce the risk of impaired driving crashes and make this holiday season safer for all.
- **Sober Drivers, Stay Alert:** Watch for impaired drivers. Buckle up, drive slowly, and stay focused.
- **Talk to Teens About Risky Behavior:** The holiday season is a good time for parents to discuss underage drinking and safe choices. MADD's Power of Parents handbook is a proven tool to start the conversation.
- **If You See Something, Say Something:** If you suspect an impaired driver, call 911. One call could save a life or prevent a serious injury.

If you, or someone you love, have been the victim of impaired driving, MADD's trained victim advocates are here to help 24 hours a day via the MADD Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP (1-877-623-3435) or www.MADD.org. MADD has provided supportive services to nearly 1 million victims of drunk and drugged driving at no charge. MADD provides services at no cost to victims, survivors, and their loved ones by providing emotional support, guidance, and information about the criminal and civil justice process.

About the Author: *Paige joined MADD in 2023 as the regional executive director for NY|NJ|PA bringing 20+ years of leadership, advocacy, philanthropy, and communications experience to the role. She spent 17 years in higher education before transitioning into nonprofit work. Paige is a mission-driven and compassionate leader overseeing a team of 12 dedicated professionals across*

three states working to end impaired driving for good through victim assistance, community engagement, and prevention education programs.