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HCAM TEAMS WIN AWARDS AT PREVENTING DISTRACTED DRIVING VIDEO CONTEST

NEWTON -- Two teams from the Hickory Career and Arts Magnet School took home awards in the fourth annual Preventing Distracted Driving Video Contest at a Red Carpet Event held April 7.

A team of HCAM Photography students won the First Place Award, chosen by a panel of judges. Team members include Talia McClary, Yuri Catalan and Nereyda Rivera. Their school will receive \$500. The team will also be treated to a limo ride and lunch at a local restaurant, and receive free movie tickets.

A team of Cosmetology students won two top honors: the Community Share Award, which is the video with the most YouTube and Facebook likes and shares; and the Viewer's Choice Award, chosen by persons attending the awards ceremony who voted by texting. The team won a total of \$400 for their school. Their video featured a student talking about her personal experience in a distracted driving accident. Team members include Katera Vaughn, Emily Wright, Mariana Rico, Hydeia Steed and Olivia Lipps.



First place winners, left to right, Nathan Phelps, CVCC photography arts instructor; Nereyda Rivera; Yuri Catalan; and Talia McClary



Community Share Award and Viewers' Choice Award winners, left to right, Kim Ray, CVCC cosmetology instructor; Katera Vaughn; Mariana Rico; Hydeia Steed; Emily Wright and Olivia Lipps.

The Red Carpet Event also included performances by a chorus and band from Challenger Early College High School. Hickory Police Chief Tom Adkins spoke to the group about the dangers of distracted driving. In North Carolina, it is now unlawful for anyone to text while driving. It is unlawful for anyone 18 and younger to use any technology while driving, including talking on a cell phone.

Sig Holcomb, State Farm insurance agent and one of the contest sponsors, served as emcee for the event. Tammy Garlock of Charlotte, whose son Brian was killed in a distracted driving accident, talked briefly, congratulating the students for helping to spread the word about the dangers of distracted driving. She showed a video of her daughter talking about her emotional struggles following her brother's death. "Nothing is the same

anymore," said Grace Garlock. "Everybody's changed." Brian Garlock died in 2008. He was one of 6,000 people in this country who died as a result of distracted driving that year.

This year's contest sponsors include AAA Carolinas, Action Limousine, Carmike Cinemas, Catawba County Government, Catawba County Community Child Protection and Fatality Prevention Team, Catawba County Schools, Catawba County Youth Council, Catawba Valley Medical Center, Council on Adolescents of Catawba County, Dale Earnhardt Chevrolet, Drum and Willis-Reynolds Funeral Home, Hickory City Schools, Mike Johnson's Hickory Toyota, NC Cooperative Extension, North Carolina Driving School manager Fentress Chestnut, Newton-Conover High School, Safe Kids Catawba County, and State Farm agent Sig Holcomb.

The videos in this year's contest may be seen by going to the contest Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/DistractedDrivingVideoContest>.