

## AAA's new driving simulators help teen drivers at state conference

Nearly 150 students from 14 high schools from across Michigan were on hand for the 25<sup>th</sup> annual “Students Leading Students” State Conference – which included students testing their driving skills on AAA driving simulators in “Distracted Driving” workshops. Participating Southeast Michigan high schools included Warren Cousino High School in Macomb County.

All of the students rated the AAA Driving simulators as an “impactful, useful training tool” and the driving workshop as “excellent” at the conference, which was held at Shanty Creek Resort near Bellaire in mid-November. The annual conference helps students to have positive impact on other students. Many of the group leaders – including Missy Dyke, a retired Grand Rapids Police officer, and Matt Sterling, an active Lansing firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician – began their careers as high school students in the leadership program.

The AAA driving simulators offer real-world driving challenges for new teen drivers, including distracted driving situations, texting while driving and making traffic safety decisions in split-second timing. New research by AAA shows an alarmingly high number of teens admit to engaging in very risky behavior behind the wheel, including driving under the influence and text messaging while driving. Because car crashes are the leading cause of death among 15- to 20-year-old high school students, AAA has been very involved in a teen driving safety program.

AAA Michigan has four driving simulators for use at area high schools, community groups, AAA Driving School and at events like the AAA-Detroit Tigers “Teen Driving Safety” event at the ballpark last Memorial Day weekend. The simulators are also used by traffic safety partners in their support of AAA’s message on distracted driving.

AAA also launched a new teen web site this year to help teens – and their parents – navigate the important steps new teen drivers need to take to be safe drivers.

“AAA was pleased to once again be a part of the Student Leadership Services annual conference,” noted Jack Peet, AAA Traffic Safety Manager. “The positive comments we heard from the students showed they left understanding the very real dangers of distracted driving.” Peet was

presented with the “SLS Lifetime Achievement Award” at the conference for his many years of working with the group.

“These driving simulators were a great visual tool for our students to see how important it is to pay close attention to driving behind the wheel,” added Pam Voss-Page, Director of Student Leadership Services. “Many of our teen participants said they would be safer drivers now, knowing how distractions can lead to dangerous consequences.”

For more information on how to help keep teens safer drivers, visit [TeenDriving.AAA.com](http://TeenDriving.AAA.com). AAA’s new website provides extensive information and useful tools for both parents and teens and a downloadable parent-teen driving agreement.

For more information on the AAA driving simulators, contact Peet at [jcpeet@aaamichigan.com](mailto:jcpeet@aaamichigan.com) or [jcpeet@aaamichigan.com](mailto:jcpeet@aaamichigan.com).

For information on Students Leading Students, visit [://www.slstoday.org/](http://www.slstoday.org/)