

# Community

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# Staying safe on the roadways

## 'No Texting While Driving' assembly organized at Davie school

By **SCOTT FISHMAN**  
Staff Writer

A Davie student is hoping to raise awareness of the dangers of texting while driving.

Katie Cannon, a University School student, helped organize a "No Texting While Driving" assembly for Upper School students at Nova Southeastern University's Epstein Center for the Arts. The event featured a presentation by professional race car driver and driver education advocate Andy Pilgrim.

"I set up this program to raise awareness and let people know

how dangerous texting while driving can be," Cannon said. "I don't text at all. I have my phone in my bag when I'm driving. You are not only endangering yourself when you pick up your phone while driving, but you are endangering a child or another person. It's not OK. You can kill someone or cause them brain damage."

Marc Cannon, her father, is a senior vice president at AutoNation. He told her of a friend of the family in California who had to pull to the side of the road because of car trouble. A teenage driver was texting when she hit him, putting him in a coma.

Pilgrim founded the Andy Pilgrim Foundation to spread this safety message through appearances and educational DVDs. He produced "Driving Zone" as a tool in driver education and followed up with "Driving Zone 2" to delve into the dangers of distracted driving. Pilgrim showed clips from the DVD during the assembly, and each student received a copy the next day.

"Peer groups getting together to understand this stuff is great," Pilgrim said. "It's part of what we need. We need kids to understand

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it, parents to understand it, and the education to be good. We need all the pieces."

Following the assembly, students had the opportunity to sign a pledge to not text while driving. Cannon is looking into using the pledges in an art piece or showing them to a legislator, as well as possibly expanding her efforts to other schools.

Junior Meredith Adams took Pilgrim's words to heart.

"I was actually quite shocked at the stunning amount of people that are

killed from car accidents and are distracted by texting or looking down," she said. "I mean, you have a 1-in-150 chance of getting hit by another car. I will definitely not distract myself with my cell phone. I have been a little guilty of taking phone calls but don't text. This really made me think twice about it."

AutoNation sponsored the assembly, and Marc Cannon said he is proud of his daughter's efforts.

"It's critical to get this message across," he said. "... People are unnecessarily dy-

ing because people are texting and driving and not paying enough attention. In USA Today, there was an article that talks about how teen accidents are skyrocketing because there are so many distractions. So if we can educate these teenagers so they can take it home to their parents, it makes a huge difference."

For more information, visit [www.andypilgrimfoundation.org](http://www.andypilgrimfoundation.org).

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Professional race car driver and driver education advocate Andy Pilgrim speaks to University School students in Davie.

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