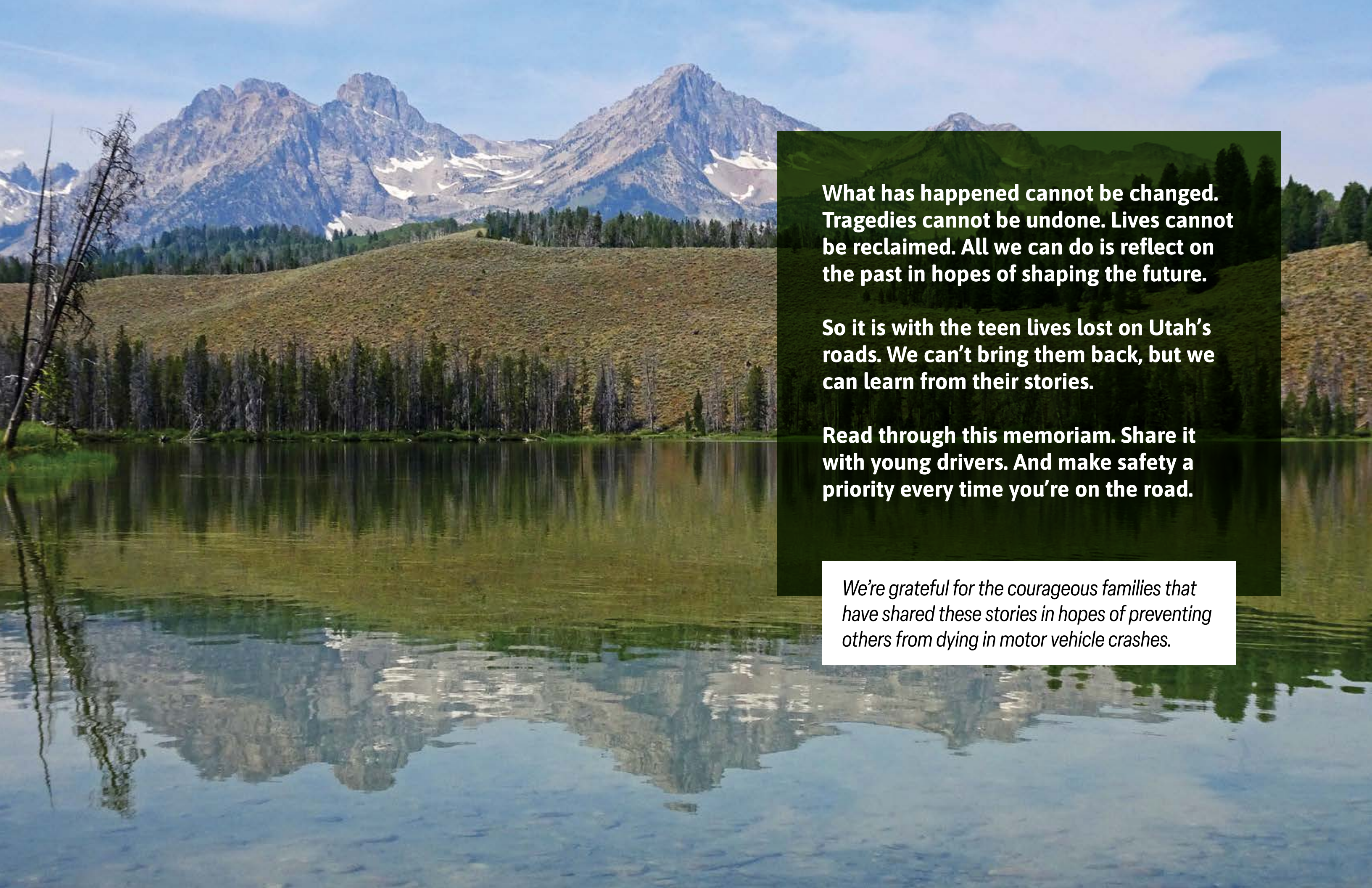




A Reflection of Lost Lives

Remembering the 38 teens lost on Utah roads

2023



What has happened cannot be changed. Tragedies cannot be undone. Lives cannot be reclaimed. All we can do is reflect on the past in hopes of shaping the future.

So it is with the teen lives lost on Utah's roads. We can't bring them back, but we can learn from their stories.

Read through this memoriam. Share it with young drivers. And make safety a priority every time you're on the road.

We're grateful for the courageous families that have shared these stories in hopes of preventing others from dying in motor vehicle crashes.

Ben Berry

18 | West Haven, UT

On the evening of June 26, 2023, our family was changed forever. As a recent graduate from Fremont High School, Ben had big plans. He was attending Ogden-Weber Technical College in the computer aided design program. Ben had turned 18 just three weeks prior and was starting his first full time job.

I had returned home from work and had some time to talk with Ben. We talked about his plans to save up for a new car and a new motorcycle, as he had just purchased his first motorcycle with money from his birthday on June 9. After talking with him, he wanted to go for a ride on his motorcycle. He gave us a hug and headed out the door.

About half an hour later, I heard the sound of emergency vehicles (and a lot of them) heading up the street near our house. I quickly grabbed my phone and looked at our family locator app to see that Ben had been stopped just about a quarter mile from our home. My wife drove me up to where Ben's phone had sent its last position.

I quickly saw Ben's motorcycle lying in a patch of grass over the curb and Ben lying in the road with paramedics working on him. Ben had just turned onto westbound Midland Drive from 1900 West in West Haven. As he got up to speed, a vehicle that was stopped on the shoulder of the road entered traffic and went across the active lane of traffic straight into the median. Ben was to the side of the vehicle when this happened. The driver struck Ben, ejecting him from his bike and sending him into oncoming traffic.

Ben was killed instantly from the impact. Even though good Samaritans and emergency personnel worked on Ben for over 45 minutes trying every life-saving procedure at their disposal, Ben was unable to be saved. His favorite quote in life was "Die with memories, not dreams," and he lived that every day.

Ben leaves behind four younger brothers, a bonus sister, and his parents (mom, dad, and bonus mom). We all love him and miss him every day. Ben was a very cautious and alert driver. This accident was a tragic mistake that could have easily been prevented if the driver of the other vehicle would have stopped to take a second look at her surroundings before entering traffic.





Analise Marie Nielsen

18 | Orderville, UT

Annie loved life so much. She enjoyed it with her sisters and friends; she was best friends with her whole class. She got along with everybody and loved them so much. Sometimes, she would cry because of how much she loved her friends. She loved to fish and catch crawfish with her sisters.

She just loved to be out living her life. She was a definite animal lover and loved all kinds of animals. She worked as a barista at the local rock stop here in town, and she could tell you every type of rock, fossil, and mineral that was inside that shop. She had plans to go to UVU in the fall of '23 with her best friend.

She gave so much love and shined so much light to those around her. Even for those who didn't know her, it's clear that she was loving and inviting; her smile just lit up the room. She would always tell you how proud she was of how you were doing. She wanted to let everyone know they were loved and that they were never alone.

Analise Marie Nielsen received her wings June 3, 2023. Early that morning, Analise was driving home from her boyfriend's house in St. George, Utah. I had asked her to be home for work in the morning. Around 1:13 a.m., Analise texted me saying she had made it to the Sands turn off, a local road we use to travel back and forth from Hwy 89 to St. George. I responded right back knowing where she texted from. It was about an hour and a half to get home.

Although we will never really know what actually happened early that morning, Analise went off the road and overcorrected the vehicle, which resulted in her rolling and being ejected from her car. While trying to reach Analise, knowing she should have been home by then, I received a call from the sheriff's office stating they had found our car but no one was in it. I told them my daughter was driving.

Analise's accident was 15 minutes away. I rushed to the scene. I was second on site. Upon my arrival I saw my daughter's car and pulled off the road to run to it. The officer on site then grabbed me and said she did not make it. Those words, which no parent wants to hear, crushed every part of me. The officer held me tight in his arms, as there was nothing more he could do but hold me.

The pain of losing a child is so unbearable, and the pain of her sisters losing a sibling has been so crushing to them. The loss of Analise has forever changed our lives. If we could leave any message for anyone, it would be this: Please buckle up, slow down, and think of your safety and the safety of others. If you are tired, pull over. Don't let anything rush how you drive. Let people pass. Always hug and say "I love you." Our lives are so precious; your family waits for you to come home safely. We will forever miss you, Annie.

Dylan Smith

18 | Bluffdale, UT

On April 26, 2023, we lost an amazing soul. Dylan Smith lost his life in a tragic motorcycle/car crash. Dylan was riding his bike southbound on Lindon State Street. A car turning left at a light did not see Dylan coming from ahead and began his left turn. By the time they saw each other, it was too late. The driver of the car walked away without a scratch. Unfortunately, Dylan died on impact when his bike hit the back-passenger door and he flew over the car. He was wearing a helmet, but it just wasn't enough as his chest hit the frame of the car.

Dylan was always the life of the party. He had a gift for knowing when someone was feeling down and always found a way to bring their spirits up, even those he didn't know. He would put on an inflatable dinosaur costume or jump off a balcony if that's what it took to make someone smile. Dylan loved camping, riding his four-wheeler, his motorcycle, and working on his various vehicles. He had the most beautiful single dimple, which only showed when he smiled.

With his goofball personality, that dimple, and his amazingly contagious laugh, he was always lighting up a room. Dylan never cared what anyone else thought — he did him, and there was never a dull moment when he was around. Dylan was a daredevil through and through. He never turned down a dare. Those close to him find some comfort in feeling that he lived years beyond those of an average 18-year-old because he was always in for an adventure and had experienced all life had to offer to him in his short 18 years on this earth.

Dylan's older brother, Dalton, who was also his best friend, had a bullet bike as well and they loved riding together. But as a parent, the fear of a traumatic event was never so obvious with his brother as it was with Dylan. Maybe it was his fearless, adventure-seeking personality, I will never know. Dylan's grandfather broke his neck in a motorcycle accident at the age of 25. His uncle lost his leg at the age of 24, also in a motorcycle accident. And in the end, Dylan lost his life. All these life-altering accidents have more in common than involving a motorcycle. They were not the fault of the biker and could have been avoided had the other driver been more aware of their surroundings.

As the survivors of such a tragic loss, we as Dylan's family want to take this opportunity to remind drivers to be aware of and watch for motorcyclists on the road. Bikes are smaller and therefore harder to see than a car/truck. They also have so much less protection, which means compared to a car, truck, or SUV, even a small crash can result in life-altering injuries, or in the worst cases, could take another amazing person like Dylan from their family way too soon.



Addie George Oldham

14 | Jensen, UT

On September 25, 2023, our lives forever changed. Addie was driving a Razor XP 1000 on a county road. The road was straight; there is no known reason why she abruptly left it. Her Razor cartwheeled two and a half times. I arrived on the scene about five minutes later. I ran up and saw my beautiful daughter laying there lifeless. I cannot tell you in words what a horrible feeling it is to know there is nothing you can do to save your child. Addie died instantly with severe head injuries and a broken neck. Watching my daughter leave the scene in an ambulance with no lights and sirens was devastating.

If she had been wearing her seat belt, she might still be here.

Addie loved hanging out with her older sisters. She liked riding her horse with her dad and her sister, Arlie. She liked playing her Xbox, and she loved riding motorcycles with all her sisters: Abby, Arlie, and Albie (she started riding a dirt bike with training wheels when she was three years old). The day before Addie's accident, she was at her sister's gender reveal party. She was so excited she was going to be an aunt.

Addie was a good friend and a very loving sister. She brought so much joy to our family. Everything is different since the loss of her. It has had a great impact on all our lives. We all love and miss her so much. She will always be "Our Sunshine."



Ciarra Kuhr

18 | Roosevelt, UT

On September 12, 2023, we received a knock on the door at 3:30 a.m. and received the worst news any parents could ever hear: "She didn't make it." Our lives, along with the lives of many others that loved Ciarra, were forever changed from that moment in time.

At 1:00, Ciarra headed to work on her bullet bike. Six minutes into her ride, she attempted to go around a corner. Something in that corner stopped her from completing it. Her bike was laid over and it hit the curb. Ciarra was thrown off her bike into a tree, hitting her head. She was wearing a helmet, but the impact was too great for the helmet to save her. We were told the impact took her life instantly.

Many parents say this about their children, but Ciarra was a true light. She had a pure soul and truly loved life. She was adventurous and good at including everybody. When she walked into a room, everyone knew she was there. She loved so many people and made sure to show people she cared for them. She loved going places and was always the first one in the car ready to go. Ciarra rode her entire life. She started on a four-wheeler of her own at the age of 4 and moved on to a dirt bike at the age of 12.

Ciarra had so many plans for her life and was going to accomplish so many things. She wasn't done living, and we, as her family, are truly broken by the fact that we won't get to see her do all those things. Losing her at the young age of 18, when her life was just starting, is heartbreaking.

The message we have as Ciarra's family is this: Ciarra was a phenomenal rider (she even desert raced her dirt bike). However, when it comes to motorcycles on the road, it doesn't matter how good of a rider you are. There are so many other variables that come into effect when riding a motorcycle. Your situation can change within seconds, and you aren't protected from the metal of a car or truck. You aren't invincible; it could very well happen to you too, just as it did to Ciarra and all of us who continue to grieve her. If you insist on riding a motorcycle, always wear proper gear and abide by the laws. If you don't ride, always look twice for a possible biker as they are harder to see.

Ciarra was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and we lost her because of it. We love and miss her very much and our world lost color without her here. It's we who are left behind that suffer every day, trying to navigate our lives after such a tragic loss. Ciarra leaves behind a big, beautiful, blended family of four parents, three siblings, and many grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. We will miss her until it is our time to be with her again.

All our love,
Ciarra's Family



Erik Aildredge

15 | Richfield, UT

On May 2, 2023, my son, Erik, asked to go hang out with two of his friends. He loved to be outdoors. Whether he was riding in the mountains, four-wheeling, or camping, he was all for it. He and his friends went on a ride up the water tower road in Richfield. On the way down, they had a 14-year-old drive so he and the other friend could drink. Erik decided to hang out the sunroof of the car and they were driving too fast. As they came around the turn, the driver hit a rock and the car flipped, pinning Erik underneath and suffocating him, resulting in him losing his life.

He is truly missed by his family especially his younger brother. Every holiday and birthday are especially hard because he is not here to celebrate with us. I hope this story will help teenagers realize how important it is to be responsible when hanging out with friends and use common sense.





SoRaya Manakaja

16 | Tremonton, UT

I once read that the name SoRaya means to stir curiosity and inspire discovery under the stars. That was our SoRaya in every way. She was endlessly curious, brimming with adventure, and had a spirit that was as wild and free as the wind. She was always eager to embrace something new, her fearlessness matched only by her deep love for those around her. She had this incredible ability to put others first, especially her three younger sisters, who adored her with all their hearts. SoRaya had a gift for making people smile—she'd tease and joke just to hear their laughter. She could strike up a conversation with anyone, her confidence and warmth evident in every word.

Our SoRaya was a beautiful paradox, a radiant blend of so many contrasting traits. She was truly one of a kind, our shining sunshine.

We had just returned from a family camping trip over Labor Day weekend and were unloading the car together. I found SoRaya inside, putting on makeup, and reminded her that school was the next day. She simply smiled and said she knew, but she wasn't going anywhere.

Around 4:30 that morning, I woke with a heavy feeling in my spirit. I walked around her room, but she wasn't there. I went downstairs and remembered hearing sirens in the distance. As I folded my husband's clothes, I felt a strange sense of disorientation and went back to bed.

The next thing I knew, there was a pounding on our front door. As the police began to speak with my husband, telling him that his wife had died in an accident, I came downstairs. In the midst of the confusion, we realized that my AirPods—something SoRaya had been using—had led to the identification. Our world was torn apart. SoRaya had been riding her bike on the sidewalk when she was struck by a garbage truck. The truck was pulling out from a business during its regular collection route. She collided with the passenger side of the truck and was pulled underneath. She died instantly.

I want to share something important from our heartache to help others. Please, always be aware of your surroundings. Our SoRaya was wearing AirPods when she was riding her bike, and she didn't hear the garbage truck coming. If she had been more aware of her environment, perhaps this tragedy could have been avoided. It's so easy to get lost in music or distractions, but being alert and present can make all the difference. We hope that by sharing this, others can stay safe and avoid a similar heartbreak.

I find solace in imagining her breathing deep in the fresh mountain air of Montana, but that does little to ease the ache of her absence. Her smile no longer lights up the room. Our sunshine is gone, and our hearts are broken. We miss her every single day.



Gideon Fudim

16 | Spanish Fork, UT

Gideon Fudim passed away unexpectedly on March 18, 2023, at the age of 16. Gideon died as a result of a fatal head injury sustained after being ejected from the truck he was a passenger in. The driver lost control while speeding in excess of 100 miles per hour.

Born to us, Heidi and Jonathan, on November 12, 2006, Gideon has three older brothers and two older sisters. He was truly the baby of the family. He was everyone's favorite sibling and the favorite uncle to his four nieces and nephews.

If Gideon was around, we were laughing. He brought joy to everyone. Some of Gideon's favorite activities were baseball, learning to play guitar, playing video games, and hanging out with his family and friends. Family game nights after Sunday dinner were epic! So much laughter, joy and memories that still makes us smile, even through the tears.

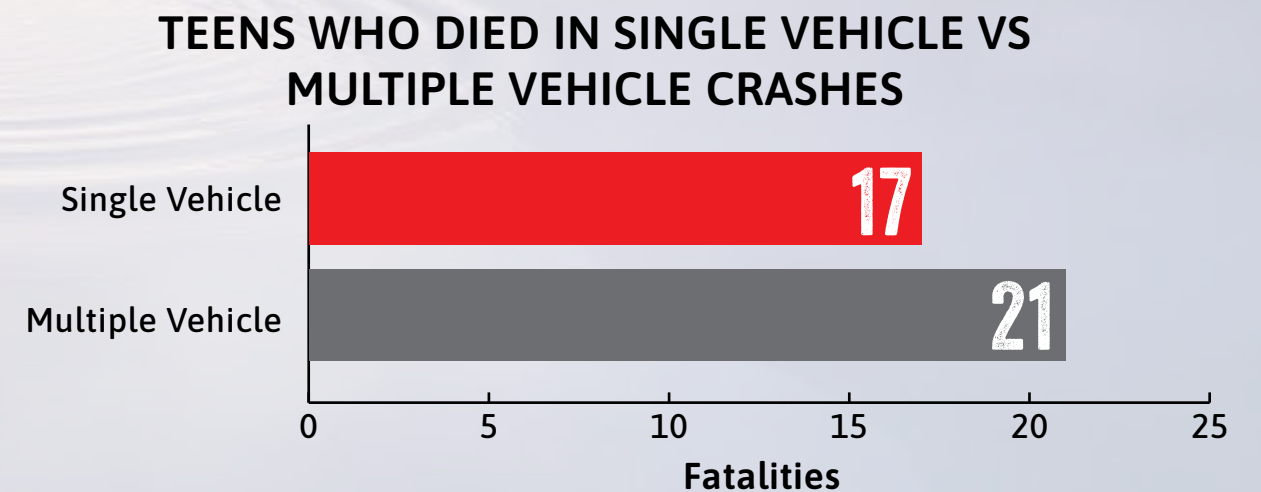
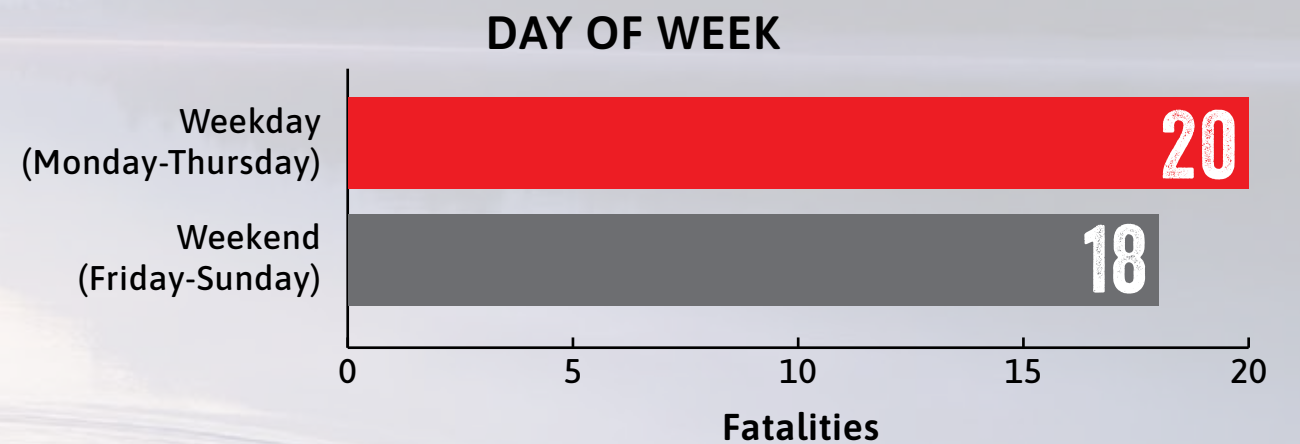
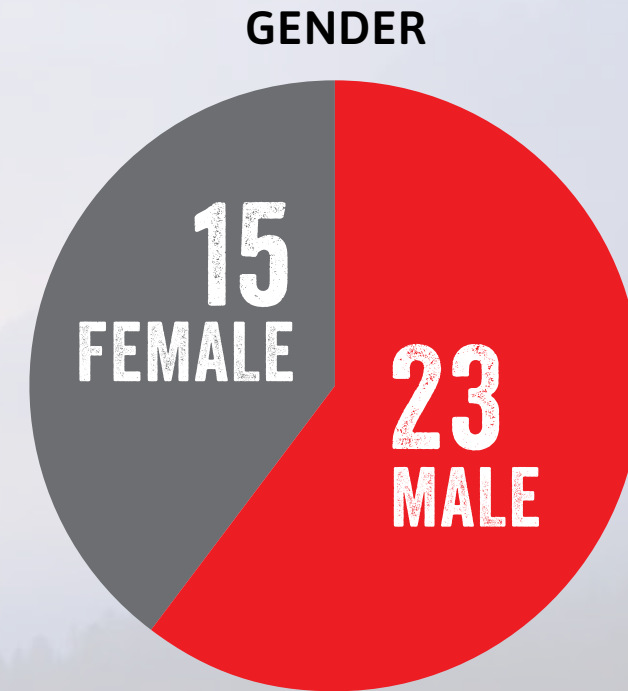
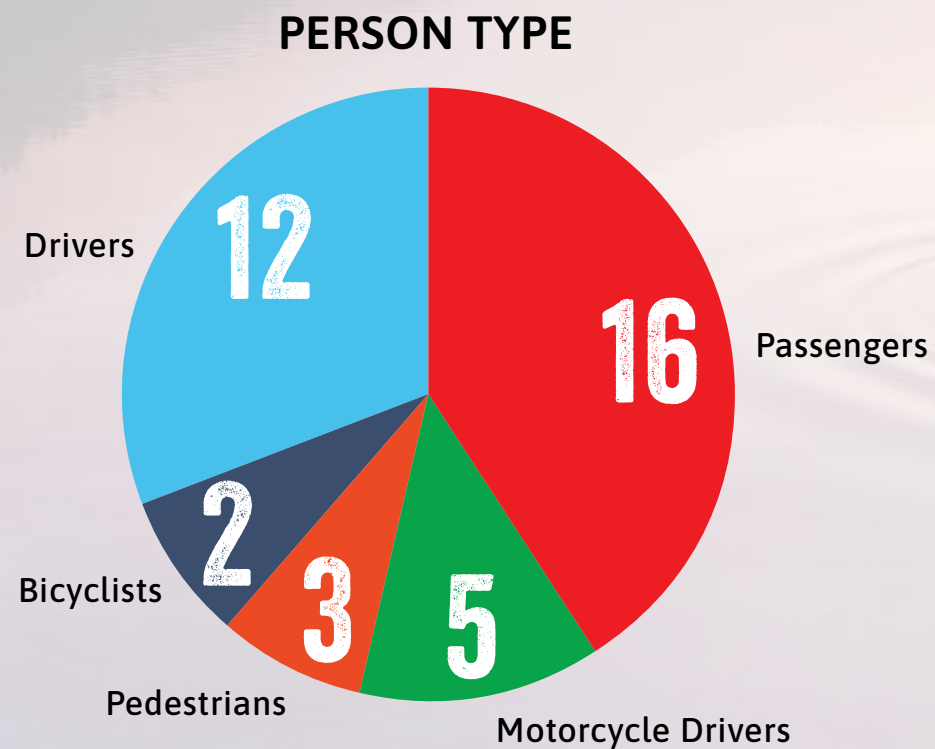
Our family was not expecting the loss of Gideon or for his life to be cut so short so soon. We are devastated by this loss and will feel his absence forever. He was the funniest and most loving soul and a joy to be around. He will be forever missed.

As a family, we want to remind everyone to wear their seat belts. Please slow down. Life is fragile. Hug your loved ones, and always tell them that you love them.

2023 UTAH TEEN CRASH STATISTICS

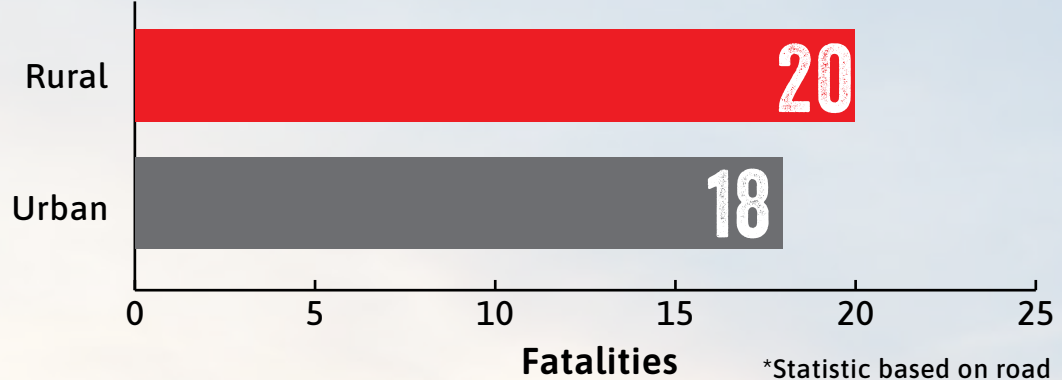
38 TEENS LOST THEIR LIVES ON UTAH ROADS

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

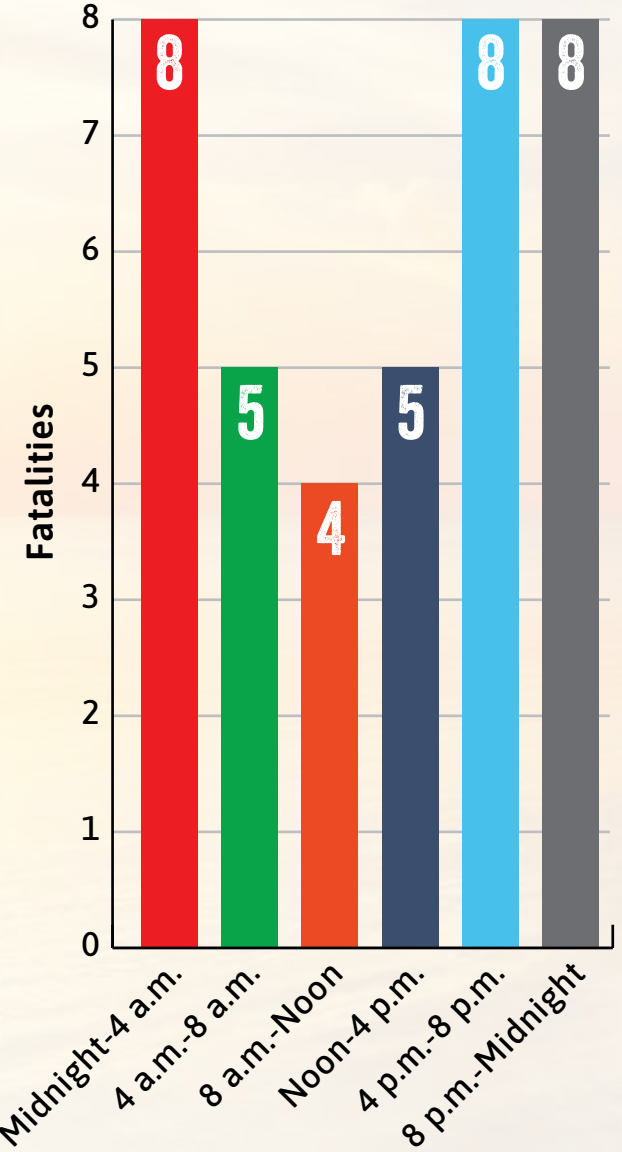


2023 UTAH TEEN MOTOR VEHICLE FATALITIES

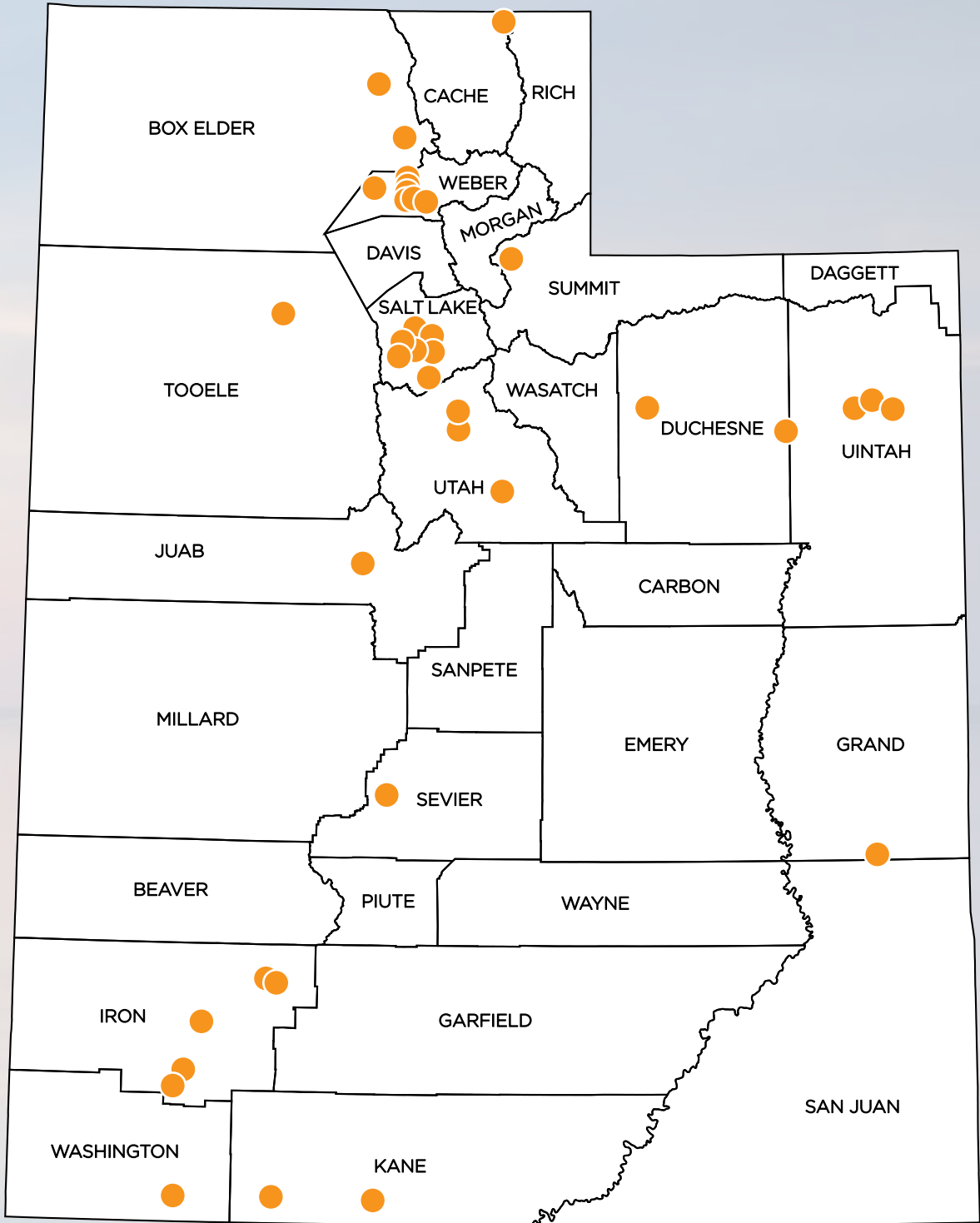
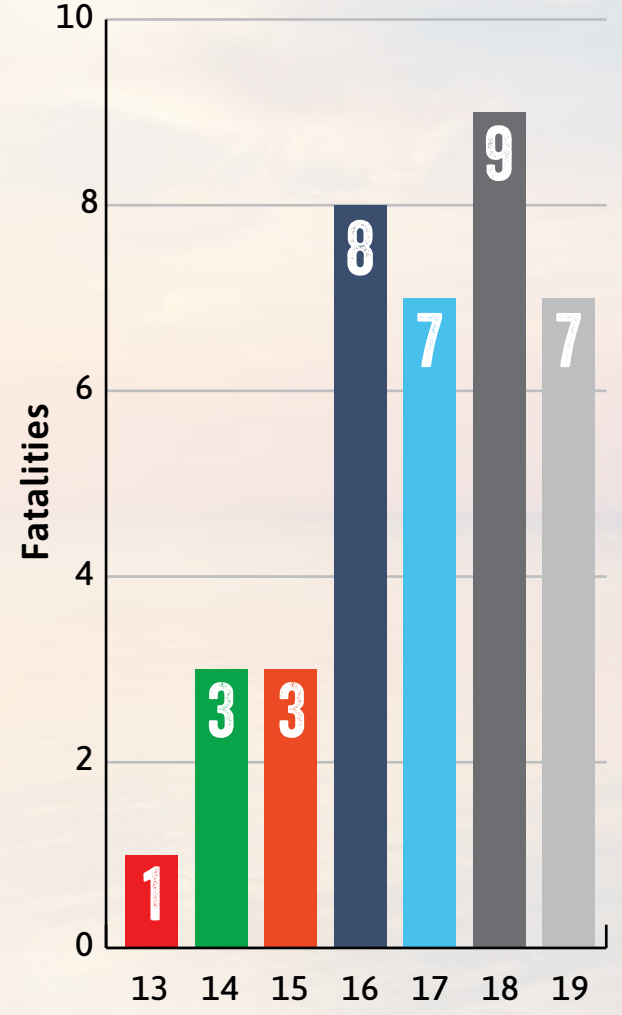
RURAL VS URBAN ROADS*



TIME OF DAY



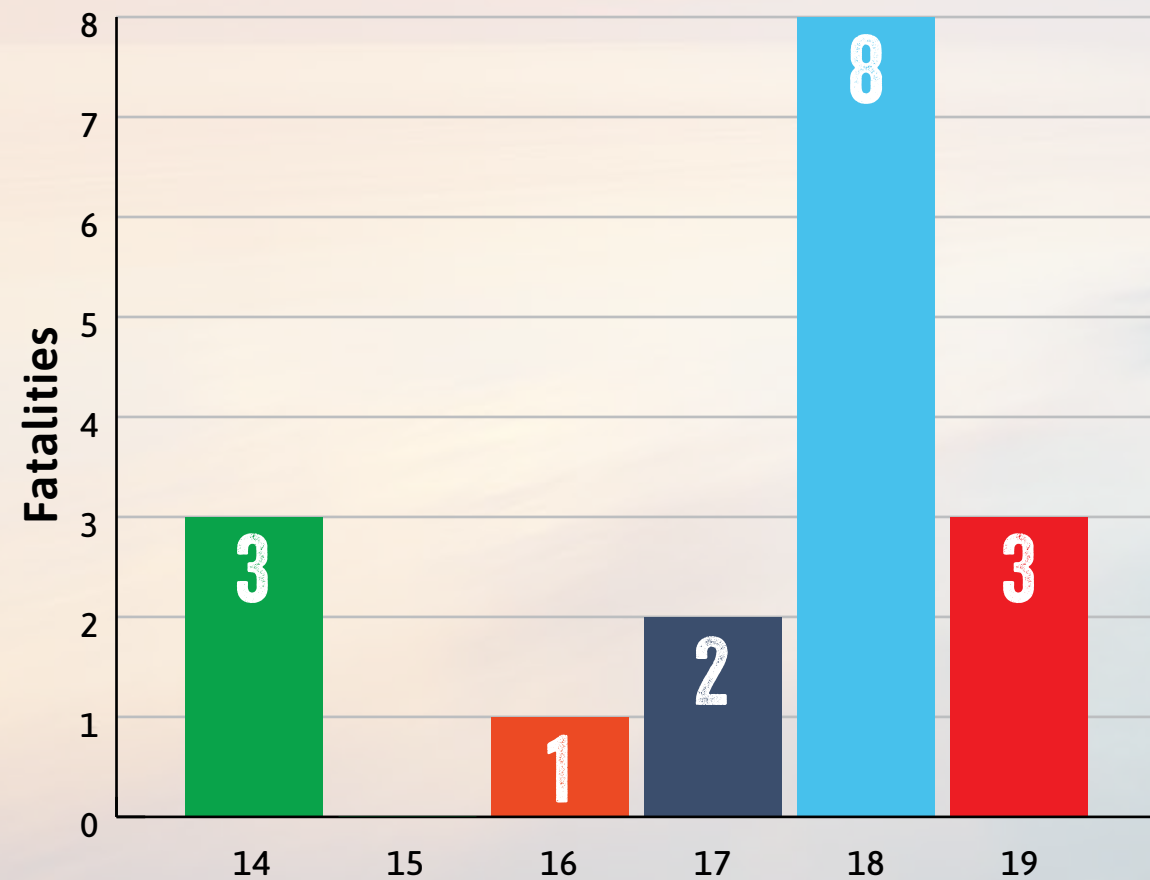
AGE



2023 TEEN DRIVER CRASH STATISTICS

In 2023, 33 teen drivers were involved in a fatal crash; a total of 38 people were killed in these crashes, including 17 of the 33 teen drivers.

AGE OF TEEN DRIVER



ZERO Fatalities®

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS*



Drug-related crashes and fatalities include the number of crashes resulting from one or more drivers who had a positive drug test. Drug presence does not necessarily imply impairment. For many drug types, drug presence can be detected long after any impairment that might affect driving has passed.

*Each crash can have more than one contributing factor

ZERO Fatalities®

USE THIS BOOK TO SAVE LIVES

For the past 16 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



2018-2020



2021



2022

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

A Goal We Can All Live With

A UDOT and DPS Program