

TEAM Georgia

Una Coalición para la Conducción Automovilística Segura y Sobria

For Immediate Release

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PHOTO OPP: photos of victim

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Tips and Taxis for Celebrating Responsibly:

TEAM Georgia Launches 2011 Safe Holiday and Tow to Go Campaign

In the spirit of celebrating safely this season, TEAM Georgia, a safe and sober transportation coalition and partner of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, will launch its 2011 Safe Holiday Campaign on Thurs., Dec. 1 with a public education message and keynote address by a victim of impaired driving.

TEAM Georgia's 2011 Safe Holiday Guide will reach thousands of Georgia businesses and private hosts with safe celebration suggestions and legal reminders for partygoers. TEAM Georgia, which has put particular emphasis on outreach to Atlanta's burgeoning Latino community through a grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, will make all of its Safe Holiday materials available in Spanish.

To underscore the tragic mix of drinking and driving, Mrs. Joél Samuels-Esson will deliver the keynote address about losing her husband, Christopher Jermone Esson, who was killed by a drunk driver while traveling from New York back home to Georgia.

Details of the TEAM Georgia 2011 Safe Holiday launch event follow:

WHO: Speeches by Mrs. Joél Samuels-Esson, a victim of impaired driving and prominent speaker for MADD, and Harris Blackwood, Director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

WHAT: Launch of the TEAM Georgia 2011 Safe Holiday Campaign.

WHERE: Smyrna Community Center, 2800 King Street, Smyrna, GA 30080

WHEN: 12 noon luncheon, followed by press conference at 1:15 p.m.

WHY: The Georgia State Patrol reports increasing numbers of DUI arrests in recent years, with 14,629 arrests made in 2009, up from 11,812 in 2008 and 1,278 in 2007. Crashes involving impaired driving are six times more likely to be fatal than those that do not involve alcohol and other drugs, according to GOHS, which says that one out of three fatal crashes in Georgia over the last decade involved impaired drivers.

Sponsored by Budweiser, AAA Auto Club South, Checker Cab, WXIA 11 Alive and WSB Radio and supported by the Georgia Restaurant Association, the TEAM Georgia Safe Holiday program provides partygoers with tips to celebrate safely as well as a free ride home this holiday season. Area bars and restaurants will join the campaign by displaying Safe Holiday information, offering a free non-alcoholic drink to designated drivers and training wait staff to advise intoxicated patrons of the free ride home from Checker Cab and the Budweiser/AAA "Tow to Go" service.

TEAM Georgia is a nonprofit organization comprised of concerned businesses, individual supporters and public safety officials. For more information on the Safe Holiday Campaign, contact TEAM Georgia at 404-261-6053 or visit www.teamgeorgia.net

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