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## Mothers and law enforcement team up to 'Tie One On for Safety'

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By Linda Ann Chomin

CORRESPONDENT

Marie Cosenza pushes a box of red ribbons into the hands of a Westland police officer at the kick-off Friday of the Tie One On for Safety campaign at Westland Shopping Center.

The Mothers Against Drunk Driving volunteer is determined to stop another person from dying in an alcohol-related crash. MADD is encouraging drivers to tie a red ribbon on their vehicle as a reminder not to drink and drive.

Earlier tears filled her eyes as Cosenza recalled the night her son, Anthony, was killed 2<sup>nd</sup> year ago. Anthony, 20, was leaving his job in Livonia at 12:30 a.m. when hit by a 16-year-old drunken driver.

Tony, as the youngest of her five sons was affectionately known, had just become a father.

"It was devastating. I miss him every day. I miss his 'I love you' and his calls for mom's recipes," said Cosenza. "I started volunteering three-four months after because I personally needed to do something."

Ally Wilmot still has visions of the 400 people who attended Tony's funeral and the mile and a half procession. Wilmot became friends with Tony after he attended an alternative high school in Garden City. Like Cosenza, Wilmot became a MADD volunteer after Tony was killed. She knows firsthand that many people drink and drive. Her mother was arrested several times for driving under the influence.

"I don't want to lose any more people," said Wilmot of Westland. "I even posted it on my Facebook page. If you need me, if you've been drinking and need a ride, call. It's important to be there for your friends."

Janette Kolodge is hoping that MADD's new state office in Troy will serve as an "open house" to anyone interested in volunteering to help stop

drinking and driving. Drunken drivers killed nearly 11,000 men, women and children last year in America, nearly 300 in Michigan.

"We've added a Designated Driver link to our website, www.MADD.org," said Kolodge, executive director, MADD Michigan.

"You can print off a voucher and give to your families and loved ones to say you will be their designated driver."

Cheryl and Lorenzo Houston never imagined that a drunken driver would kill their son, Havens. The couple spoke about Havens at the MADD event along with representatives of the nonprofit organization and officials including Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano and Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard.

Havens died Feb. 26, 2005, at age 20 when he stopped to help a woman injured in a crash and was hit by a drunken driver. For the last three years, the Houstons estimate they have spoken to more than 20,000 offenders during court-ordered Victims Panels in the area, even though as Cheryl said, "It hurts to tell the story every time."

### HEALING PROCESS

"This is my healing process," said Cheryl Houston. "I love speaking of my son. We never expected this. We expected him to grow up to be a responsible citizen, expected him to be a father."

Law enforcement is stepping up patrols during the

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holiday. On average in Michigan, 125 people are arrested every day.


Michigan State Police Capt. Monica Yesh, commander of Traffic Safety, said officers would rather make an arrest than a death notification.

"If you drink, don't drive," Yesh warned. "To have one or two, it does impair judgment."

For more information, call MADD at (248) 528-1745, for 24-hour victim assistance (800) 323-6233.




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