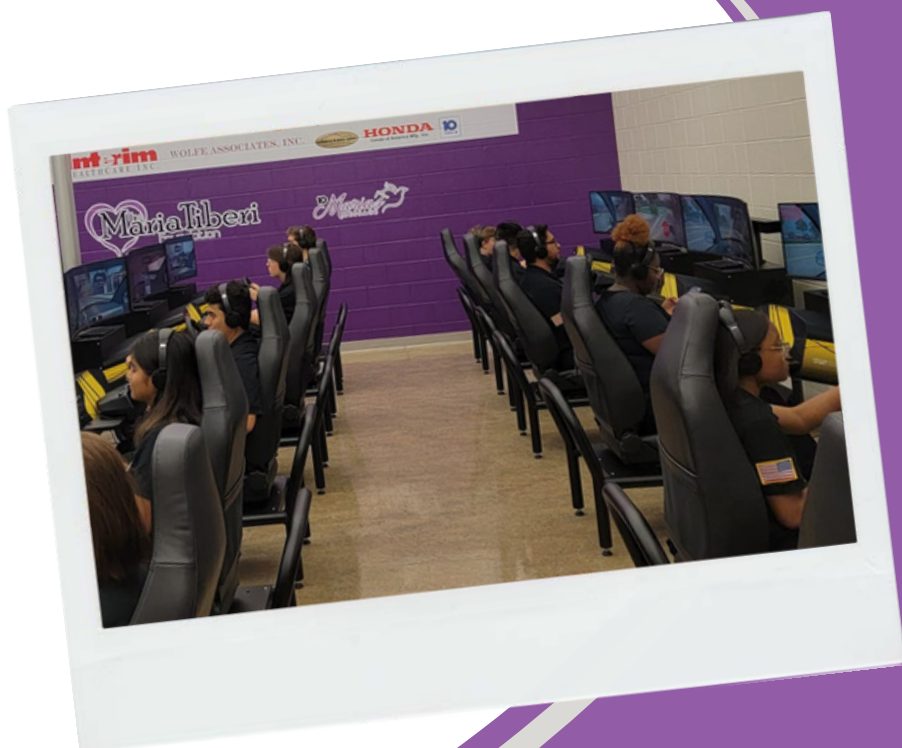


# The Maria Tiberi Foundation

## CASE FOR SUPPORT

2023



# Maria's Story

On September 17, 2013, in the early hours of the morning, Dom and Terri Tiberi awoke to a parent's worst nightmare. Police officers were at their door with heartbreaking news: their 21-year-old daughter Maria had been in a horrible car accident. She didn't make it.

Maria Tiberi was a kindhearted, free-spirited young woman. A senior Graphic Design major at OSU, she loved life and lived it to the fullest. She brought light and joy everywhere she went.

In the months that followed, Dom and Terri struggled to make sense of Maria's death. An investigation revealed that at the time of the accident, Maria's phone was not in use and no drugs or alcohol were in her system. **An unknown distraction** had caused her to hit a semi-truck at 53 miles per hour.

Sadly, Maria's story is not unique. **In 2020:**



**NEARLY  
41,000**  
WERE KILLED IN MOTOR  
VEHICLE CRASHES IN THE U.S.<sup>1</sup>



**+ AN ADDITIONAL  
2.1 MILLION**  
WERE INJURED<sup>1</sup>



**IN OHIO ALONE,  
THERE WERE  
1,230**  
TRAFFIC DEATHS<sup>2</sup>

These deaths are tragic, and above all, **they are preventable.**

Determined that no other families should have to suffer this grief, Dom and Terri created the Maria Tiberi Foundation. In her memory, the Foundation educates new drivers about the dangerous distractions they will encounter on the road, so that they can actively **prevent accidents and save lives.**



*"Every statistic has a family. Every statistic has a mom and dad, brother and sister, grandparents who are missing that person. This is personal for me. It has become my mission. We must change the culture."*

—Dom Tiberi

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>2</sup> Ohio State Highway Patrol

# The Epidemic of Distracted Driving

Drivers face three types of distractions:



**VISUAL:** anything that takes your eyes off the road

**MANUAL:** anything that takes your hands off the wheel

**COGNITIVE:** anything that takes your mind off driving

Eating or drinking. Setting directions in a navigation system. Placing a phone call. Sending a text message. Putting on make-up. Or even just interacting with passengers. All these distractions have the potential to cause a life-altering crash.

**Everyone who travels on our roadways is at risk of becoming involved in a distracted driving accident.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):



*Motor vehicle crashes are a **leading cause of death in the U.S.***

**110** *More than 110 people are killed every day in*  
**DAILY** *motor vehicle crashes.*

**\$430** *Deaths from crashes in 2020 resulted in \$430*  
**BILLION** *billion dollars in medical costs and cost estimates for lives lost—*

*—and that figure does not account for the **incalculable emotional cost** to families, friends, and communities.*

**However, the danger is much higher for inexperienced young drivers.**

*Motor vehicle crashes are the*  
**#1 LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG TEENAGERS**

**FATAL CRASH RATE 16-19**

*Drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 have a **fatal crash rate nearly 3 times as high** as older drivers per mile driven.*

**39%**

*of high school drivers said they have **texted or emailed while driving** at least once in the past 30 days.*

Distracted driving is an epidemic that is taking the lives of our children. The Maria Tiberi Foundation is teaching them the value of driving distraction-free and cultivating the skills that will keep them safe.

## An Underreported Issue

*In 2019, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that there were*

**3,142 & 424,000**  
**PEOPLE KILLED & AN ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL PEOPLE INJURED**  
*in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.*

But these numbers do not tell the whole story. The NHTSA points out several problems with this data:

- ⚠️ **Police crash reports vary across jurisdictions.** Not all crash reports account for distractions or define distractions in the same way.
- ⚠️ **Drivers might not tell authorities the whole truth.** A driver who is involved in a crash is unlikely to admit that they were engaged in a negative behavior like texting while driving.
- ⚠️ **In cases like Maria's, we might never learn the whole story.** If a driver fatality occurs, police often don't have enough information to confirm that a distraction caused the accident.

These factors cause distracted driving to go underreported. But we cannot underestimate the importance of educating young people so they can avoid distracted driving accidents.

# Bringing Driving Simulators to Ohio Schools

The Maria Tiberi Foundation makes it easy for central Ohio teenagers to practice vital driving skills by **creating simulator labs in local schools**. Driving simulator labs...

So far, the Foundation has established simulator labs at Eastland-Fairfield Career Center, Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center, and Tolles Career & Technical Center.



teach students the consequences of distracted driving without risk to themselves and others.



provide a stress-free environment for new drivers to practice.



allow many students to complete hours of training modules simultaneously.



These schools are ideal locations for the Foundation's simulator labs. They serve students from districts throughout central Ohio who drive longer distances to school, putting them at greater risk for accidents. And their relationships with surrounding districts make it easy to coordinate field trips for students from other high schools to use the simulator labs and complete the training modules.

When a school establishes a Maria Tiberi Foundation simulator lab, the administration makes a **life-saving commitment: all their students must complete the simulator training in order to graduate.**

## **VDI** *Virtual Driver Interactive*

The Maria Tiberi Foundation is committed to establishing state-of-the-art simulator labs throughout the state of Ohio. That's why **we are proud to use simulators and software from Virtual Driver Interactive.**

Virtual Driver Interactive creates innovative driver training simulations using cutting-edge Virtual Reality (VR) technology. Their products offer comprehensive training for new teen drivers—all while focusing on the dangers of distracted driving. Students who use the Foundation's simulator labs complete two modules: Virtual Driving Essentials™ and One Simple Decision®.

**One Simple Decision®** is the world's first simulation-based impaired & distracted driving program designed to prevent destructive driving behaviors among teens and young adults. The program consists of simulation drives, first-person consequence videos, interactive quizzes, and advice from experts.

**Virtual Driving Essentials™ (VDE)** is an immersive learning experience designed to guide teen drivers through critical driving skills. VDE includes nearly 50 miles of drivable area—including all types of roads, weather conditions, traffic patterns, and pedestrian interactions.



*"Our students are eager for the independence and opportunities that come with driving. The Maria Tiberi Foundation simulator lab builds skills that will keep them safe as they commute to school and internships."*



—Dr. Todd Hoadley,  
Superintendent of Tolles  
Career & Technical Center

# The State of Driver's Education in Ohio

Inexperienced drivers need guidance to recognize dangerous situations and keep their attention on the road. In Ohio, minors must fulfill the following requirements to earn their license:



These requirements cost money and take time and resources that many high schoolers and their families simply do not have. However, **drivers 18 years old and older do not have to fulfill these requirements** if they can pass the road, maneuverability, and knowledge tests. Many teenagers opt to forgo classroom and in-car lesson requirements and wait until they turn 18 to get their license.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety issues about 90,000 teen driver training certificates per year. But the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles issued 140,569 licenses to drivers aged 16, 17, and 18 in 2021.

*That means that an estimated*  
**50,000**  
**YOUNG DRIVERS**  
*hit the road without completing driver's education in 2021.*

That is why the Maria Tiberi Foundation is bringing innovative driver training into Ohio classrooms: **for some students, it may be the only driver training they receive.**

## Preparing Young Drivers For the Road Ahead

In 2023, the Maria Tiberi Foundation is expanding its reach. **We are raising funds to establish up to five more simulator labs in Ohio schools.** Target locations include:

-  South-Western City Schools
-  Pickaway County
-  Delaware County
-  Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Columbus
-  Licking County

It costs **\$350,000 to establish a simulator lab**, which includes 25 simulators, technology infrastructure, and a central computer for data collection and teacher oversight. The Maria Tiberi Foundation seeks funding to make this vision a reality. **Your generous support will prevent accidents, protect everyone on our roads, and most importantly save lives.**

# Creating a Culture of Safety

## Legislation for Safer Driving Practices

Driven by the Foundation's mission to ensure all kids receive distracted driver training, the Maria Tiberi Foundation successfully advocated for legislation that will reduce distracted driving.

On January 3, 2023, Gov. Mike DeWine signed Senate Bill 288, which makes distracted driving a primary offense in Ohio. Now, people can be stopped by police solely for holding or using a cellphone while driving.

As a member of the Ohio Traffic Safety Council, Dom Tiberi, Maria's father, was instrumental in getting the bill passed. Unfortunately, Gov. DeWine knows Dom's grief all too well: he lost his daughter Becky to a car accident in 1993.

This kind of legislation works. States with primary hands-free laws have seen reductions in traffic deaths. According to the NHTSA, **of the 14 states that enacted these laws before 2018, 11 saw a decrease in their traffic fatality rates** within two years after passing and enforcing new laws.

By educating young drivers and enforcing distraction-free driving on our roads, **the Maria Tiberi Foundation is paving the way for a safer future for all Ohio drivers.**



“

*“Your teachers and parents tell you to be aware on the road, but when you're just learning to drive, you don't always know what to be aware of. The simulations put you in situations where you learn to recognize dangers you'll find in the real world.”*

”

—Nathan, Driving Simulator Student

The Maria Tiberi Foundation's innovative model will change the way Ohio approaches driver's education. By establishing permanent simulator labs directly in schools, **we are creating a culture of distraction-free driving.**

It starts with the hearts and minds of our youth. That's why the Maria Tiberi Foundation is motivating them to drive distraction-free and equipping them with lifesaving driving skills.

With the collective support of donors, Ohio will become the gold standard for distracted driving education and prevention, and a model that will inspire the rest of the country.

## TOGETHER, WE WILL SAVE LIVES.