



**State Farm®
National Teen Driver Safety Week
Billy Long's Story**

On Dec. 23, 2005, best friends Billy Long and Tyler Ford were driving to Oklahoma City to finish Christmas shopping. While driving at a high rate of speed, Billy lost control of his car and crossed the center median, hitting an SUV in a head-on collision. Both boys were ejected more than 50 feet from the vehicle. Tyler was killed instantly upon impact and Billy was critically injured. They were 17 years old.



Childhood best friends, Tyler Ford, left, and Billy Long

After his vehicle crash, Billy was compelled to share his story with his classmates and community, urging them to make safer driving decisions. Billy approached his teacher, Krystal Joplin, about educating teens on the dangers of speeding and reckless driving. Through Project Ignition, a national service-learning program sponsored by State Farm and coordinated by the National Youth Leadership Council, Billy and his peers have shared their safe driving messages with more than 300 Oklahoma towns, represented by 129 high schools.

Billy is now 19 years old and is spreading his safe driving message across the nation during the first-ever National Teen Driver Safety Week, Oct. 15-19. He is participating in State Farm's student-led youth summit on Capitol Hill to extend the dialogue beyond drunk driving and help bring attention to other driving distractions and dangerous behaviors. At the summit, Billy will work with students from nearly all 50 states to address graduated driver licensing laws, best driving practices and solutions for reducing distracted driving.

Not a single day goes by that Billy doesn't think about Tyler and the crash. By sharing his story, he's hoping to help teens make safer driving decisions and save lives.

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