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10/15/08

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### UD Extension Staff Take Driving Under the Influence Workshop

On Oct. 13, the parking lot of the University of Delaware's Carvel Research and Education Center, in Georgetown, was filled with swerving vehicles and employees walking a sobriety line. Mike Love, a UD Cooperative Extension agent, and Merritt Burke, community traffic safety program coordinator, had invited their co-workers to try out a SIDNE® Go Kart and wear Fatal Vision Goggles, which simulate various levels of impairment that might be felt while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

"We wanted our colleagues to experience the anti-drinking and driving program tools and expose them to the community outreach we are doing," Burke said. Burke feels that the program's outreach extends beyond teenagers and young adults, and that every person in Delaware has a stake in reducing alcohol-related injuries and fatalities.

Roseann Ferri, a secretary at extension was first to volunteer as an impaired driver. Ferri drove the SIDNE and then, with impaired goggles, tried to shoot hoops with a child's basketball set. She failed miserably. "I felt so disoriented," Ferri said, "I kept seeing double." Ferri said driving the SIDNE emphasized the responsibility a driver has not to put their passengers at risk.

Marvin Duffy, a technology staff member at Carvel first drove SIDNE sober, then impaired. Later, after naturally passing the 'heel-to-toe' sobriety test, Duffy struggled with waving arms to keep his balance in check once he donned the goggles.

Carvel Center director Mark Isaacs also participated in the exercise. He tried to navigate corners in an adult-sized tricycle and tried not to collide the SIDNE into course cones. "This is a great opportunity for Carvel's staff to see and experience the tools that are used to educate youth and adults about impaired driving and the risks associated with driving under the influence," noted Isaacs.

Isaacs felt it was a great opportunity for Carvel's staff to see and experience the tools that are used to educate youth and adults about impaired driving and the risks associated with driving under the influence.

He credits extensions safety team for the vital role they play in directing attention to so many common safety risks. "We have been extremely lucky to have staff like Ron Jester, Mike, and our new addition of Merritt to focus on agrability, workplace safety, highway and traffic safety, and homeowner safety." Isaacs said. It takes a "special" person to motivate youth and adults about safety issues, and we certainly have such a talented team that does exactly that!

For more information about Cooperative Extension's safety programs and initiatives in Kent and Sussex County, or to request Fatal Vision technology demonstration at your school, business or organization, please contact Merritt Burke via e-mail at [merritt@udel.edu] or by calling the Sussex County Extension Office at (302) 856-7303.

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