

SAFER OHIO

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“So then that’s
when my life
changed.”



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The Hoeflinger Family

Redefining happiness and finding a new normal

“One in five teenagers drink and one in 100 parents think their teenager drinks,” said Dr. Brian Hoeflinger, an Ottawa Hills neurosurgeon. “We were one of those parents.” They admit they were naive; they did not know.

In February 2013, Dr. Hoeflinger and his wife Cindy, who is a retired forensic pathologist, should have been celebrating their 18-year-old son Brian’s acceptance letter to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Instead, they were picking out the clothes in which their son would be buried and the photos they would display at his funeral. Instead, Dr. and Mrs. Hoeflinger listened to hundreds of mourners each share a story about how Brian made them feel special.

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The Hoeflinger family was awakened by three of Brian’s friends knocking at their door in the early hours of February 2, 2013. They were looking for Brian. The last time the Hoeflingers saw Brian was at the high school basketball game, just hours before.

They frantically began texting and calling Brian, getting no response. Then, a family friend called and told Mrs. Hoeflinger there had been a crash and Dr. Hoeflinger needed to call the hospital.

“You knew something was desperately, desperately wrong,” Mrs. Hoeflinger recalled while wiping tears from her eyes.

Dr. Hoeflinger called the Level III trauma center near their house. If Brian had a broken leg, he would go there. The hospital staff told Dr. Hoeflinger Brian had been there, but was transported to Toledo Hospital, a Level I trauma center where Dr. Hoeflinger also worked. That’s all they would say.

“So then that’s when my life changed,” Dr. Hoeflinger said, fighting back tears. “Because I knew if he went to Toledo Hospital that it was life threatening.”

The staff at Toledo Hospital would only tell Dr. Hoeflinger that he needed to come to the Emergency Room, but don’t rush. He knew what that meant. “I said, ‘He’s gone Cindy.’”

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The day before Brian’s crash had been a normal day – work, school, appointments, planning dinner, and their son Kevin’s junior varsity basketball game.

Brian was also making plans, which included the game and going to a friend’s house to celebrate a birthday. His plans also led him and his friends to Foxx Liquor Store in Toledo to buy vodka for later that night.

At the game, the Hoeflingers could see Brian from their seats. They say they remember thinking Brian looked happy. It was the last time the Hoeflingers saw him alive.

At the party, Brian drank vodka. Later, he tried to drive home and crashed into a tree. When Dr. and Mrs. Hoeflinger arrived at Toledo Hospital, a colleague and family friend met them at the door. He hugged Mrs. Hoeflinger and told them Brian was dead.

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Almost immediately after the crash, questions arose about the possibility of alcohol playing a role in Brian's death. Mrs. Hoeflinger says she knew alcohol was involved.

"I knew he had to be drinking to be dead," she said. "There's no way that he drove down that road on that night and hit a tree without having been intoxicated."

It was confirmed days later by a medical examiner. Police reports show Brian's blood alcohol level was .15 percent.

acceptance letter from UNC. Then they showed the students alcohol bottles and photos of Brian's burned, mangled car. It was impactful for the students and for them.

The Hoeflingers now know Brian drank underage and that the night he died was not the first time. They believe he was trying to be a part of things.

"I am not embarrassed by what my son did," Dr. Hoeflinger said. "He's a kid, he's a teenager. He does what a lot of teenagers do. But there is no reason that we can't learn from it and try to impact people from it."

The Hoeflinger family also holds an annual 5K each May for alcohol awareness. The money they raise goes to alcohol prevention programs and healthy, positive activities for kids. They sponsor a junior golf tournament in Toledo in his honor as well.

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More than three years later, there are smiles and laughter through the pain. Brian's friends still stop by the house. They hang out with his siblings, Kevin, Julie, and Christie.

"I had to redefine what happiness was," Mrs. Hoeflinger said. "Because happiness isn't what I used to think it was."

In the fall, Kevin is off to college to study business. Julie plays lacrosse and will begin her senior year in high school. Christie will be a sophomore in high school and plays Brian's favorite sport, golf. The Hoeflingers say the whole family is looking at life more positively.

"We found out how Brian could touch somebody with a word or a smile," Mrs. Hoeflinger said.

"Losing Brian just made us realize that life is short and there is no reason not to be positive, and try to make other people's lives positive," Dr. Hoeflinger said.

Please visit BrianMatters.com to learn more about the Hoeflinger family's efforts to raise awareness about the prevalence and danger of teenage drinking.

By telling Brian's story – their story – they hope to prevent other families from experiencing their pain.

"I thank God there was nobody in the car with him," Mrs. Hoeflinger said. "Because so many of the kids felt guilty that they weren't able to stop him. And I say, 'You weren't meant to be in that car with him, and I thank God you weren't in that car with him.' I thank God he did not hit somebody else."

The Hoeflingers called the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) in March 2013 and provided agents with the information needed to file charges against the clerk who sold alcohol to Brian and his friends that day.

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Two months later, the Hoeflingers spoke to 400 students at nearby St. Ursula Academy. They talked about Brian before the crash and showed students photos of him playing golf with his team and his

After St. Ursula, the Hoeflingers told Brian's story often. They started at other local high schools, and then as part of diversion programs and alcohol awareness programs, including one in Maryland and an OIU education program for liquor permit premises.

They appeared on several local talk shows and the Katie Couric Show. They have talked to parent groups and high school students in Ohio, Maine, Massachusetts, and Michigan.

In April, they told Brian's story more than 5,300 students in southeast Ohio at a pre-prom event at Ohio University. By telling Brian's story – their story – they hope to prevent other families from experiencing their pain.



Ohio Investigative Unit Fights Illegal Alcohol Sales on Two Fronts

Almost immediately after Brian Hoeflinger's crash, the Ottawa Hills Police Department asked the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) to conduct a trace-back investigation to determine how 18-year-old Brian Hoeflinger obtained alcohol.

Information provided to OIU agents during interviews with friends and discussions with the Hoeflinger family provided agents with enough evidence to charge a clerk at Foxx Liquor Store in Toledo for selling alcohol to Brian and his friends. The clerk was convicted in the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas and sentenced to the maximum of six-months in jail.

When investigating an alcohol-related crash or incident, a law enforcement agency can request an OIU trace-back investigation to determine whether alcohol was illegally sold or provided to an underage or already-intoxicated individual. Law enforcement agencies can request a trace-back investigation by contacting OIU at #677.

OIU also offers a free Alcohol Server Knowledge (ASK) program to liquor permit holders and their employees. Agents provide instruction on laws pertaining to the sale and/or consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Agents also cover topics such as false identification, employment of minors and penalties for violations. Liquor permit holders can request ASK training by calling (614) 644-2415.

CAR CRASHES
are the LEADING
cause of **DEATH** for TEENS
about **25%**
of those crashes involve an
UNDERAGE DRINKING DRIVER

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Traffic Safety Facts 2013: Overview". Washington DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2015. <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812169.pdf>
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Traffic Safety Facts 2013: Young Drivers". Washington DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2015. <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812200.pdf>



For more on this story, watch the latest episode of *Contributing to a Safer Ohio* at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.

First Cleveland Cadets
Graduate from Patrol Academy

RETURN HOME TO
SERVE

Cadets of the Cleveland Police Department graduated May 6, 2016, after 21 weeks of training at the Ohio State Highway Patrol Training Academy. The class was the first of its kind; Cleveland cadets have never trained outside their city, and Patrol staff has never trained a police department's entire new class of recruits. Graduation day for the 44 eager cadets marked the end of one chapter in a journey shared by both departments.

“Agencies can’t operate in silos,” said Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams. “We have to have similar training, policies, and procedures, and we have to all know that change is inevitable. We have to embrace it and make ourselves better.”

The newly-graduated class returned home to train in Cleveland for several more weeks before officially joining the force. Simultaneously, the Patrol started preparing for another Cleveland class to arrive in the fall.

Basic police cadets at the Patrol Academy live on campus in Columbus Monday through Friday and learn fundamentals of police work established by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy. They cover criminal law, physical training, community relations, and about 150 other subjects. Instructors adjusted training for the Cleveland cadets to focus on challenges specific to their city; officers needed to add water survival, for example, because of nearby Lake Erie.

Though this class is unprecedented, Patrol instructors have trained basic officers from local municipalities since 1968. Such classes consist of a handful of officers from multiple departments across the state. The program fosters unity among

agencies as trainees from different backgrounds live in the same dorms and train in the same classrooms.

“We teach them that they’re partners, and no one is left behind – that as a team they start together and finish together,” said Captain Art Combest, commandant of the Patrol Academy.

Patrol instructors are known for holding their cadets to high standards, and the Cleveland class was no exception. The paramilitary training is both physically and mentally demanding to prepare cadets for the stressful job ahead. It’s a culture shock at first, but before long, instructors see trainees gaining confidence in themselves and their training that will serve as a foundation for the rest of their careers.

“It’s a dramatic change,” said Sergeant Aaron Morgan. “As an operations sergeant at the academy, they’re like my children. There’s nobody here that wants them to succeed more than I do.”

The Patrol will continue adjusting the training for future Cleveland basic classes. As long as the program exists, both agencies are committed to the cadets, who are dedicated to serving their community through law enforcement. Instilling professionalism, skill, and resolve in these future police officers will benefit the agency they represent and the citizens they protect.

“Things are changing fast. We’re at a time that people expect us to do more and different things,” said Chief Williams. “I don’t want to leave this profession knowing we had an opportunity to make it better and we didn’t embrace that.”



For more on this story, watch the latest episode of *Contributing to a Safer Ohio* at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.

Ohio Law Enforcement Demonstrates **COMMITMENT** *to* **COMMUNITIES**

Within the first two months of the certification process, more than 140 Ohio law enforcement agencies applied and were undergoing review to fully adopt and implement the new state standards recently established by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board.

Twenty-six agencies became provisionally- or fully-certified by meeting new statewide standards for the use of force, including deadly force, and agency recruitment and hiring.

The standards are the first of their kind in Ohio and were developed by the 12-member collaborative in August 2015 as part of the state's efforts to strengthen community and police relations.

“For us to be successful, the community has to trust us. They need to have faith that we're legitimate and we're doing the right thing,” said Colerain Township Police Chief Mark Denney, whose force was among the first four agencies to become fully certified within 30-days of applying.

The state has partnered with the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police to help certify Ohio's nearly 1,000 law enforcement agencies on a process to ensure that they are in compliance with Ohio's new standards.

“Any chance we have to be transparent, show them our operations and meet the standards that the experts tell us we need to be meeting, I think it strengthens that bond with the community,” Chief Denney said.

Certifications will continue throughout 2016 and a report detailing the compliance status of agencies will be published in March 2017.

“**For us to be successful, the community has to trust us.**

Chief Mark Denney
Colerain Township Police

Certified Law Enforcement Agencies*

Auglaize County	New Knoxville Police Department
Butler County	Fairfield Police Department
Carroll County	Carroll County Sheriff's Office
Clermont County	Clermont County Sheriff's Office Miami Township Police Department Milford Police Department
Clinton County	Wilmington Police Department
Cuyahoga County	Broadview Heights Police Department Highland Heights Police Department
Darke County	Ansonia Police Department
Delaware County	Shawnee Hills Police Department
Franklin County	Franklin County Metro Parks
Gallia County	Univ. of Rio Grande Police Department
Hamilton County	Colerain Police Department
Hardin County	Ada Police Department
Holmes County	Millersburg Police Department
Lake County	Mentor-on-the-Lake Police Department
Lorain County	Grafton Police Department
Madison County	London Police Department
Medina County	Medina County Sheriff's Office Medina Police Department Medina Township Police Department Montville Township Police Department
Mercer County	Coldwater Police Department
Miami County	Miami County Sheriff's Office
Montgomery County	Brookville Police Department Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Shelby County	Sidney Police Department
Summit Count	New Franklin Police Department
Stark County	Stark County Sheriff's Office
Trumbull County	Bazetta Township Police Department

*As of June 10, 2016. For more information on the certification process for law enforcement, visit ocjs.ohio.gov/ohiocollaborative.

CHANGE STARTS HERE.

Continuing Ohio's intensive agenda to improve community-police relations in Ohio, the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board and the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services launched their multi-pronged outreach and education campaign, **Change Starts Here**.

The campaign uses diverse media methods such as PSAs, billboards, posters, and social media posts to share messages from law enforcement, public safety advocates, and community members about community-police relations and their suggestions on improvement.

Change Starts Here Highlights:

- Educate law enforcement on how to better interact with the community they serve by focusing on appropriate and effective programming, especially programs that promote positive educational interactions between law enforcement and youth in the community;
- Educate the general public on strategies to improve community-police relations, including how to appropriately interact with law enforcement and how law enforcement should appropriately interact with the public; and
- Educate the community about the duties of law enforcement and the nature of their responsibilities in order to raise citizen awareness and understanding of law enforcement's obligation to protect and strengthen the vital partnership between the community and law enforcement.

*For more information, please visit
changestartshere.ohio.gov.*

The Change Starts Here campaign was showcased during a Gallery Hop in Columbus' Short North Arts District on June 4.

Premier Event

Recognizes & Honors

Ohio's Excellent Prehospital Providers



Above: Heart attack survivor Damon Givens (center) was reunited with members of the Washington Township Fire Department who helped save his life in June 2015.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services, and the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians hosted the **16th Annual EMS Star of Life Awards** ceremony in observance of National Emergency Medical Services Week in May.

They paid tribute to four individuals and seven organizations from across the state whose overall contributions went beyond their basic duties and responsibilities and represent the finest traditions of their profession.

Each year, an estimated 240 million calls are made to 9-1-1 in the U.S., with approximately one million emergency runs for EMS in Ohio. The theme "EMS STRONG: Called to Care..." exemplifies the commitment and dedication of the 750,000 EMS providers nationwide, and the more than 34,000 in Ohio who provide an essential community service every day.

"EMS teams are ready to provide critical, lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with many of our first responders being volunteers," said Ohio EMS Executive Director Mel House.

Attendees of the ceremony heard the outstanding accounts of first responders fearlessly entering emergency situations, quickly assessing and deciding what needed to be done to save a mother, a father, or a child. Many of these first responders were also reunited with the patient they treated.

National Emergency Medical Services Week brings together local communities and medical personnel to publicize safety and honor the dedication of those who provide the day-to-day lifesaving services of medicine's "front line."

For more coverage of the EMS Star of Life ceremony, visit ems.ohio.gov.



For more on this story, watch the latest episode of *Contributing to a Safer Ohio* at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.



2016 EMS Star of Life Awards *Recipients*

EMS Stars

Akron Fire Department
Damascus Fire Department
North Olmsted Fire Department
Plymouth Fire Department
Ravenna City Fire Department
Troy Fire Department
Washington Township Fire Department

EMS Provider of the Year

Debra Willis
Paramedic, Jackson County EMS

EMS Medical Director of the Year

Robert Lowe, MD FACEP
OhioHealth Doctors Hospital Systems

EMS Agency of the Year

University of Dayton Emergency Medical Services

Frank Giampetro Distinguished EMS Educator Award

Donald Zimmerman
Paramedic, Mentor Fire Department

Motorcycle Ohio Aims to **REDUCE MOTORCYCLE DEATHS** and Injuries through Ride SMART Campaign

Motorcycle Ohio partnered with Quaker Steak and Lube this spring to kick off its Ride SMART motorcycle safety campaign statewide during scheduled “Bike Nights,” at the restaurant raising awareness about all aspects of motorcycle safety including: Ride Sober. Ride Motorcycle Endorsed. Ride Alert. Use the Right Gear. Ride Trained. Ride SMART.

“It is important that we continue to educate both riders and motorists alike about the importance of motorcycle safety,” said Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services Executive Director Karhlton Moore. “We must also continue working with our traffic safety partners on education, enforcement and engineering efforts that ultimately contribute to a safer Ohio.”

Motorcycle Ohio is working with state and local safety partners to get the message out to riders and motorists that everyone plays a critical role in motorcycle safety and will be working to continue these messages across the state during the entire riding season. People can follow [#rideSMARTohio](#) on social media to get up-to-date information on scheduled activities.



Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services Executive Director Karhlton Moore presented Columbus resident Melissa Ritts the “Saved by the Helmet” award on May 11. Ritts is a survivor of a motorcycle crash whose miraculous recovery is attributed to her wearing her helmet. Her story was featured in the last issue of Safer Ohio magazine and episode of Contributing to a Safer Ohio.

Ohio EMA holds Campus EM Summit



Ohio EMA hosted a summit for campus emergency managers in Columbus on April 5.

In an effort to bring county and campus emergency management closer together, nearly 70 college and university emergency management professionals from around Ohio gathered at the first-ever Ohio Campus Emergency Management Summit at the Ohio Emergency Management Agency in Columbus on April 5, 2016.

“You are responsible for protecting some of Ohio’s most valuable assets,” said John Born, director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, in his welcome to the group.

In the day-long summit, campus emergency managers heard from their counterparts from other colleges on a wide variety of topics including drones, “game day” preparation, pre-event planning, active shooter scenarios, and “Partners in Preparedness,” focusing on campus and county emergency managers working together. The college and university emergency managers also toured the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center.

“We’re excited to bring a large group of campus and university emergency managers together for the first time,” said Sima Merick, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “This excellent networking opportunity will lead to better collaboration among campus emergency managers and help bring local emergency managers and their college and university partners together.”

Thirty-six of Ohio’s colleges and universities were represented at the summit, which was sponsored by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

To help continue this effort, a representative of the campus emergency management summit also addressed Ohio’s county EMA directors at the Ohio EMA Spring Directors’ Conference later in April.

New Plate Honors Women in the Military

On Friday, April 22, 2016, new Women Veterans license plates were officially unveiled during a special ceremony at the Ohio Statehouse. During the event, five women veterans were honored with special commemorative license plates.

“We are proud of these brave women who have served our country, and are pleased that Ohioans can now honor them by displaying the new special plate on their vehicle,” said Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles Registrar Don Petit.

Women make up more than 15 percent of America’s military. More than 67,000 women veterans reside in Ohio.

“The women veteran advisory committee, representing 67,000 women veterans in the state of Ohio, over the years received the same request — to have a women veteran license plate,” said Jennifer Baun, Vice Chair, Ohio Department of Veterans Service’s Women Veteran Advisory Committee. “The plate would mean that women are being acknowledged for their service, not necessarily separated from our veteran brothers, but to bring awareness that women are veterans too.”

The plates are available for purchase to any woman currently serving in, or retired from, any branch of the U.S. military: Marine Corps, Navy, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

“Ohio’s women veterans are groundbreakers,” said Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Chip Tansill. “They have served with distinction in every war and we thank them for their role in preserving and protecting our freedom.”

The BMV offers nearly 40 other military-related specialty license plates. For more information, please visit bmv.ohio.gov/vr-sp-military.aspx.



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