

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***Click It For a Ticket?***

*Students at Valley Forge High School will be “Ticketed” for Buckling Up!*

**Cuyahoga County, OH** – On Thursday morning, students driving to Valley Forge High School will be hoping to start their day by getting a ticket. The tickets teens are seeking are part of the Click it For a Ticket initiative, which is an effort to increase seat belt use among teens and is supported by UH Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital, Cuyahoga County Safe Communities Coalition and State Farm. Students who are spotted driving onto school grounds wearing seat belts are given tickets for good safety practices that can earn them cash and prizes.

These tickets emphasize the lifesaving benefits of seat belt use and give students a chance to win rewards when they sign their tickets and turn them in for a drawing. During the morning’s announcements, Officer Dan Kravanis will talk to the students about the importance of wearing seat belts, and will draw a name from the redeemed tickets. The winner will receive a \$108 gift card—the same amount these students would pay if they received a seat belt citation. “Like all of us, students need to be reminded of the importance of wearing seat belts. Without seat belts they could be seriously hurt or killed in a collision, or suffer the less serious consequence of having to pay the fine,” said Captain Rick Brown.

Traffic crash data show that teens need the seat belt message even more than older drivers. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. Per mile driven, teen drivers are four times more likely than older drivers to crash. With this increased crash risk it is important that every teen gets into the habit of buckling up. A 2011 observational seat belt use survey conducted by UH Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital showed that seat use in Cuyahoga County was significantly lower among younger drivers overall: 65.8% for drivers 15-24, 74.8% for drivers 26-64, 76% for drivers > 65.

“The goal of this program is to increase our students’ awareness of the health and safety benefits of wearing seat belts. If that isn’t enough to convince them to buckle up, the \$108 financial consequence of receiving a seat belt citation in Cuyahoga County should be an incentive to follow Ohio’s law,” said Mayor Michael Byrne. “Local law enforcement will be participating in the national Click It or Ticket campaign this spring, and we are warning all of our students that officers will be strictly enforcing Ohio’s seat belt laws. There will be no warnings.”

