

## **Health and Wellness:**

### **Backovers**

**By Laura Jimenez, M.S.W.**

A very warm and sincere WELCOME BACK is extended to all Beach High students, teachers, administrators, parents and everyone else who positively influence the lives of our children. Hopefully everyone had a very fun, happy, healthy and safe summer. One of the things that makes summer more fun for many students is the ability to legally practice driving with or without a parent or caretaker in the car.

Fortunately, most drivers use the utmost of care while driving. However, even the most careful driver can have a very unfortunate accident. Such is the case with backovers which occur when a child is backed over by a vehicle driven by a parent, grandparent, sibling or other person and the child is either injured or killed. This happens because drivers simply cannot see behind their vehicle. While all cars have a blind spot in the rear, the rear blind spot is larger in vehicles such as SUVs, minivans and pickup trucks. Blind spots also vary by the height of the driver.

You might be thinking to yourself this is probably an uncommon tragedy. Unfortunately, between eight to 16 children die every month because they are accidentally run over. Be aware that although this typically occurs with a seasoned driver such as a parent, it certainly can occur to a teenage driver.

Following are a few tips to avoid backovers:

- In a typical scenario, a parent or other loved one says goodbye to a child, gets in their vehicle, checks the mirrors and drives away. A child who wants to say goodbye runs after the car for whatever reason. Use the utmost of care when going in reverse, especially since you won't see and might not even hear that child.
- While some newer cars come equipped with rear cameras, the camera will not help unless it is turned on and the display is seen. Aftermarket camera systems cost between \$400-800 plus installation. For a modest amount, you can attach a wide angle lens to your rear view mirror to diminish, although not completely eliminate, the size of your blind spot.
- The best advice is to get out of the vehicle, look and see what's behind you (especially when you are at home or near children), be aware of all of your surroundings and slowly and cautiously back up.

Here is a related link for additional information:

<http://www.kidsandcars.org/pressreleases/lieberman.htm>

For any student, parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent or anyone else who missed or would like to reread my article from last school year titled Teen Driving Safety Tips, click here:

<http://www.theventionsocialworker.org/uploads/MBSH - Article 3 - Teen Driving Safety Tips.pdf>

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