

My name is Lauren Newell, and I'm a 15 year old sophomore at Wabaunsee High School. On April 30, 2015, Taylor Benteman and I were in a serious rollover car accident. He was driving me home from my softball game. It was dark and there weren't many cars out on I-70. We were in the right lane, coming up to pass another vehicle when they slammed on their brakes. Taylor swerved to miss and then over corrected right. We went straight into the ditch flipped up and rolled 4-5 times. Taylor wasn't wearing his seatbelt, I was. He was ejected from the car. When the vehicle stopped rolling, I was able to crawl out a window, to find him laying unconscious in the ditch. That could've very well been me if I hadn't made the choice to put my seatbelt on. Me, Taylor's family, my family, all our lives have been flipped upside down. But because of the accident, because he didn't wear his seatbelt, his life will never be the same.

The reason I am sharing my story with you is because I'm trying to get people to see what a seatbelt can do. SAFE is a perfect way to get more high school students involved and more aware about seatbelt safety. I believe it should be considered at every high school in the state. SAFE expresses the importance of wearing your seatbelt, no matter how far you're driving, no matter how fast you're going, you need to buckle up. Some people have it set in their mind that it won't ever happen to them, so just one time won't hurt anyone, right? Well I was one of those people, so was Taylor. But the one time he didn't buckle up, look what happened . He was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury.

Everyone needs to be aware of this subject, because no one deserves to go through this. The more people that realize the danger of not wearing a seatbelt, the more people will buckle up. I really want this to be taken seriously. I believe, SAFE needs to be put out there. People need to wear their seatbelt, because you never know. Every time you "forget" to put your seatbelt on, or just don't want to because it's not "the cool thing to do", you're putting yourself in danger.

I went through something nobody should ever have to experience. So here I am in front of you, asking you to please help me out with getting a SAFE club at every high school in Kansas.