

## Briarcrest joins safe-driving initiative

### Latest of 14 area high schools participating in Alive at 25 program

By Richard Kelley

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

Briarcrest Christian School of Memphis is the 14th area high school to sign up for the "Alive at 25" program that teaches safety to teenage drivers.

The Alive at 25 initiative was created by the National Safety Council and is administered locally by the professional and continuing education program at the University of Memphis.

"It is exciting to offer a program that introduces principles of safety and proper mental approaches to driving to our freshmen," Steve Simpson, principal of Briarcrest's high school, said Tuesday "It is important to start influencing attitudes before they begin driving."

Alive at 25 has been in place at Germantown and Houston high schools since 1996, and teen traffic fatalities have dropped dramatically. The local program has expanded significantly over the past year as well, from an enrollment of 1,400 students to an estimated 4,300 this year.

"We did the parents night at Briarcrest last Thursday, and we probably had about 40 parents attend that meeting," said Tommy Roberson, driving program coordinator for the U of M program. "We opened it for questions, and the response was very good."

Vicki Murrell, director of the U of M professional and continuing education program, is also a big supporter of Alive at 25.

"We're thrilled to have yet another group of students who are going to be exposed to this information," she said. "We hope every little bit helps one person, one family, one group of friends."

The Alive at 25 program supplements regular drivers education. It consists of classroom instruction that seeks to make the youngest drivers aware of risky behavior on the road, stresses that driving is not a social activity and drills students

on defensive driving skills.

The new emphasis on the program follows a tragic year at Bolton High School where three students were killed in traffic accidents. Bolton High signed up to offer the course in July, and classes begin there next week.

Roberson met with Bolton parents Tuesday night to preview the class and to take questions.

Also, for the first time, a group of home-schoolers has signed up for the Alive at 25 course and it will be taught in Collierville at the Carrier Center beginning Nov. 1. While the program's usual focus is on ninth-graders, it will be expanded for home-schooled students from the 9th grade through 12th grade. Twenty students have signed up.

For more information on the Alive at 25 program, call 678-6000 or visit the U of M web site at [umce.memphis.edu](http://umce.memphis.edu).

-- *Richard Kelley: 529-2300*

### **Alive at 25**

Local high schools participating in the Alive at 25 training are:

Bolton High

Briarcrest

Christian Brothers

Collierville High

Germantown High

Houston High

Hutchison

Millington Central

Memphis University School

St. Agnes

St. Benedict

St. Mary's

St. George's

Tipton-Rosemark

*Source: University of Memphis*



© 2007 Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers