

SKILL AND CONFIDENCE

Doug Herbert's renowned B.R.A.K.E.S. four-hour, five-course, free sessions brought to Arizona teens at Westworld in Scottsdale courtesy of Kia and Barrett-Jackson

When NHRA drag racing star Doug Herbert lost his two young sons, Jon and James, in a tragic car accident in January 2008, he channeled his grief into creating a driving program to help prevent other families from experiencing any such heartbreak, devoting himself to teaching young drivers more conscientious and confident skills behind the wheel.

Herbert wasted no time putting his mission into motion. Before that year was out, he created B.R.A.K.E.S. (Be Responsible and Keep Everyone Safe), a 501(c)3 organization providing free advanced driver's education in the Teen Pro-Active Driving Course.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death—in the thousands—for 14- to 18-year-olds in the US. This staggering statistic can be reduced through the efforts of the B.R.A.K.E.S. program.

Kia Motors America (KMA) and B.R.A.K.E.S. recently brought the Teen Pro-Active Driving Course back to Arizona, to provide our teens with advanced driver training and the tools to be safe and responsible behind the wheel.

Put On The B.R.A.K.E.S. aims to prevent injuries and save lives by training and educating teenage drivers and their parents about the importance of safe and responsible driving.

Parents commonly ask whether conventional

driver's education is not adequate training for the new drivers in their family. B.R.A.K.E.S. says that while conventional driver's education is important and valuable, the Teen Pro-Active Driving Course goes beyond that level of training by addressing driving situations responsible for many traffic accidents involving teens.

The B.R.A.K.E.S. curriculum includes advanced behind-the-wheel training from professional driving instructors, including skid avoidance, distracted driving awareness, panic stopping (ABS activation), drop-wheel recovery and car control.

Accident Avoidance uses a slalom course to teach elevated steering control; a Distraction Exer-

Teens say: "I feel so prepared to handle driving situations." | "The instructors were all really fun. Thanks for this—so nice that it's free!" | "No other place puts you in accident situations." | "I think the information I learned today could save my life."

Parents say: "It was awesome. I will bring all my kids. Thank you!" | "There is not enough room to write all the positive comments! This is my oldest child, and ALL of my other three children will take this!" | "Thanks for what you are doing! Excellent program. Will absolutely bring my other two children." | "This is our second daughter to take the course. Daughter #3 is six years away. We'll be back! Thanks!"



cise teaches increased focus and concentration; a Wheel Drop-Off Recovery Exercise teaches the proper method of retaining control when a vehicle drops a wheel off a highway shoulder; a Panic Stop Exercise gives teenagers safer and more controlled responses when braking in an emergency; and a Car Control and Recovery Exercise teaches the skills needed for maintaining or regaining control in wet or icy road conditions.

B.R.A.K.E.S. utilizes instructors from various backgrounds who have extensive experience with advanced driver training and defensive driving instruction. Their credentials include experience as accomplished race drivers and skilled driving instructors. Many of the instructors have provided training for numerous automobile manufacturers, while others have experience as advanced defensive driving instructors to the US Secret Service and private security organizations.

To date, over 17,000 teens and their parents have traveled from 33 states and 3 countries to attend the B.R.A.K.E.S. program in 15 states. They provided training for 150 Arizona teens and their parents at the recent WestWorld event.

B.R.A.K.E.S. schools are held one weekend a month at Zmax Dragway and the Charlotte Motor Speedway in Charlotte, NC. Schools are also held in locations all over the US, including the LA County Fairgrounds in Pomona, Pacific Raceways in Kent WA, Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis, Alameda Point in the Bay Area, the Center Line Complex in Michigan and others. The school has been held at the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler, and as far away as Juneau, Alaska. The schedule for the second half of the year is still coming together, but they expect to host another school in Arizona this fall.

To participate in B.R.A.K.E.S., you must be 15-19 years old, have a valid learner's permit or driver's license, have 30 hours of behind-the-wheel driving experience and be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The B.R.A.K.E.S. Teen Pro-Active Driving Course is free of charge, though a refundable \$99 deposit holds your spot.

As a non-profit organization, B.R.A.K.E.S. relies on donations, sponsorships and various fundraising events to allow them to provide this life-saving program to teenagers across the country. In general, the organization's cost is about \$300 per student, and one weekend of B.R.A.K.E.S. instruction will train about 140 students. The program is always looking to expand geographically, though to bring it to your community, they need assistance in covering its costs.

Call B.R.A.K.E.S. headquarters at 704-720-3806 or sign up at putonthebrakes.org/2016-waiting-list, and once a fall date is set for Arizona, you will be the first to know. ■

