

MADD Aims to Save Lives and Serve People

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Gary Davey from Phoenix is a long-distance bike rider, mountain biker, and places outdoor sports and activities in the center of his life; and at the moment he is riding his bike home from work, helmet on of course, like he usually does. Without knowing exactly what happened as if being caught in a nightmarish dream that has you in a lost, dark and eerie place, he hears the voice of his brothers, which seems impossible because they live in England. The next thing he remembers is feeling a drugged state that seemed to last for days with teetering moments of intense and severe pain, and finally discovers that he is in a hospital bed, looking at his brothers who flew from England, where a large piece of his leg is missing and has been bleeding badly.

A drunk driver hit him on his bicycle from behind, at 45 mph, and if he did not have his helmet on, he wouldn't be here to tell this story. For weeks, Davey and his family were unsure whether he would live. Two vertebrae were badly broken, as well as his pelvis, and his leg was barely attached. Now Davey will forever live with three pieces of metal in his back and pins screwed into his pelvis. Miraculously he survived, but Davey will never again be able to pursue his athletic passion to the fullest. The culprit who hit him was found to be on amphetamine and methamphetamine and was charged with another DUI four months after he hit Davey.

This story is one of many who are lucky enough to be a survivor in a crash from the result of driving under the influence, and his personal memoir on the experience was reported to Arizona's MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving — the nation's largest nonprofit organization working to protect families of America from drunk driving, including driving on drugs and underage drinking.

"Our state has some of the toughest DUI laws in the nation, yet hundreds of people died in Arizona from accidents involving drunk driving last year," says Susan Kavanaugh, Executive Director of Phoenix's MADD. The Governor's office of Highway Safety reported 30,433 arrests in 2012, where 1,262 of those arrests involved drivers under the age of 21. Tommy Richardson, attorney at Friedl Richardson Trial Lawyers says, in 2011, there were 5,537 crashes and 265 deaths in Arizona alone due to drunk driving. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the United States in 2010 (latest figures available) had 10,288 people who died in drunk driving crashes.

These unfortunate statistics and the tragic stories told by victims are the reasons that MADD provides a service advocacy program for victims, education to offenders about the dangers of alcohol, and risk and possible tragedies that await a person who drives drunk. They also do conversations about drunk driving at schools and other community organizations.

Recently MADD conducted Walk Like MADD, a fundraiser and awareness event on drunk driving. The event had 1,093 walkers and raised \$100,186, an increase in last year's walk. All the money donated went to MADD's Victim Services. In 2011, MADD served more than 63,000 victims and survivors of drunk and drugged driving crashes.

<http://www.madd.org/>