

A 'Whale' of a Video: High School Students from Washington, D.C. Area Win Grand Prize in Toyota TeenDrive365 Video Challenge

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Silver Spring, Md. (April 29, 2016) – If you were steering a beluga whale down the street, would you risk sneaking a peek at your phone? Probably not. High school sophomores Matthew Post and John Caporaletti agree, and in their new public service announcement (PSA), they encourage their peers to drive their vehicles with the same care and attention. Today [Toyota](#) and [Discovery Education](#), the leading provider of digital content and professional development for K-12 classrooms, announced that the Sherwood High School students of Montgomery County Public Schools in Olney, Md. (outside of Washington, D.C.) won the grand prize in the [Toyota TeenDrive365 Video Challenge](#) for their video “For the Whales.” You can view their winning video [here](#).

Now in its fifth year, the Toyota and Discovery Education challenge invites teens across the country to create public service videos to inspire their friends and peers to drive more safely. Matthew and John’s video provides an innovative perspective on the seriousness of driving with the stark reminder that just like a beluga whale, a standard sedan weighs a whopping two tons. With this in mind, the pair encourage drivers to eliminate risky behaviors and focus on the road. The teens will receive \$15,000 and will work with a Discovery film crew to reshoot their video into a TV-ready PSA to air on a variety of Discovery networks.

“We were delighted by Matthew and John’s unexpected take on the huge responsibility of driving a vehicle,” said Mike Goss, General Manager, Social Innovation, Toyota Motor North America. “Their video is clever and funny and best of all, it works. It really makes you stop and think about why it’s so important – as they put it – to drive smart. We’re excited to help them share this message with teens everywhere.”

“We applaud this year’s grand prize winners Matthew and John and their use of digital storytelling, creativity and humor to influence the behavior of their peers and ultimately help save lives,” said Bill Goodwyn, President and CEO at Discovery Education. “The TeenDrive365 Video Challenge is about empowering young people like Matthew and John to address the critical issue of distracted driving, and they did it with smarts and creativity. We look forward to their PSA running across Discovery’s networks and influencing other drivers out there to be more cautious.”

“We hope this video inspires fellow Sherwood High School friends and students to drive more safely, we hope it sends a broader message across the Washington, D.C. area, and across the nation,” said William Gregory, Principal of Sherwood High School. “Driving a car takes tremendous responsibility – for teens and adults of all ages – and Matthew and John perfectly illustrated that.”

Matthew and John’s video was chosen by a panel of judges at Toyota and Discovery Education from more than 1,500 submissions – the most ever received in contest history. The other winners include:

- Second Place: Samuel Brown and Lillian Smith, students at Oklahoma City Public Schools’ Classen School of Advanced Studies in Oklahoma City, Okla., will receive \$10,000, as well as a behind-the-scenes trip to a live taping of a Velocity network show for their video, “[Scary Movie](#).”

- Third Place: Blake Rozas and Jackson Ingraham, students at Eanes Independent School District's Westlake High School in Austin, Texas will receive \$7,500 for "[Brain Surgery](#)."
- People's Choice: Blake Takushi and Tyler Mora, students at Fort Bend Independent School District's Kempner High School and Austin High School in Sugar Land, Texas, [who were chosen online by public vote](#), will receive \$5,000 and a behind-the-scenes trip to a taping of a Velocity network show.

The additional seven finalists will receive \$2,500, and four regional winners will receive \$1,000. Their videos can be viewed [here](#).

The challenge is part of Toyota TeenDrive365 (www.TeenDrive365.com), a comprehensive initiative to help teens and parents become safer drivers together. Building on the programs Toyota has offered for more than a decade, it offers a collection of online tools, events, expert advice and tips as well as social media elements.