



## **Saint Viator Students Issue Warning: Distractions, Slow Reactions**



Saint Viator students **Richard McLoughlin '10, Danielle Faul '12, and Janet Jozwiak '10** finish up creating their display case around the theme, "Distractions, Slow Reactions." It includes such visual cues as cell phones, iPods, food and makeup, as well as the variety of communities students drive from to attend

their \$2,000 grant to help mount their campaign, which runs through Feb. 27, however the program is co-sponsored by Allstate and Ford.

Already, Saint Viator students conducted a survey in their parking lot to see how many drivers—and their passengers—wore seat belts as they arrived at school. They also plan to monitor for reckless speeding.

Tuesdays at the school are designated as "Teen Driving Tuesday," when students announce statistics and safe driving tips over the school's public address system.

"It's the distracted driving that we're targeting the most," says senior Erick Diaz of Bensenville. "We've got statistics that show how often accidents occur while teens are on the phone or texting. It's something that applies to all of us, and we just want to heighten that awareness."

He and three other seniors—all members of Students Against Driving Drunk or SADD—are leading the initiative among their classmates. They include: Janet Jozwiak of Elk Grove Village, Christine Julius of Arlington Heights, and Richard McLoughlin of Prospect Heights.

Rose Ruffato, a Saint Viator administrator working as faculty liaison with the group, says that promoting safe driving among its teen population is particularly fitting.

"Our students drive as far as 30 miles to get to school," Ruffato said. "They spend much more time in the car than the typical student at the local public high school."

Her student leaders have lots of ideas about promoting their campaign, including contacting the 60 communities where Saint Viator students live, to support the safe driving campaign on their village signs, and distributing information at basketball games.

A new display case went up last week in the hallway of Saint Viator High School in Arlington Heights, and it had nothing to do with trophies.

Its contents center around a new campaign being waged by students, reminding drivers of the consequences of driving while distracted—as in texting, cell phone use and iPod tuning.

They have coined their campaign "Distractions, Slow Reactions," and they are hitting the ground running in terms of getting their message out. The display case was one of their first efforts, after holding a school-wide poster contest to determine their logo.

It's all part of the 2010 Operation Teen Safe Driving program launched Dec. 1, in which Saint Viator High School was one of 15 schools in the Northwest suburbs selected by state officials.

Saint Viator students met with IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation) to receive a portion of