

# Germantown School District

**GERMANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL  
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TO: Supporters of the State Farm Celebrate My Drive Initiative

FROM: Joel R. Farren, Principal, Germantown High School

DATE: December 14, 2015

RE: Celebrate My Drive Summary Report-2015

In the fall of 2014, Germantown High School participated in the State Farm “Celebrate My Drive” contest for the first time. For our efforts, we received a \$300 grant from Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, but we were not chosen as a Celebrate My Drive winner that year. A lot was learned from that process and when the opportunity was presented to us in 2015, with a very different format and different potential winnings, School Resource Officer Toni Olson, School Counselors/Student Council Advisors Susan Bast and Elizabeth Miller took the lead in organizing our entry. They worked with English teacher Tom Kujawa and several students on creating the thirty second video to submit for consideration. The lead students for the video were seniors Jacob Mohar and Brian Feilbach and the main organizer was junior Jake Colthurst with assistance from senior and Student Council President Emma Brandenburg.

The video was submitted on October 23 along with paperwork where we answered questions and prompts regarding teen safe driving initiatives and what we would do with the grant regarding programming. We were notified on November 5 that Germantown High School was selected as one of the Celebrate My Drive 100 Finalists. This program encourages teens to make positive choices as they begin driving, like Drive 2N2® — 2 eyes on the road, 2 hands on the wheel.

We then educated and informed students, staff, parents and community members to visit [www.celebratemydrive.com](http://www.celebratemydrive.com) to vote for Germantown High School for a chance to win a private concert with Echosmith and a \$100,000 grant. If we received the grant, 22% would have to be allocated to safe driving initiatives. The rest will be used for student determined initiatives. During the voting period, two local news stations did stories on our efforts during this initiative: [Fox 6 Milwaukee](#) and [WISN 12](#).

From the submissions received, 100 High School Finalists, as determined by judging, were featured on [celebratemydrive.com](http://celebratemydrive.com) for public voting November 9-13, 2015. Eligible voters had to be 14 years or older to participate and are allowed to vote once per day, per the Official Rules. Students voted during lunch periods using Chrome Books in the Cafeteria, announcements were

made to remind students to vote and we even allowed students to use their personal devices during a designated and monitored specific time each day (7<sup>th</sup> period). The range of where we stood on voting was consistently within the top ten and on the last day that they publically posted the rankings, we were number two. After voting closed on November 13, the waiting game began.

On Friday, November 20, School Resource Officer Olson and I were notified via email that we were one of the eleven large schools selected to receive a \$100,000 grant. We then spoke with Sue Sampson from State Farm, who confirmed the content of the email and then discussed the grant application process. I began working on that with the assistance of School Resource Officer Olson and the formal grant was submitted on November 24 and then again, with revisions, on November 25. The grant was verified and accepted.

Planning began for the presentation to be made to Germantown High School for winning this grant award. On Friday, December 4, we held a semi-formal event in the Germantown High School Cafeteria during what is our first lunch period. We did not want to interrupt the instructional day for all 1,420 students so we decided to do this in the presence of approximately 500 students but would also have the student coordinators and materials available for other students to view during the other two lunch periods.

On December 4, we had a number of adults who helped make this event possible and several special guests as well including: Julie Collins (Fox 6 News), Jason Hunter (WISN 12 News), CT Krueger (Now Newspapers), Thomas McKillen (Express News), Alberta Darling (Wisconsin State Senator), Bob Soderberg (Germantown Board of Education President), Jeff Holmes (Superintendent), Ric Erickson (Business Manager), Brenda O'Brien (Director of Teaching and Learning), Sally Kellman (Director of Pupil Services), Jayne Borst (Assistant to the Superintendent), Tessa Krentz (Comptroller) and eight members of the State Farm Team.

Bernie Furlong from State Farm began the presentation, followed by congratulatory remarks by Germantown School Board President Bob Soderberg and State Senator Alberta Darling. Junior Jake Colthurst concluded the formal portion of the presentation by thanking the students for voting and making this all possible. Fox 6 and WISN 12 were in attendance, as were representatives from Germantown Now and Germantown Express News. The Fox 6 story can be found [here](#) or here: <http://fox6now.com/2015/12/04/this-is-truly-exciting-germantown-h-s-safe-driving-campaign-wins-100k-prize/>

On Friday, December 11, when we received the U.S. Mail in the later afternoon, I found that we had received the \$100,000 check. Under the provisions of the grant, 22% (\$22,000) is to be dedicated to "teen safe driving initiatives," which we already have an account for that is dedicated to those initiatives and, in the past, to the Every 15 Minutes program. The other 78% (\$78,000) is to be used for student suggested initiatives and the plan is to have these dollars put into a "Special Projects Fund." Students entered their ideas in a designated suggestion box during the voting period and we are compiling those ideas while adding some need based ideas as well. Any items that would be required to go to the Germantown School District Building Committee will be reported to District Office Administration and then put on future agenda items for consideration by the Building Committee and then the Board of Education.

Thank you to the organizers of this competition, the student leaders, our staff and our community for the incredible support that has led to receiving this grant. More information will be shared out as we begin to utilize the funds for teen safe driving and for improvements at Germantown High School. On December 10, the Celebrate My Drive updated information regarding winning schools and that information can be found here: <https://www.celebratemydrive.com/>