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Safe driving class to reduce death of younger drivers

Originally printed at <http://www.nbcaugusta.com/news/local/48011927.html>

AIKEN, SC. -- Summer months are here, more people are at the beach and enjoying barbecues. Officers say that behavior leads to a lot more drinking and driving, especially in younger drivers.

A defensive driving course called "Alive at 25" tries to change a drivers' behavior in order to save their lives.

"We have a drinking and driving problem, a speed problem, distractions such as texting, talking on the phone, multiple person's in the car creating distractions," said Sergeant Steve Deibel from the Aiken County Sheriff's Office. "Just not focusing on driving because of the attitude developed at a young age that nothings going to happen to me."

Sgt. Deibel is the instructor of the 4.5 hour course. Saturday, his class had about 45 students. One of them was 19-year-old Krishna Pillai, from Charleston, SC.

"I'm always one of those people who would do out there and drink with my friends and hop in the drivers seat, or just hop in the car with my drunk friends," Pillai said.

Pillai says the course has opened his eyes and he doesn't want to risk getting into a deadly drinking and driving accident.

"Instructor Deibel says most driving deaths happen to drivers between the ages of 16-25. Drinking and driving, speeding and cell phones are some of the biggest reasons why."

"The behaviors they take behind the wheel with them is the reason were working to change those driving behaviors and keep them alive.

Deibel says most students in the driving class are required to be in it for school or a pre-trial education program and a lot of them have experienced a driving death of a friend of family member.

"I've been seeing all this all my life. Drinking and driving, people dying you get used to it some times," 18-year-old Alphonso Youmans from Barnwell, SC said.

"The last thing we get them to do is commit to making a change, if they don't they might as well not have been here," Sgt. Deibel said.

In the two years Instructor Deibel has taught the driving class, he said he's only lost 2 of his 13,664 students.

Classes are \$35 each and happen nation-wide. For more information about the class click [here](#).