

It Just Clicked



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ABOVE: The Coventry Clicks: Kyle Willett, Katina Gustafson, Matt Lee, and Jill Ward with the trophy they earned by posting the best time in the eight-team finals. BELOW: Jim Barden, highway safety coordinator for RIDOT, hands the state trophy to Matt Lee and Jill Ward.



CHS team wins seat belt relay

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COVENTRY— Four students from Coventry High School were able to defeat all of their competitors during the RI Department of Transportation's recent "Buckle Up Shuffle Relay" Seat Belt Challenge.

Students Matt Lee, a junior; freshman Kyle Willett, senior Katina Gustafson and sophomore Jill Ward were all smiles during the trophy presentation held Friday morning.

Their team, The Coventry High School Clicks, won the State Championship against numerous other high schools' teams with the fastest time of 37.8 seconds.

The RIDOT, along with AAA Southern New England, hosts the event every year to raise awareness about seat belt safety.

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Team from CHS wins belt relay

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Lloyd Albert, Senior Vice President for AAA Southern New England, explained that they partner with RIDOT for this competition because "seat belt use in teens is an issue and these kids are great ambassadors for making sure that teens buckle up."

Out of 17 high schools statewide, eight went on to compete in the final, including Coventry, Middletown, Cranston East, Cumberland, Lincoln, Smithfield, Tiverton and Providence.

"We've done this for many years," said Albert. "We're trying to get as many schools involved as we can. The idea is to heighten the awareness about seat belt use and how it's critical."

During the competition, the four-person teams had to buckle up in each position of the vehicle while being timed. The two boys and two girls had to enter the vehicle, properly buckle their seat belts, unbuckle, exit and switch seats until all four students returned to their original seats.

The Coventry High School Clicks beat their opponents winning the State Championship and \$1,000, courtesy of AAA of Southern New England. Assistant Principal at the high school Joseph Lucian explained that the school will receive \$500 of that money and the four students will split the rest.



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(L-R): Francisco Lovera from the RIDOT's Office on Highway Safety, Willett, Gustafson, Lee, Ward, AAA Senior Vice President Lloyd Albert and Joseph Lucian, Coventry High Assistant Principal.

Second place went to the Middletown High School Islanders—39.5 seconds — and in third place were The Cranston High School East Bad News Bucklers — 41.7 seconds.

Lucian said the students practiced diligently for weeks to ensure their victory.

"We had a car and they went out and kept practicing," he added. "They practiced and kept getting more aggressive

with their times; they're so competitive."

He explained that an announcement was made regarding the competition a few months back and tryouts were held—the fastest team was chosen.

"It's a nice partnership with the police, AAA, the schools and the kids to get the community involved," Lucian said. "They're not only great kids but their personalities always help people out."