

# Student Deaths Spark Teen Driving Class

Posted: 5:59 pm EST January 11, 2010

[Comment On This Story >>](#)

**FORT MILL, S.C.** -- Almost three months after the deaths of two their classmates, students at Nations Ford High School have not forgotten.

"It's been a tough year for us here," said Nations Ford senior Rory Masterson. He ran cross country with Luke Hoover, who was killed in an October crash.

Masterson came into his senior year with all the enthusiasm you'd expect, but things change quickly.

"I was thinking all right, senior year. This is good times, we're gonna have fun, then we're gonna leave here and go to college, and cherish all these times together. But cherishing all this time together, became something else," he said.

Hoover and Michelle Dibernardini died within a week of each other. The tragedies shocked the community, and led to calls for quick action. At the time, a driving course called "Alive at 25" was voluntary, and few students signed up for it.

Following the deaths, the class was required for any student who wanted an on campus parking pass, either at Nations Ford or Fort Mill high school.

The class costs \$35 per student, and some parents were concerned about paying for it.

On Monday, Continental Tire Company stepped in, giving \$14,000 to allow 400 students to take the "Alive at 25" class next month.

Company officials told reporters that they wanted to do something when they heard about what had happened at Nations Ford.

Nations Ford Principal Beverly Bowman and Fort Mill principal Dee Christopher, stood together to thank Continental for its donation, and the company's concern about protecting children.

Bowman said her students have suffered tremendously this year.

"It's exhausting. When you think about all the pain our kids experienced, the loss of those two lives," she said.

Bowman said students who take the course will learn from it, and apply it on the road.

"They know they need to be safer drivers, they know that." she said.

The "Alive at 25" course is a one-day survival session for teenage drivers. It deals with bad driving behaviors, and their often tragic results.

Instructors talk about the dangers of texting while driving, using cell phones, and mp3 players. They discuss driving with a carload of friends, and how one brief second of inattention can be deadly.

Masterson has mixed feelings. He's glad the class is required and believes it will save lives, but thinks of Hoover, and how all this attention on teen driving came too late for him.

"For me, with Luke. I just, I don't know, " he said. "I do think if it saves one life that's good enough, and it's definitely good enough for me."

The class will meet on Feb. 6.