



Video: Kathy Smith on camera

Audio: As a mother I'd like to ask. Please take five before you drive to stay alive.

What am I talking about? It takes about five seconds to put on a seatbelt before you turn the key and before the vehicle starts moving and it could be a life changing five seconds for you.

Why do I say that? Last July 4th my son had gone to fireworks and he stopped in a hurry on the way back home at a convenience store to get some chips.

He ran in, he ran out, he didn't put his seatbelt back on when he came back out of the store.

He was in a hurry as usual but that cost him dearly ...

Video: Photo of Smith's son, Michael

Audio: "Because he got back out on the road and he was accelerating and I truly believe he was going to put his seatbelt back on once he had accelerated.

He was in the habit of wearing it.

Video: Kathy Smith

Audio: But unfortunately he didn't get that opportunity.

He went to change lanes and he hit a car that was alongside him. I image in his blind spot.

He didn't see the car and then his car went tumbling and he crashed into a pole and he was ejected.

Within five minutes of my son's stop at the convenience store he had died.

Can I guarantee to you that he would have lived if he had put his seatbelt on, of course not?

But what I can tell you is that the passenger that he had in the car had her seatbelt on and she did live thankfully and she's recovering and doing well today.

Video: Photo of Michael Smith playing drums

Audio: Michael's death put a big hole in our universe. The universe of my family and our friends and our community.

Video: Kathy Smith

Audio: We weren't ready to let go of him and even though we say its heaven's gain we wanted to keep him around.

He would have been twenty-two on the day after the accident. I would say please take five before you drive to stay alive.

Take the five seconds to put your seatbelt on before the car is moving. That five second act could change your whole world. It could keep you around longer for family and friends.

Video: Graphic of Highway Safety Challenge

- Buckle up
- Avoid distractions
- Share the road
- Drive drug- and alcohol-free
- Obey speed limits

www.SafeVAHighways.org