



Kitsap County Traffic Safety Task Force

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pierce County Traffic Safety Task Force

Emphasis Patrol and Dedication for Surviving DUI Victim Clancy O'Connor

Saturday, February 17, Gig Harbor, Washington

Gig Harbor, Washington – February 13, 2018 - After Clancy O'Connor was struck while riding his motorcycle by a driver impaired by meth, he knew the road back was going to be tough.

"But I never imagined opening my eyes and seeing only black instead of my four grandchildren," said the 22-year Navy veteran who once shot off and retrieved planes from aircraft carriers with spot-on vision.

O'Connor lost both his eyesight and leg while riding home from his job at a Bremerton Shipyard on November 19, 2015 when Sonja Pangelinan, 39, crossed into his lane on Highway 304, pinned him against the curb and within seconds catapulted O'Connor's life into upheaval and disability.

To educate drivers about how traumatizing serious injury DUI crashes can be, the Kitsap and Pierce County Traffic Safety Task Forces are teaming up for a **special impaired driving patrol dedicated to O'Connor on Saturday, February 17, 8 PM, Gig Harbor Civic Center, 3510 Grandview Street, Gig Harbor.**

Following a public dedication, officers, deputies and troopers will begin hunting for drug and alcohol impaired drivers in Gig Harbor, Key Peninsula and Kitsap County. The patrol, hosted by the Gig Harbor Police Department, also will include trained drug recognition experts who can be called by other officers working the road to test drivers who exhibit signs of impairment but may not have been drinking.

Additionally, Pierce County's *Home Safe Bar Team*, will be joined by Chief Kelly Busey, Gig Harbor Police Department and Chief Pete Fisher, Fife Police Department and officers from the WSLCB who will visit area bars and taverns to review current alcohol laws with owners, bartenders and servers. They also will leave customers with printed information on the current monetary costs of a DUI and the reminder that the driver who caused O'Connor's crash is now serving a 96-month prison sentence for vehicular assault. Besides meth, she had alcohol in her system at the time of the crash.

Pierce and Kitsap Counties had a combined total of 28 impaired driving fatalities and 64 serious injuries in 2015, the year of Clancy O'Connor's crash. "Unfortunately as drugged driving has increasingly found its way into the driver's seat, these numbers are not improving," says John Cheesman, Chairman of the Pierce County Traffic Safety Task Force and Chief of the Fircrest Police Department.

CONTACT: *For interviews with the victim and his family:* Marsha Masters, Kitsap County Target Zero Manager, 360.551.6233 (cell) *For media ride-alongs:* Lt. Fred Douglas, Gig Harbor Police Department, 253.250.1785 (cell) *For event information:* Gloria Mansfield Averill, Pierce County Target Zero Manager, 253.222.9088 (cell)

