

## **Darien Kids Win Awards for 'Stay off the Phone; Drop It & Drive' Artwork**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

**Categories :** [Darien Library](#), [Parents & Kids](#), [Public Safety](#)

**Tagged as :** [Drop It](#), [Drop It & Drive](#), [Drop It & Drive Darien](#), [Drop It & Drive Darien 2016](#), [Drop It & Drive in Darien 2016](#), [Drop It And Drive](#), [Drop It And Drive In Darien](#), [Drop It and Drive In Darien 2016](#)

**Date :** May 12, 2016

Awards were given out Wednesday for artwork from Darien kids with the message "Stay off the phone when driving" as part of a "Drop It & Drive in Darien" competition meant to remind their parents.

Elementary school students were asked to design a poster, and middle school students a couple of comic book pages with the theme "On the road equals off the phone: Let's make Darien a safer community," said Whitney Ball, a Darien mother and founder of "Drop It & Drive Darien."

Ball's organization tries to get the safety message out around town. Darienite.com is a sponsor of the competition.

In addition to getting a ribbon and a certificate (and having their artwork displayed through May at Darien Library), contest winners each received cash prizes of \$25, \$50 or \$75.

Here's what the artwork looked like, and lists of the winners:

Ball thanked everyone who participated in the competition and thanked Darien Library for hosting the awards ceremony for kids late Wednesday afternoon. Then First Selectman Jayme Stevenson, who was standing next to Ball to help hand out the awards, suddenly said:

"I'm going to stop you there for just one second." Turning to the audience, Stevenson continued: "She's been so busy thanking everybody around town and all of you for your fantastic entries. [...] I want to personally thank, on behalf of the town, Whitney Ball for this incredible initiative, which really hit home for me on my way over here from Town Hall. I stopped at this traffic light, and every car I saw had a ["Drop It & Drive in Darien"] magnet on it."

More than 2,000 of the magnets have been distributed since Ball began the organization last fall.

"So I think it's really taking hold, and only through your efforts, Whitney, to really bring this to a greater awareness. We can all do better with this. I know I can do better with this, too.

"And kids, you're the most powerful voice of all, because if you tell your parents, 'Don't be distracted when they're driving — no texting, no talking and all of those things — they're going to listen to you. So thank you so much for all of your work, and Whitney, we can't thank you enough."

Ball later said, "We can turn this around, at least within this generation."

## ***Darienite***

The contest announcement for Kindergarten through Grade 5 kids described what was wanted (and an announcement for the middle schooler comic book contest was similar): "Create an original safety/awareness message that encourages safe, unimpaired driving, especially cell phone use while driving, in our Darien community." <https://darienite.com>

---

Use the contest message "Let's Make Darien A Safer Community. / On The Road = Off The Phone" in your entry. Show your creativity while you emphasize why it is dangerous to everyone when drivers don't pay attention to what they are doing."

You can get car magnets for "Drop It & Drive in Darien" in the Town Hall lobby, Darien Police Headquarters and at various places around town. For more information, [see the website](#).