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Driving school goes virtual



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In the wake of so many fatal accidents in Horry County, a local driving school has a new program that gives people a better sense of driving before they actually hit the road.

At Coastal Grand Mall, Demetrius Jones, 14, got a unique experience behind the wheel Saturday, without his mom in the car. "I always tell him, it's not as easy as it sounds," said Jacqueta Jones, Demetrius's mother.

After driving the Cyclops Simulator, he learned how dangerous driving can be. "It was a good simulation of what really happened, it was like tunnel vision," said Demetrius.

The Coastal Academy for Driver Education introduced their new simulator to the public Saturday, giving folks a realistic driving perspective. The headset allows drivers to see a virtual road with obstacles.

There are 30 scenarios you can do, including driving under the influence and watching out for pedestrians.

John Kurywchak, the driving school's CEO, said the simulator teaches proper defensive driving tactics, with hopes of preventing fatal accidents that often happen when drivers over-correct the wheel.

"Over-correcting is something that happens in the simulator anyway, so the smaller actions is something the simulator helps the student get used to," said Kurywchak.



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The simulator also teaches drivers to be aware of distractions, but the biggest thing Kurywchak likes is making sure kids get an appreciation of not drinking and driving.

"It really shows what it is to drive when you had one too many, 3 too many, it's a visual feel to how bad things can get, " said Kurywchak.

With an added driving tool, the school hopes it will teach the dangers and prevent accidents.

A new driving class, which includes the simulator, starts on September 15th. For information call, 651-6066

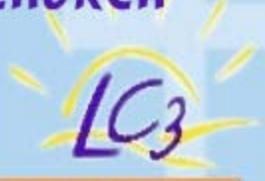
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