

# WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS IN THE U.S.

**For Immediate Release: October 12, 2023**

**Media Contacts:**

Amy Cohen, Families for Safe Streets  
646-581-4232  
[amy@familiesforsafestreets.org](mailto:amy@familiesforsafestreets.org)

Leah Shahum, Vision Zero Network  
415-322-0438  
[leah@visionzeronetwork.org](mailto:leah@visionzeronetwork.org)

Triny Willerton, It Could Be Me  
713-775-3636 (available for Spanish as well)  
[trinywillerton@gmail.com](mailto:trinywillerton@gmail.com)

## **Record-High Traffic Deaths Spur Actions Nationwide: November 19 is World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims**

*Actions planned for [World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims – November 19, 2023](#) – will draw attention to the urgent need – and historic opportunity with billions in new funding – to make life-saving changes to the nation’s failing transportation system.*

Note: Both print quality and digital images of previous events are available upon request. See a [recap](#) of last year’s events.

---

*(New York, NY and San Francisco, CA) — As the number of people killed and injured in preventable roadway crashes reaches staggeringly high levels in the U.S. – far beyond the rates of comparable nations – aid may be on the way for some. More than 500 communities across the U.S. are being funded to develop ambitious plans to advance [Vision Zero](#): the goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries. [Is your community one of them?](#)*

On [World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims \(Nov. 19, 2023\)](#), people across the nation are organizing actions to demand local, regional and tribal leaders take advantage of billions of dollars in new funding to stem the record-number of roadway deaths. More than [500 communities \(see map & list\) received grants totalling \\$800 million](#) in the first cycle of the new federal [Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program](#) to develop Vision Zero plans and build new safety projects.

“It’s unacceptable that, as a nation, we are burying more than 40,000 children, brothers, sisters, mothers and loved ones each year and devastating their communities – day in and day out, year after year. It can and it must stop,” said Amy Cohen, whose son was hit and killed by a driver in NYC while walking to soccer practice in 2013. Cohen co-founded [Families for Safe Streets](#), a national advocacy group with 20 chapters and thousands of individuals who have been hit and injured and/or lost loved ones in crashes and who are now fighting for change.

The number of World Day of Remembrance actions across the U.S. has grown significantly in the past few years. Community advocates and elected officials, along with survivors and people who’ve lost loved ones in crashes, are calling for more funding and faster delivery of road safety projects. Last year, more than 60 U.S. communities organized World Day of Remembrance activities, including memorials, candlelight vigils, rallies, mass bike rides and more (see [2022 photo gallery](#) and summary).

### **Shocking Statistics of Preventable Tragedies on U.S. Roads**

- In 2022, [more than 46,000 people were killed](#) in roadway crashes in the U.S., according to the National Safety Council. While this is a slight (0.3%) decrease from the prior year, this is little comfort, as 2021 saw a [16-year high](#) in U.S. traffic deaths and the largest annual percentage increase in the nation’s reporting history.
- The [U.S. ranks the worst](#) amongst 29 high-income countries analyzed for road safety by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The population-based death rate in the U.S. is 11.1 per 100,000 population, which is the highest amongst the 29 high-income countries and 2.3 times the average rate of the 28 other countries (4.8 per 100,000).
- Roadway crashes in the U.S. disproportionately harm some communities: **Black people** are [nearly 30% more likely to be killed in crashes](#) than white people; **people in very low-income neighborhoods** are [73% more likely to be hit and killed while walking](#) compared to the general population; and **pedestrian deaths** [increased 58%](#) and **bicyclists’ deaths** [increased 31%](#) between 2012 and 2021.

### **Advocates Call for Proven, Live-Saving Strategies to Be Put into Place**

“We have the tools and know-how right now to prevent most roadway deaths and severe injuries, but too often political and corporate leaders dodge responsibility to address these preventable tragedies by leading us to believe that they’re inevitable, but that is simply not true. If we put into place the proven

strategies working in other nations, we would save tens of thousands of lives,” said Leah Shahum, founder and executive director of [Vision Zero Network](#), a national organization supporting Vision Zero and World Day of Remembrance.

**Calls for action on World Day of Remembrance include the following:**

- **Re-design roads and set policies to prioritize Safety over Speed.** Speed is a top contributor to the occurrence of traffic crashes *and* a top indicator of severity of injuries. A reduction of just 1mph in operating speed can result in a notable [17% decrease in fatal crashes](#). Vision Zero advocates are demanding that city, state and federal leaders lower speed limits, re-design roadways, and leverage proven technology to manage speeds and improve safety.
- **Leverage historic, new funding for near-term safety investments, particularly in most needed communities.** Transportation funding should be focused on *safe* mobility – not speed – and prioritized to benefit the communities suffering disproportionately, including people walking and biking, people in low-income areas and communities of color (see statistics above).
- **Boost safe transit, walking and biking options for more people.** We [cannot reach national climate goals](#) without more convenient alternatives to single car use. Relying on shifting more people to electric vehicles will not get us to needed climate targets fast enough, nor does it meet Vision Zero safety goals.

“Given the twin crises of record-high, preventable roadway deaths *and* the worsening climate disaster, we must pick up the pace of making it safe and convenient for more people to make more trips without driving,” said Triny Willerton, founder of [It Could Be Me](#), a survivor of a serious crash and an organizer of World Day of Remembrance events in Boulder, CO. “We call on local, state and national leaders to stop expanding roads and freeways and instead invest in dedicated bus lanes, protected bike lanes and safe walking environments. We do not have time to waste.”

**Local calls for stepped-up action for roadway safety follow establishment of the first [national goal of zero traffic deaths](#) and the release of the [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) in early 2022.** As U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said at last year’s World Day of Remembrance: “A single preventable death is a tragedy, tens of thousands of them a year is a national crisis – one that demands not just our remembrance, but our urgent action.” (See his [remarks](#) from 2022 World Day of Remembrance.)

**Learn more about U.S. World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims activities and calls for change at [wdor-usa.org](#).**

**U.S. World Day of Remembrance is organized by [Vision Zero Network](#), [Families for Safe Streets](#), [It Could Be Me](#) and [Road to Zero Coalition](#), in partnership with local communities.**

###

