

Please Don't Try This on the Street!

Industry Program Combats Illegal Street Racing

(NAPSA)—Sport compact cars are today's very popular hotrods. Honda Civics and Ford Focuses and their hi-tech cousins are being tuned-and-tweaked rather than the V-8 monsters of the past.

These nimbler, quicker cars provide their drivers with the opportunity to show off their stuff, sometimes in unsafe and illegal ways. Illegal street racing and its possible unfortunate consequences make headlines, negative ones at that.

RASR, aka Racers Against Street Racing, is working hard to combat the problem of dangerous, illegal street racing. How? Professional sport compact drag-racing heroes and heroines are taking their status as role models seriously, and speaking out against the practice of illegal street racing.

Stephan Papadakis and Lisa Kubo—the Michael Jordan and Mia Hamm of sport compact drag racing—were featured prominently on an episode of MTV's acclaimed series “Flipped.” The show focused on the tragic repercussions of street racing, including death.

RASR uses a video version of the TV show in classrooms and at automotive enthusiast events. Driver education and other high school classroom teachers draw on RASR's professionally developed curriculum to supplement the dramatic video.

Classroom programs are only one part of the RASR outreach, however.

RASR also takes an active role in promoting alternatives to illegal street racing. Many professional racetracks across the country are instituting street-legal “drags.” These programs offer participants the thrill of intense com-



Credit: Super Street magazine

The Racers Against Street Racing program works to convert amateur racers from illegal street racing to “street legal” programs at local racetracks.

petition while providing some things not available on the street—a controlled, professional race environment and official time slips to provide real proof showing just how fast their cars are.

Some racetracks are taking their street-legal programs to another level, adding other lifestyle attractions to their amateur racing events, including car shows, climbing walls, live music performances and foam play pits.

The racetracks have the support of local law enforcement authorities. In southern California, for instance, the local police issue “tickets”—to go race at their local Irwindale Speedway at no charge.

Another RASR fan is professional drag race champion Lisa Kubo. She said, “Illegal street racing is so dangerous. While you might win \$5, you can also get a ticket that could cost you hundreds and hundreds of dollars, and the possible loss of your license. The money that ticket

costs you could be put to much better use—to improve your car, to support your team, to buy uniforms. Illegal street racing just isn't worth it.”

RASR's message against illegal street racing contends with hundreds of media messages that depict street racing as glamorous and OK, said Christopher J. Kersting, president and CEO of SEMA, the Specialty Equipment Market Association which houses the RASR effort. He noted that the reality is quite different, that in fact it's a rare day when there isn't news about the unfortunate results of a street-racing incident in this country. “RASR strives hard to educate new drivers about the dangers of street racing and aggressive driving stunts that put them, and others, at risk of serious injury and death.”

More information about RASR and its programs to provide legal alternatives to street racing within controlled environments is available at www.rasr.info.