

**February 17, 2003**

Kate Olmsted admits that it's still frustrating when one of her peers does not heed her advice about drinking and driving. That frustration has not stopped her from continuing to speak out on the subject at every opportunity.

Olmsted is a junior at Illinois Wesleyan University where she has organized campus-wide educational sessions on drunken driving in each of her first two years. She will bring a series of speakers to the campus on March 4 for a special meeting. Kate has a personal stake in educating as many of her fellow students as possible on the subject. Her older sister, Erin Olmsted, was killed in March 1997 while she was a passenger in a car driven by a drunken driver. Kate was a high school freshman when Erin, a senior in high school, died.

"When I go out on a weekend and know that someone is going to drive a car when he or she shouldn't, it is frustrating," Olmsted admits. "Still, I can't let that stop me from continuing to do whatever I can do to let people know about the issues."

Olmsted believes that more can and should be done at the junior high school and senior high school levels to educate students. But she also believes that such education has to be realistic.

"One of the things that I hope to do when I begin my teaching career is design and develop educational programs that will reach students when they really need to hear and understand this message," says Olmsted, an education major at Illinois Wesleyan.

"Although I agree completely that 16-year-olds should not be drinking, I also know that many, many kids who aren't of legal age do drink," she says. "I think it's increasingly important to make them aware of what it means to be responsible."

Olmsted, who works with the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists, is glad to hear that statistics show as much as a 60 percent decrease in the number of drunken-driving fatalities for 16- and 17-year-old drivers. She knows that there is more to be done.

"I was reluctant to begin speaking out because I had a really hard time talking about my sister's death," Olmsted says. "Even now I often get choked up in a presentation if it's been a while since I've made one. To talk about it a few times a year is good for me. It's like therapy. If I don't do something, it's like it happened for no reason."