

## **Fundación Cepsa and Aesleme raise awareness of road safety issues**

- **Through talks in educational centers, given by victims of traffic accidents who have suffered a spinal cord injury.**
- **Raise awareness, generate empathy, and promote positive change in the behavior of young people on the road, objectives of the program.**

Fundación Cepsa has learned about the content of the "Te Puede Pasar" (It Can Happen To You) program from the Association for the Study of Spinal Cord Injury (Aesleme), as part of its program of visits to the winners of the Social Value Awards 2022, by attending one of the talks on road safety awareness, given by the representative of the entity in the Canary Islands, Juany Ramirez.

With the ultimate goal of saving lives, changing the attitude towards responsible and safe transportation values of nearly 9,000 students in middle school, high school, and vocational education throughout this year, seven people with spinal cord injury due to traffic accidents, previously trained both in road safety and training of trainers by the experts of the Association, have spent six months giving lectures in numerous schools in the islands. A project that will be extended for the rest of the year, with José Manuel Fernández-Sabugo as a solidarity sponsor at Cepsa.

During a visit to one of the talks, the head of Fundación Cepsa in the Canary Islands, Belén Machado, emphasized that "these sessions are a very effective way of raising awareness among young people and can help prevent traffic accidents. The fact that they are taught by people who have suffered a spinal cord injury as a result of a road accident has a notable impact, as their personal experience of the accident and the real consequences and challenges they have had to face due to the disability are things that young people will find difficult to forget."

"You can see how, after hearing a talk like, the perception of risk increases in them, which can motivate them to change their attitude about driving. They stop feeling invulnerable and realize that no one is exempt from risks on the road, as well as the importance of having a responsible and safe attitude behind the wheel," he said.

In the words of Aesleme's representative, Juany Ramírez, "traffic accidents are a very serious problem for society, claiming the lives of more than a million people a year. In Spain alone, so far in 2023 we have already exceeded 400 fatalities, and that is without counting the serious after-effects they often cause in those who come out alive. Financial support such what Fundación Cepsa provides us with enables us to continue on this path of raising awareness among young people."

"As people with spinal cord injury are the ones telling them about it in first person, they connect emotionally with us, generating an empathy that encourages them to reflect. The data may be forgotten, but the experience we share with them as accident victims is not. It is a very powerful tool to raise awareness and prevent accidents," she said.

During the road safety education talks with first-person testimonies of accident victims, the young people also learn about the various injuries that can occur as a result of a road accident, emphasizing the importance of prevention and how reckless driving actions can have a very negative and lasting impact on their own lives or the lives of other people such as family and friends.

At the same time, emphasis is placed on the importance of complying with traffic regulations, not driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, avoiding distractions such as the use of cell phones at the wheel, and wearing seat belts or helmets in the case of motorcycles.

All of this promotes positive changes in young people's behavior on the road, with a lasting impact.

### **Social Value Awards**

These annual awards, which began in 2005, are one of the stand-out initiatives of Fundación Cepsa. They are held in the Canary Islands, Madrid, Huelva, Campo de Gibraltar, Portugal, and Colombia, and are aimed at supporting disadvantaged people, groups and sectors, in addition to promoting solidarity values by involving Cepsa's professionals, who sponsor the projects presented by the non-profit organizations.

A total of 69 projects have been carried out to date in the Canary Islands thanks to these awards, with a contribution of around €650,000 from Fundación Cepsa.

The 2023 call will begin on September 7.

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