

## Lac Courte Oreilles Teen Saved by the Seat Belt

The Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO), Wisconsin, Injury Prevention Committee's seatbelt campaign was credited with preventing the death or serious injury of a teenager who was in a rollover crash. In this country, more than 40,000 people lose their lives in motor vehicle crashes (MVCs) every year – or, on average, one person dies every 13 minutes.

MVC death rates are about 4 times higher for teenage drivers than those 25-69 years old. MVCs are the leading cause of death for American Indians between 1-44 years old. Research has shown that use of seat belts reduces the risk of death to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent. Yet seat belt usage rates are very low in many Reservation communities.



*Natalie Miller and a photo of her car shortly after a rollover crash.*

### **A Success Story**

Natalie Miller, a LCO teenager, relates this story. While driving one morning, a deer ran in front of Natalie's new car. When Natalie swerved to miss the deer, her car rolled, landing with its front end in the ground and its back bumper in the air. Natalie was shocked and scared after the crash, and wondered about the serious injury or death she may have suffered had she not been wearing her seatbelt. Natalie later said "thanks to the LCO Injury Prevention Program and their on-going seatbelt campaign, I always remember to put on my seat belt".

For more information, contact Carolyn Quaderer, LCO Injury Prevention Committee, 715-634-4795 or Bemidji Area Indian Health Service at 218-444-0503.