



## Ford, Effat University Mark International Women's Day with Global Debut of Driving Skills for Life for Her in Saudi Arabia

- Ford Driving Skills for Life for Her – the first event of its kind since the historic royal decree to lift the ban on women obtaining a driver's license in Saudi Arabia – made its global debut this week at Jeddah's Effat University
- New customized version of Ford's award-winning global initiative helps women build confidence behind the wheel as they prepare to acquire their driver's license
- More than 250 students are among the first graduates of the program, coinciding with International Women's Day on Thursday

### [More Middle East Driving Skills for Life Coverage](#)

**JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, March 8, 2018** – In their continued efforts to empower women, Ford Motor Company and Jeddah-based Effat University are wrapping up the inaugural session of Ford Driving Skills for Life for Her this week, a special version of Ford's globally renowned safe driving program for teens and new drivers. Designed to accommodate Saudi women ahead of them acquiring a driver's license for the first time, the award-winning program's global debut in the Kingdom coincides with International Women's Day on Thursday.

Ford Driving Skills for Life for Her marks the second initiative the company has launched in Saudi Arabia aimed at empowering women and giving them the skills they need to embark on their journey with confidence. Last year, Ford Fund – the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company – debuted its Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy in the Middle East, providing 50 Saudi women entrepreneurs with the tools and knowledge needed to sustain their businesses.

"Providing access to opportunities for people to reach their full potential is core to our mission and Ford's goal of becoming the world's most trusted mobility company," said Jim Vella, president, Ford Fund.

Vella, in the Kingdom this week for the momentous occasion, said it's no coincidence that the program takes place around International Women's Day, marking the social, economic and cultural achievements of women. "We are thrilled to be part of this historic milestone as we bring Ford Driving Skills for Life for Her to Saudi Arabia," he said. "This program is designed to help young women feel safe and confident behind the wheel for the first time, and with it, we look forward to welcoming a new generation of women to the driver's seat."

Dr. Haifa Jamalallail, president of Effat University, said: "The wheels of change are constantly moving, and finally Saudi Arabia has caught up with the rest of the world with regard to women driving. Statistics show that women are generally safer and more defensive drivers than men."

"At Effat University, we are determined that this becomes the case also here," Jamalallail continued. "We want women to be behind the wheel, and so we are looking forward to working with all elements of society to improve the safety of all citizens on the road. The Ford Driving Skills for Life program is a step in this direction."

Ford Driving Skills for Life for Her is training more than 250 Effat University students, incorporating lessons necessary for new drivers, tips from highly skilled experts, and a deep understanding of safe driving practices, which is paramount for new drivers as they take to the roads for the first time. Modules for this customized introductory program were created with first-time drivers in the Kingdom in mind. Sessions include:

- Learning About Your Vehicle: Students are taught the fundamentals of preparing to drive, including the importance of adjusting seating position, checking mirrors and placing hands at the correct point on the steering wheel
- Braking: This session allows students to learn to safely control a car from being in motion to bringing it to a complete stop, preparing them to take to the road with confidence
- Driver Distraction: This session stresses the importance of staying focused on the road at all times, highlighting through practical, hands-on experience the dangers of driving distracted. In Saudi Arabia alone, close to [7,500 road deaths in 2017\\* were attributed to the use of mobile phones while driving](#)

Participating students had the chance to wear specially designed “fatal vision” goggles to mimic the effect of tiredness or drowsiness, as well as unique nighttime goggles that create conditions synonymous with driving on darker roads, which often requires added attention and focus.

“I’ve always been a passenger in the car and I can’t wait to get behind the wheel,” said Shams Hakim, an Effat University student in the business human resources program. “I’m excited, but I also have some apprehension about what is actually involved in driving. Ford Driving Skills for Life for Her has given me the confidence and education I need for the journey that lies ahead to obtain my license.”

More than [9,000 people were killed in car accidents in Saudi Arabia in 2016\\*\\*](#) – an average of more than 25 per day – mainly due to speeding, a figure sure to cause concern for new drivers. With Driving Skills for Life, Ford aims to instill safe driving practices early on with younger drivers, both men and women.

A signature program of Ford Fund, Driving Skills for Life is an international initiative for road safety created in cooperation with the Governors Highway Safety Association and a panel of safety experts. It captures newly licensed drivers’ interest with free, hands-on ride-and-drive courses that pair new drivers with professional instructors to focus on the issues and obstacles that cause crashes, including impaired and distracted driving. Now in its 15th year, Ford Driving Skills for Life has provided free training to more than 1 million newly licensed drivers in more than 40 countries. In total, Ford has invested more than \$50 million in initiatives globally as part of its long-standing commitment to promoting safety on the road.

Since its Middle East launch in 2013, more than 3,600 students have participated in Ford’s Driving Skills for Life program, with sessions in three cities across Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates last year alone.

Ford intends to conduct phase two of Driving Skills for Life for Her later this year at Effat University, then expand to other institutions across the Kingdom.

Driving Skills for Life for Her is part of Ford’s global commitment to providing access and opportunities for women. From its Empower-Her women entrepreneur program to projects focused on helping end human trafficking, as well as numerous initiatives that provide professional development and leadership training, Ford Fund has long supported programs that help women succeed by overcoming social, educational and financial obstacles.

*[\\*As reported by Saudi Gazette](#)*

*\*\*As reported by Arab News*

## About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 202,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit [www.corporate.ford.com](http://www.corporate.ford.com).

Ford's history in the Middle East goes back more than 60 years. The company's local importer-dealers operate more than 155 facilities in the region and directly employ more than 7,000 people, the majority of whom are Arab Nationals. For more information on Ford Middle East, please visit [www.me.ford.com](http://www.me.ford.com).

Ford Middle East is also a responsible corporate citizen with currently various CSR initiatives running in the region including the Ford Motor Company Conservation & Environmental Grants, Ford Warriors in Pink<sup>®</sup> breast cancer awareness campaign, Ford Driving Skills for Life for young drivers and the Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy education initiative for young entrepreneurs.

## About Ford Motor Company Fund

Ford Motor Company Fund is the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company. Established in 1949, Ford Fund invests in transformational programs that advance innovation, empower people, promote social mobility and improve community prosperity. Ford Fund works with local and global partners to create opportunities in education, encourage safe driving, enlist employee volunteers and enrich community life. For more information, visit <http://community.ford.com>, or join us on Facebook [@FordFund](https://www.facebook.com/FordFund) and Twitter [@FordFund](https://twitter.com/FordFund).