



‘Having a car . . . is like freedom’

Leigh Osborne, 15, rides the No. 67 bus from near her home in Strafford to Coe-Brown Northwood Academy, where she is a sophomore. Osborne and her twin brother, Randy, left, will be taking their driver’s tests sometime this summer after they turn 16 in June. Once they get their drivers’ licenses, they’ll share a 1994 Ford Escort, which is currently sitting unused next to the garage on her parents’ property in rural Strafford.

I am definitely ready to be done riding the bus to school with all the freshman. It’s kind of embarrassing to ride the bus, seeing all of my friends getting rides and driving to school. It’s horrible.

To me, having a car when you are a teenager is like freedom. Because you have 15 years of having your parents take you places and waiting around for your parents.

Every week, I get stuck at school, waiting for hours at a time. We have always had to plan out our schedule for the week because my mom has to go pick up my brother and me and my sister. My parents have five kids, so it’s been kinda hard traveling and trying to find rides.

When I get my license, it’s gonna make it easier for me to travel around and get to places where I need to be on time. I just think it is going to give (my mom) some time off, and I know it’s going to give me time off because I am not going to have to stay after at school and wait around.

I will get to go everywhere without waiting for my parents to come home. I’ll be able to hang out a lot more and go places. Mostly I will be going over to friends’ houses, just going over and hanging out with my friends.

All that I hear is that, “When you guys get your licenses, all that you guys are going to do is go to the store and pick up your sister,” and all that stuff. That’s something we know is gonna happen, and I know that after a while, I am going to get used to it, and it’s gonna get annoying. My dad is going to pay for the car, the insurance and repairs, and they are going to help us

with the gas a little bit, and once we get money, we are going to start paying for all of that stuff ourselves.

My parents have a Ford Escort waiting for me. It’s kind of hard to look at the car knowing that I am going to be driving it in six months. It is going to be a bit shaky sharing the car, cause we both do sports and its going to be hard for us to share one car if we are going different places.

There is probably going to be some fights, but just typical brother-sister stuff.

When I first started driving with my mom, I started to worry about the talking. It bugs me when she talks to me while I’m driving. I know my brother is going to talk to me, but if he just talks to me nice about school stuff or just stuff in general, it will be fine. But if we start arguing, if we start fighting in the car, it’s gonna be a big hazard. I’m going to have to keep my temper down when I’m in the car. I know I’m gonna have the music up. I’m not going to talk on my cell phone; I get very distracted. I can’t really pay attention to where I am going if I am talking on my phone at the same time.

My mom definitely emphasizes safety. That’s all that she worries about when we are in the car because my two older sisters have already gotten into accidents, so she worries about it a lot. They weren’t really bad, just bumping into trees and stuff. She has a right to worry about it. I am a pretty good at driving, but there is always a chance of getting in an accident.

They are going to have limitations, like, I know they are going to have a curfew for me. I don’t really have a curfew right now, but when I have a car, I will because it’s, you know, driving and stuff for the first time.

To me, having a car is very important because there is a lot to do in high school, like, there’s so many things to join, and you have to get there at certain times, and finding rides is very hard. I’ve always wanted to join student activities, but I couldn’t because I would never have a ride to get here in the mornings for meetings because my parents are busy.