



Saved by the Belt- Danielle Deschenes

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Only a few days after the Thanksgiving holiday, Danielle Deschenes and her two children, Alexis Logan and Michael, had a lot to be thankful for—wearing their seatbelts.

On Saturday November 28, 2009, Deschenes loaded her children into their SUV Ford Explorer and headed up north to Havre to pick up a friend from the train station. When the truck she began to pass on the Old Highway put its blinker on, she thought to herself, *You have to be kidding me*. Just 20 miles outside of Havre, the truck, which was pulling a horse trailer, turned into her lane just as she sped up to pass it. Going 80 miles per hour, Deschenes swerved to miss him and severely overcorrected her car. In hindsight, she says she should have just headed into the ditch. Instead, she heard the car's axle snap and Deschenes and the children flipped four times.



"I never lost consciousness," Deschenes says. "I was awake the whole time. I closed my eyes and held on and I could hear my kids in the backseat screaming the whole time."

When they finally stopped rolling, Deschenes' first thought was to make sure her children were okay. The smell of gas was overpowering and she claims she's seen too many movies where people blow up at the site. Deschenes managed to remain calm and helped her seven-year-old son and five-year-old daughter crawl out the back window. The kids kept pointing out that Deschenes' hands were all bloody and scratched from the broken glass, but she says she was focused on getting out of the vehicle. It wasn't until later that she would learn she hit her head, bruised her arm and walked away with a black eye. All of it though, is better than the alternative.

"I still can't believe we walked away from it," Deschenes says.

Danielle, Alexis Logan and Michael Deschenes were all chosen as the [Safe Kids Montana](#) and City-County Health Department's *Saved by the Belt* award recipients. They will receive a one-year membership to AAA services and will continue to wear their seat belts.

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