

NC SADD YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE RECAP

The 2019 Youth Empowerment Conference—"Dive Into SADD," marked the 37th Anniversary of NC SADD, and it was a blast. Our theme was The Ocean. Chapters attended from **JP Knapp Early College High School** *(Currituck), **First Flight High School** and **Manteo High School** (Dare), **Person High School** (Person), **Weldon High School** and **Weldon Middle School** (Halifax), and **West Iredell High School** (Iredell). For the first time, the conference was hosted by the Charlotte/Concord Great Wolf Lodge, a site that provided lots of diversion when conference was not in session. Students and advisors arrived in cars, vans and buses Friday afternoon ready to have an adventurous weekend retreat. The purpose of the conference is to celebrate the chapters for their prevention efforts and keep them abreast of the latest prevention methods in traffic safety, leadership development, self-esteem building, and teen pregnancy, substance misuse, and violence prevention. Presenters and partners contributing to the success of the conference were the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Commission, Community Prevention Services, Durham County Dept. of Public Health, Mecklenburg County Prevention and Intervention Services, NC State Highway Patrol, TextLess Live More, and Valarie R. Brooks Real Estate.

Council for Women & Youth Involvement Executive Director **Mary Williams-Stover** opened the conference and welcomed everyone on behalf of the Dept. of Administration. During the evening, she had everyone do the wave to "Rollin' on the River." The wave rolled several times from table to table all around the room and generated much laughter and fun.

*School County

Mary Williams-Stover (*inset*) directs the wave.



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CLICK IT OR TICKET.

TALK it OUT START THE CONVERSATION. STOP UNDERAGE DRINKING.



Council for Women & Youth Involvement
Department of Administration

We Had Visitors from National



Emily Curtis (left) and Marie McGrath

Emily Curtis, field operations coordinator, and **Marie McGrath**, TextLess Live More director, brought greetings from the SADD National office and talked about exciting programming that SADD is providing for chapters registered through the registration portal. Curtis and McGrath participated the entire weekend and helped make the conference a success. Curtis conducted advisor workshops, and McGrath conducted student workshops. We appreciate their contributions and support of NC SADD.

We Started the Conversation

Jim Van Hecke, ABC Commission deputy director for education and outreach, and Nicole Augustine, Talk it Out ambassador, announced the Talk it Out/SADD partnership. Talk it Out: Start the Conversation, is an initiative to get parents involved in on-going conversations with their children about underage drinking. We have formed a partnership with ABC that kicked off at the conference with the announcement of a contest among the chapters. The chapter with the highest number of Talk it Out pledge card signups by April 17, 2020, will receive special recognition.



Jim Van Hecke (left) and Nicole Augustine "Start the Conversation."

Talk It Out urges parents to start the conversation about underage drinking with their children *now*—rather than wait until alcohol use becomes a problem. Research shows that the average age that teens take their first drink is 14, and many start even younger. For more about Talk it Out and to take the pledge, go to <https://www.talkitoutnc.org/sadd/>.

The SAB Rocked!



The Mermaid Squad

The SAB discusses conference rules and regulations on opening night.

Left-Right: India Burton, Ashley Sudduth, JaKayla Betts, Makayla Woods, and Aryana Daye

The five-member 2019 Student Advisory Board was made up entirely of females from Person County—three high school students and two college students. These ladies did an excellent job of helping to plan and manage the conference. They hosted, led the student sessions, and provided great entertainment throughout the weekend.

Thanks, Person County, for producing such capable leaders.

We Were All the Way Up

Valarie R. Brooks, award-winning real estate magnate and motivational speaker, got the audience on their feet and involved in her presentation. She talked about the importance of not allowing others to determine your value. She spoke about her own life in which she had to ignore negative talk and negative energy in order to attain the level of success that she has achieved. She encouraged the students to always reach “all the way up!”



Valarie Brooks (at podium) leads the audience in an inspiring cheer.

We Presented 2019-20 Awards

NC SADD values the diligent efforts of all our students, advisors and chapters during the year. At the annual conference, awards are presented to the student, advisor and chapter that has most exemplified commitment to SADD's mission of empowering youth to successfully confront the risks and pressures that challenge them.

Aryana Daye received the **Student of the Year Award**. She is former president of Person High School SADD and currently a freshman at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Aryana has been involved in SADD for five years. She was recognized because of her dedication to SADD and her expert leadership and mentoring of the Student Advisory Board. In a conversation with the state coordinator, Aryana explained why she chooses to remain involved with SADD.

“As a college student, SADD is very important to me. It has given me the foundation for making good decisions. It is a huge adjustment when coming to college without family and friends. There is also peer

pressure, the presence of alcohol and drugs, and having to start new relationships. SADD prepared me by giving me the information and tools to deal with peer pressure, avoid alcohol and drugs, help others who choose to partake in them, and make healthy friendships and relationships. I take the values of SADD and apply them to my daily life, and I am able to inspire and help others to make good decisions also.”

Congratulations Aryana. Keep up the good work.
Go 'Heels!



Aryana Daye (r) displays her SOY Award with her mother and former advisor, Rhonda Daye.

Sgt. Raymond Vaughan of **Weldon Middle School** received the **Advisor of the Year Award**. However, he said he could not have achieved this recognition without the assistance of **Robin Davis** and **Shronda Smith**, his assistant-advisors. Vaughan explained to the state coordinator why being a SADD advisor is important to him.

“Being a SADD Advisor is both challenging and rewarding at the same time. It has afforded me the opportunity to network with other schools and advisors on ideas and to collaborate with SADD calendar events where the students can be out front as leaders in the school. This role has also helped me to push our students to be responsible and respectful in their day-to-day activities, while upholding a high level of educational skills and priorities. I have and continue to maintain a three-strike infraction policy to hold our students accountable for their actions. In three years of being an advisor, I've never had one student get past two strikes. I continuously

push my students to see their full potential and to understand that mistakes can be avoided if they choose the best possible solution in any situation. As a SADD advisor, I have taken on the responsibility of being a part of these students' lives; teaching them how to use their talents and life lessons to promote a healthy lifestyle that will insure greater opportunities for their future."

Congratulations to Vaughan, Davis and Smith on their good work. **Go Junior Chargers!**



Above left: Sgt. Raymond Vaughan accepts the AOY Award from Harriett Southerland, state coordinator. *Above right:* Sgt. Vaughan with the Weldon Middle School SADD delegation. Shronda Smith is first on left, and Robin Davis is fifth from left.

JP Knapp Early College High School won the **Chapter of the Year Award**. This recognition was based on the quantity *and* quality of their SADD projects, fundraising efforts and commitment. When the chapter was without an advisor during the year, **Christine Bowyer**, the assistant principal, stepped in to keep the chapter going. She said the students had worked so hard, and she didn't want them to miss the conference. **Denise Fallon**, principal at JP Knapp, and Bowyer were the ones who brought the chapter to the conference. Score 100 for administrative support. **Go Spartans!**



JP Knapp students are all smiles as they proudly display their trophy. Principal Denise Fallon (2nd from left) and assistant principal Christine Bowyer (far right) must be proud of them. NC SADD is certainly is!

We Hosted Aspiring LEADers

SADD is proud to partner with LEAD, a new initiative of the Council for Women & Youth Involvement Office, and we were honored to have them participate in the conference. LEAD (Leading, Empowering, Advocating and Developing) provides opportunities for youth to be exposed to exciting career opportunities. Teens gain meaningful work experience and develop the skills, attitudes, and commitment necessary to succeed in the workplace. Students interact with professionals in a positive work environment and participate in leadership, coaching, healthy relationships, community engagement, and career development workshops. Though

LEAD is a short-term program, its goal is to introduce the youth to community leaders who will positively impact their futures. The LEAD program director, Kiricka Yarbrough-Smith, explained how community involvement is critical to the success of the program. "Community leaders and local businesses make the program possible by volunteering to serve as field Instructors and providing structured learning opportunities for the youth during the summer," she said.

LEAD program leaders Kendra Underwood, Molly Overholt, and Kiricka Yarbrough-Smith (seated, left-right) with program mentors and student participants



We Listened to an Inspirational Advisor



Kellene Bock

Kellene Bock of West Iredell High School, 2018-19 Advisor of the Year, gave a rousing closing speech on Sunday morning, the last day of the conference. Her message is indispensable for chapters trying to recruit members and build their SADD programs. Following are some highlights from her talk. Please share them with your chapter members.

"We all face the challenge of getting our peers to "buy into" the ideals we are selling. Some of them will agree and do exactly what we propose. Some will say they agree and go the exact opposite way when asked to make a choice. Some will just ignore us, or worse yet, argue with us or belittle what we are trying to do. It's tough sometimes being the voice for positive choices, but it's clearly important to all of us, since that's why we are here.

Before you share what you are doing and how you are doing it, let your audience know *why*. People don't buy what you do; they buy *why* you do it. If you talk about

what you believe, you will attract those who believe what you believe. There are leaders, and there are those who lead. Leaders hold a position of power or authority, but those who lead inspire us. Whether they're individuals or organizations, we follow those who lead, not because we *have* to, but because we *want* to. We follow those who lead, not for *them*, but for ourselves. And it's those who start with "why" that have the ability to inspire those around them."

What words of wisdom from a dedicated advisor! If Bock can help you with your chapter, please reach out to her at kbock@iss.k12.nc.us. **Go Warriors!**

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Last fall, **Weldon Middle School** SADD sponsored a couple of projects for the benefit of the entire student body. They had a trooper from the State Highway Patrol come to talk to the students about seat belt safety and the importance of always buckling up. The students also learned what happens to an unbuckled person in a crash.

The Choice Bus visited Weldon Middle School. The Choice Bus is an experience-based learning tool designed to show young people the power of education as well as the likely consequences of choosing to drop out of school. The front of the bus looks like a normal school bus, but the back half is a prison bus outfitted with a replica of a jail cell. The cell has authentic bars, bunk beds and a stainless steel toilet. The Choice Bus features a dramatic film presentation and learning tools that help young people understand the consequences and rewards of the choices they make. Students are then invited into the jail cell to experience the atmosphere and living conditions.

The Choice Bus is an initiative of the Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, named for the mother of an Alabama man who, as a young boy, witnessed his father kill his mother in a domestic violence assault. The boy ended up homeless, in poverty, and scavenging for food in garbage cans before the age of 10. What others saw as garbage, he saw as nourishment. When the food was bad or dirty, he cleaned the bad off until he found a part that was good. He learned to feel the same about people. He believes he might have chosen the wrong path had it not been for a teacher who encouraged him to do his best. Today, Dr. Shelley Stewart is a successful businessman who wants to make an impact on youth and have them understand that your attitude and the choices you make determine the direction of your life.

Excellent projects. **Go Junior Chargers!**



Left: Advisors Raymond Vaughan, Shronda Smith (1st and 2nd from left) and- Weldon SADD members with Trooper Brian Smith (far right) after highway safety assembly



Left: Weldon Middle School SADD with the Choice Bus



FREE TRIP TO NATIONAL SADD CONFERENCE

Calling all SADD chapters! The national SADD office and Ford Driving Skills for Life want to support SADD chapter efforts to reduce drunk, drugged, distracted and drowsy driving across the country. All you have to do is share what you are doing to address one or all of these issues in your community. It's easy. Just follow the project matrix to maximize your points. Complete the application before April 17 for your chance to win. The top chapters in each category will have phone interviews to determine the three chapters in each category who will attend the national conference and present their programs to a panel of judges. Each chapter selected to attend the national conference will have their travel, hotel, and conference registration expenses paid.

The presentations and judging will take place before the conference starts on Sunday, and the winners will be announced at the awards luncheon. Each chapter that attends conference will also win a cash prize!

Our chapters often say they can't attend the national conference because it's too expensive. This is an opportunity for your entire chapter to attend without it costing you a cent! Don't miss this opportunity. The conference will be June 28-July 1, 2020, in St. Louis Missouri. If you've never been to the national conference, you are in for a real treat. Information for participating in the contest is attached to the email that contained this newsletter.

Chapters may register for the national conference through the SADD Portal using the **Conferences** tab. Please note that in order to register to attend the confer-

ence, students and advisors must be *registered and paid* members in the SADD Portal.

Free Registration for Advisors

This year, the registration fee for two adult advisors from every chapter is free when they bring students to national conference. To qualify, you must be registered (including payment of registration fees) in the Registration Portal. Students will also have the opportunity to earn public service credits during the conference.

YOUR ANNUAL CHAPTER REGISTRATION

To have access to all the chapter resources available to you, you must register your chapter in the SADD Registration Portal. Some chapters have signed up in the Portal but have not submitted their registration fees. Until you submit your fees, your chapter is not registered. Registration is only \$5.00 per person. This is a small fee compared to the fees of many other organizations, and most families can handle this amount. You can register here: [Register My Chapter](#).

