

Connect



HAIL THE CONQUERING HERO!

Dalton Edwards is an active member of the SADD leadership team at West Iredell High School in Statesville. He is a cheerful, smart, determined young man who has the respect and admiration of those who know him. His SADD advisor, School Resource Officer **Dallas Hicks**, said, "Dalton has been a tremendous asset to our chapter, and I consider him one of my own kids."



Dalton Edwards

Dalton joined SADD when he was a freshman. He said he wanted to be in SADD because of the quality of the organization and because he wanted to be involved in the community. He has tried to educate not only high school students, but middle and elementary students as well, about the harmful effects of destructive decisions.

With many high school students, trying to pass tests, having a love relationship and dealing with parents are their biggest concerns. Dalton hasn't had it quite so easy. In August 2013, the beginning of his junior year, he got sick and was diagnosed with liver cancer. Officer Hicks inquired about donating part of his liver to Dalton, since in some cases a liver can regenerate itself. This was not an option, because Dalton needed an *entire* liver. When asked why he would go to such lengths for one of his SADD members, Officer Hicks replied, "Dalton is a great guy, and if there was anything I could have done to help him, I wanted to do it."

Dalton had a liver transplant in October 2013. He said the thing that upset him the most about his illness was that he couldn't play soccer. He says he plays "on and off" now. In the last 18 months, Dalton has had four additional surgeries. He had malignant tumors removed from his ribs and spinal cord, two ribs removed and a metal plate inserted to support his chest wall.

Dalton was homebound for half his junior year, and he attended school three times a week during his senior year. Officer Hicks said, "Every time he is out of school recovering from his surgeries and treatments, he is always begging me to give him things to work on for SADD."



Dalton participates in a seat belt safety activity during Teen Driver Safety Week.

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Ideas? Questions? Concerns?

Contact

Harriett Southerland
919 807-4400
919-807-4415 fax
hsoutherland@ncsadd.org

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The West Iredell administration has supported Dalton throughout his illness, allowing him to do his school work from home and from his hospital bed. Dalton was not only able to keep up, he finished school this past January (a semester early), and he is looking forward to June when he can walk with his classmates at graduation ceremonies. Dalton has signed a Letter of Intent to play soccer at Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, N.C. (**Go Falcons!**) where he starts in the fall. He will be in the 3/2 MBA program.

Dalton is the middle child of Joseph and Geri Edwards of Statesville. He has a sister aged 10 and a brother aged 21. About Dalton, Mrs. Edwards said, "He has always been a very determined, strong-willed child. When he gets something in his mind, you can't deter him. He is determined to not let cancer define him. Dalton is also very passionate about SADD, and he tries to get as many kids involved in it as possible. He plans to establish a SADD chapter at Pfeiffer."

Even though Dalton has to deal with hospitals, doctors and treatments, his routine at home hasn't changed much. Mrs. Edwards said his chores are cleaning the kitchen, cooking supper, mowing the lawn when he is able and taking care of the dog.

During the interview for this article, when Dalton was asked if he'd had to spend much time in the hospital, he said in an upbeat tone, "I'm in the hospital right now. My brother is here with me." Dalton explained how he maintains such a cheerful, can-do attitude: "My family is very supportive. I've always had a positive attitude, and I laugh a lot. I believe laughter is the cure for everything. I believe I will be perfectly fine, and I'll keep thinking that way until all the cancer is completely gone."

Fellow SADD Club member and state Student Advisory Board member **Katie Thompson** expressed the sentiments of West Iredell and NC SADD when she said, "Dalton has an awesome personality, and it has been an

honor to serve on our school SADD Leadership Team with him. He's a very smart young man who has a lot of fight in him, and I'm so proud of how hard he's fighting. I will always be Team Dalton!

PORTER TO SPEAK AT NAT'L CONFERENCE

The NC SADD 2011-12 Advisor of the Year, **Fonda Porter**, was selected to be one of six presenters at the 2015 SADD National Conference that will be in Nashville



Fonda Porter

Tennessee in June 28-July 1. Fonda is Director of Counseling Services at Louisburg College (**Go Hurricanes!**). She started the Louisburg College SADD chapter because, she said, "I believe the decisions we make as young adults create the foundation for our futures. I want every young man and woman at Louisburg College to have the opportunity

for leadership and growth. I also believe that SADD is **truly** one of the finest organizations in this country."

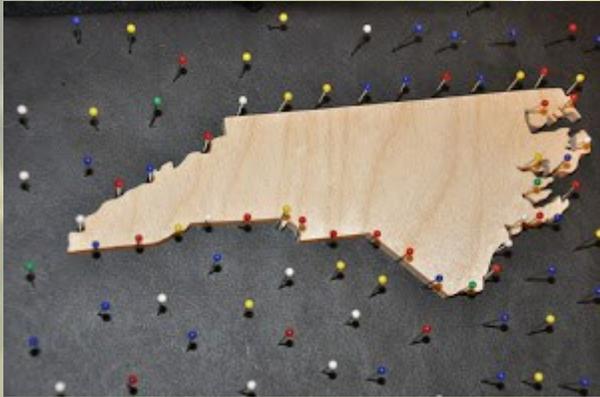
Louisburg College SADD created Project Impact, a display of all 50 states carved from wood, each surrounded by map pins that indicate the number of people who'd lost their lives in alcohol related traffic crashes in that state over the past year (*see photos next page*). They exhibited the project at the state conference. The exhibit was sobering when the viewer understood that each pin they were viewing actually represented a real person.

Fonda's contributions and dedication to prevention have also been recognized by other organizations. She received the highest award offered by Louisburg College, the Bessie Arrington Gupton Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding and Extraordinary Service. She has been named Jaycee Woman of the Year. She has served on the Wake Health Services Board of Trustees, the United States Jaycees and the NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Prior to joining Louisburg College, Fonda founded Safe Space, a model domestic violence prevention program.

In addition to her duties at Louisburg College, Fonda works with businesses and churches to help them build and maintain strong teams. She speaks throughout the state and nation on a variety of subjects, including her



Dalton walks the beam during SADD Leadership Team's teambuilding course.



first-hand experience of how a young person's destructive decisions can affect the ones who love them.

Fonda places a high value on SADD and the dedicated young people who are involved in the program. She said, "I am honored and humbled to have witnessed and known some of the finest young people; they are SADD students. They **are** the cream of the crop, the best of this country's best."

Thank you Fonda, for your contributions, and congratulations on being selected to speak at the SADD National Conference. NC SADD is proud of you!

ALMOST THE REAL THING AT WEST JOHNSTON

The West Johnston High School (in Benson) SADD and Joco Teen Drivers Clubs recently held a Prom Safety Mock Car Crash on the campus. Advisor Amanda Fisher gave the following account of the event.

"The Fire Department and EMS helped us to recreate a realistic wreck to let the students of West Johnston see what really happens when they get into a fatal vehicle crash. All the students were taken to the auditorium, and we had two speakers: Blair Cotten, a girl who got into a wreck driving drunk, and Yvette Davis, a teacher at our school whose daughter died in a car crash in 2007. Her daughter attended West Johnston. SADD and JOCO Teen Drivers then showed a video that

they'd made. It was a video of themselves in a car before the prom. They were texting, drinking and not paying attention to the road. The video ended in a car crash.

"After the video, the students were asked to go out to the football field where the wrecked cars, EMS and Fire vehicles were already in place. When all the students were seated, the call to 911 went out over the loud speakers. First the policeman came, then EMS, then Fire. Even Duke Life Flight came and landed on the football field. They had to cut students out of the car, and they went through the whole process of what happens when you get into a car crash.



“With the help of our community, and the EMS, Fire and Police Departments, the mock crash was very successful. SADD and JOCO members worked very hard on this project to promote teen safe driving.”

NC SADD congratulates the dedicated members of West Johnston High School SADD on a great effort.

Go Wildcats!



Mock crash participants with rescue and law enforcement officers pose together after a job well done.

WEST IREDELL GETS COMMUNITY INVOLVED

West Iredell High School SADD recently hosted the Iredell-Statesville Schools and Community Drug & Alcohol Prevention Forum. An invitation to the forum was issued to parents, students and anyone from the community who was concerned about the current problems students are facing involving drugs and alcohol.

Dalton Edwards, West Iredell SADD Leadership team member, spoke to the audience about SADD and how the program has evolved over the years. He told them how much their chapter had benefitted from attending the annual state SADD conference and shared conference pictures with them. Dalton spoke to the parents in detail about the purpose and activities of West Iredell SADD and stressed the importance of parents encouraging their children to participate in the SADD program. Advisor Dallas Hicks informed the audience, parents in particular, about the current drug and alcohol trends being seen in Iredell County schools and across the state and nation.

Mother and son drunk driving prevention team, **Peggy and Josh Bennett** (pbennett@mgclaw.com) closed the program with their poignant, real life experience of the consequences of youthful destructive decisions.

Officer Hicks reported that at the event, the Iredell-Statesville School System donated \$100 to their SADD chapter. The funds are being used to help with the cost of the SADD cords the seniors will wear at graduation for being active SADD chapter members. “We have 20



Peggy and Josh Bennett

very active seniors graduating this year,” said Officer Hicks.

NC SADD thanks West Iredell for the excellent work they have done this year. We wish the brightest of futures to the graduating seniors. **Go Warriors!**

CAMERON SPEAKS

Some of you, especially advisors, might remember



Cameron Houser

Cameron Houser and his dynamic message from the state SADD Conference. Cameron recently contacted NC SADD to offer his help with any upcoming impaired driving or highway safety projects you may have. Cameron lives in Hudson, NC where he attended South Caldwell High School. He played baseball throughout high school.

Cameron was injured in an automobile crash and had to learn to talk and walk

again. He speaks to students and young adults across the state. Cameron says the message he wants to get across to youth is that the temporary buzz you get from alcohol or drugs is not worth the risk to your future.

If you'd like to have Cameron speak at your school or in your community during the remainder of this year, or to schedule him for next year, please contact him at 828-310-2257.

SIGN UP FOR THE SAVE A LIFE TOUR

Although the national Save A Life Tour is booked up for this school year, they still have some openings in the fall. You will need to contact them to see when they are available. If you want them to do a program for

next prom and graduation season, you need to book well in advance.

The Save A Life Tour is a high impact safe driving awareness program that demonstrates the potentially deadly consequences of poor choices and decisions made by the operator of a motor vehicle. The program specifically places emphasis on distracted driving, im-



Save A Life Tour Simulator

paired driving, driver experience, improper driver behavior and seat belt usage. The Save A Life Tour utilizes several methods of educating, including video presentations, speaking presentations, interactive demonstrations with simulators, pre and post surveys and take-a-ways that include a pledge card and a wristband.

WAIT TO REGISTER!

Some advisors want to get a head start on next term by registering before this term ends. SADD National has asked us to wait until the new school year to register chapters for 2015-16. They are changing the way registrations are done, and your early registration will not count. However, be sure to register first thing when school resumes in August.



NC SADD wishes the very best that life has to offer to all our graduates.

Thanks for your contributions to the SADD program.

