

# Chemical Health Work Group & Pelican Rapids SADD Student Meeting

## April 8, 2011

Attending: Lynn Halmrast (Regional ATOD Prevention Coordinator - 110), David Hauser (OTC Attorney's Office-34), Mary Matteson (Fergus Falls ISD #544-32); Carole Zarling (Productive Alternatives Detox- 34); Karmy Thompson (OTC Human Services-84); Angie Schreder (Perham-Dent School); Jane Patrick (OTFSC Coordinator); Wayne Woolever and ten students from the Pelican Rapids SADD Chapter.

1. Jane Patrick welcomed the group and introduced the Chemical Health Work Group of the Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative who were able to attend today's meeting. Each work group member introduced their involvement with youth and underage drinking. Each of the students introduced themselves and shared why they enjoyed the SADD organization.
2. The purpose of the meeting was to learn more about the Pelican Rapids SADD participation at the Northern Lights SADD conference in Bismarck in March. The Chemical Health Work Group was also interested in gathering input and feedback on how to more effectively reach out to youth about the dangers of underage alcohol use.
3. David Hauser led a discussion with the students on the following questions.
  - A. What one thing did you learn the **most** about when you attended the SADD Conference?
    - Your voice counts – no matter what you have to say it truly does affect a lot of people. “SPEAK UP” when you have the chance because you don't know who may be listening.
    - Over 600 kids from across the nation who all have things in common
    - They make it a point to show students they can control their own decisions
    - Touched on specific topics so students could pick and choose what they wanted to learn more about and focus on
    - Learned that even if students have struggled in the past they can overcome it and go on to make changes and make better decisions in the future.
    - Powerful speakers (Backstroms) that students need to hear to help them to understand that “it” can happen to them!
  - B. What one thing do you wish you had learned **more** about?
    - Backstrom Family should be heard by everyone. The SADD Group thinks that everyone should hear this and would encourage their school's ninth graders to attend if they were hosted again in Fergus Falls.
  - C. We know that more vehicle crashes involving teen drivers are caused by alcohol use than any other factor. Why do you think teens chose to drink and drive?
    - They know it is wrong but have the mentality it “won't happen to me.”
    - They need to choose NOT to drink. Once they make the decision to drink, they don't make good decisions on driving either..
    - Kids are afraid to tell their parents they have been drinking so they chose to drink and drive and hope to not get caught.
    - It is an embarrassment thing caused by peer pressure – “What? You called your parents and didn't just drive home??”
  - D. Of the reasons you have mentioned, what do you think are the top three?
    - They know it is wrong but have the mentality it “won't happen to me.”
    - Kids are afraid to tell their parents they have been drinking.

- It is an embarrassment thing caused by peer pressure – “What? You called your parents and didn’t drive home??”
- E. Are you aware of any traffic laws that are specific to teen alcohol use and alcohol use while driving?
- It is illegal for anyone to drink if they are under 21
  - “Not a Drop Law” is in effect for persons under the age of 21 which the students weren’t really aware of. David will do more research on the consequences for drinking and driving with even small amounts of alcohol.
  - Jane will send the “Not a Drop” and “What’s the Big Deal” brochures to Wayne to distribute to the students.
- F. Do you ever talk with your friends about alcohol use and if so, how do your peers respond to these types of discussions?
- They talk about it with the SADD group, but not with the people who are at the parties.
  - The turning point for when friends/peers talk about it is between grades 8-10 as to when they don’t feel comfortable talking about it.
  - Some students are stubborn and let it go in one ear and out the other.
  - Younger kids will sometimes ask what it is about, but older kids don’t really seek out more information about it. Thought to expand to earlier ages to be more effective.
- G. What do you think are the best ways to reach teens with alcohol prevention messages?
- Speakers (Backstroms, etc.) The brother was the most impactful for the students since he lost his siblings.
  - Seeing things real life – Trooper Andy roll over and crashed vehicles are good examples, but the Mock Crash events seem more like a tv show
  - Marketing and written messages – toilet stall messages
- H. In what ways would the SADD Chapter be interested in partnering with us to address these issues?
- Mock crashes/ghost out events
  - Arranging real life speakers on real life situations
  - Hosting fun, drug free alternative parties
  - Putting up signs, messages, etc., in the community
  - Could SADD kids reach out to and connect with students coming out of treatment to help them make better future decisions. They would NOT shun a person coming out of treatment. Perhaps the SADD group can designate on key student contact at the school so it wouldn’t be so overwhelming for students to make connections if they aren’t familiar with anyone in the group.
- I. If you could put one key message out to teens to prevent them from using alcohol or to help them decide NOT to drink and drive, what would that message be? “You are not alone; It doesn’t just affect you; and/or Most kids don’t use even though most kids think that most do!
- J. If given the opportunity to attend the SADD conference again next year, would you go, and if so, how many of your peers would you want to attend with you?

YES!!! The students would definitely like to go again and would like to see more students attend. It is approximately \$140 to send one student and Mr. Woolever does fund raising to help offset the

costs for students. They would like to see 30 attend from Pelican for next year if funds can be secured.

4. Summary – key points from the students and the work group-
  - The more “real” we make it for students the more impact it makes. Coming from students themselves makes a difference.
  - We need to talk to more students to get a variety of opinions. Parkers would be a good place to start. Could Pelican energize and reenergize other districts to get more involved in SADD.
  - Need to reach out to younger students – by the time students are in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they have often already made some unhealthy choices.
  - Create opportunities to talk about substance abuse in social environments so students realize there are other things to do besides going out to “party”
  - Need more buy-in and involvement from SADD students who only “sign the paper” and get them more actively involved
  - Don’t discriminate – no one is better or worse than anyone else – everyone involved just want to provide a good role model for others and support system for student in the school
  - SADD provides a great support system with other kids to stand behind you who also have fun without doing drugs or alcohol – it is a great group of friends who are easy to hang out with and make good decisions
  - Students feel “good about themselves” and aren’t ashamed of being labeled as “good kids”
5. Current grant – how to ensure we use effectively and efficiently during this grant cycle.
  - Take another look at the programs not funded. Send out an email to everyone involved in the meeting in Underwood and to all the schools attending Youth Health Day. Invite them to send proposal for funds to be used PRIOR to August 31. Include a list of examples of funding requests including transportation costs to Youth Health Day, speakers, summer training for staff, staff stipends for school staff to organize groups such as SADD. Extend invites to faith communities and other youth groups that are not involved directly with schools.
  - Order more signs, posters, billboards, media.
  - Social networking sites- hire someone to do this. Look at this page and say you like it and get an incentive and have the grant fund the incentive.
6. FY12 Funding request
  - Extension of programs in place which are still a need
  - Carry over of funds for programs in the works but which haven’t rooted just yet
  - Coordination and grant writing opportunities such as SPIFSIG grant
  - On-going evaluation
  - Insert request for programs not funded last year
  - SADD program implementation in more communities and support of students to attend National SADD
  - DARE - \$6000 for two grades in Perham – how to make it sustainable and on-going to be evidence-based
  - With all the activities – it provides a variety of messages in a multiple forms, it provides the repeated, continuous message in different formats which are the most impactful. People need to hear the message in a variety of forms for it to finally sink in.
7. **Next chemical health work group meeting – May 13<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 3 p.m. in the Dead Lake Room at the Government Service Center in Fergus Falls.**