

# NORTHERN LIGHTS YOUTH SERVICES

## SPRING 2016

### THE FORCE HAS AWAKENED!

Well, another outstanding Northern Lights SADD conference is in the books, and many people have told me it was our best ever. I'm not going to disagree with them. Many thanks go out to our superb presenters from across the country (and Canada), our sponsors, NL SADD staff and an unprecedented number of SADD alumni volunteers who helped make the event run so smoothly.

As I stated in my closing comments, though, the conference doesn't represent an end to the current year, but a beginning of the next one. That has never been more true than it is in 2016. The national and NL SADD offices are putting together a portfolio of programs and opportunities that will provide our chapters with the best tools of any SADD network in the nation. We are proud of that. We will also be increasing our efforts to spread SADD to even more schools and communities in the region.

So, it wouldn't be right to close the conference by saying, "Thanks, and good job." It is more like, "Hop aboard and hang on!" It's going to be that kind of year. And thank you for being part of it! Together, we are "changing lives, one positive decision at a time."

**-LEE ERICKSON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



### WE ARE ALL FAMILY

The 2016 Northern Lights Conference was chaotic, eventful and so memorable. We saw incredibly talented speakers and experienced so many great activities.

I want to be able to listen to each and every Northern Lights Advisory Board (NLAB) member. I encourage the NLAB members and SADD members to share their stories and why they are involved in this organization. Every single one of us is important, I am no more important than they; I want them to only look at me as an example and leader. After all, we are all family.

The NLAB and I are already brainstorming ideas for next year. We cannot wait to try and make this upcoming year the most successful yet!



**-SOMMER WILMETH,  
STUDENT OF THE YEAR  
2016-2017**



# 2016-2017 NORTHERN LIGHTS ADVISORY BOARD

This year, the NLYS office is grateful for yet another cohort of talented student leaders serving on the Northern Lights Advisory Board. This year, we are fortunate enough to have the majority of the NLAB returning. Returning members include Student of the Year Sommer Wilmeth (Century High School), Miranda Johnson (New Rockford - Sheyenne High School), Lauren Roscoe (New Rockford - Sheyenne High School), Halli Hebl (Hillsboro High School), Grace Woodstead (Griggs County Central), Chris Shine (Redfield High School), and Carter Wegner (Redfield High School). All of the Northern Lights region (North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota) will be represented on this year's NLAB with the addition of brand new members: Erin Haugen (Griggs County Central), Ashley Trudel (Hillsboro High School), Adam Foerderer (Century High School), Abby Johnson (Pelican Rapids Secondary) and Zane Brosowske (Pelican Rapids Secondary).



## NDSU PARTNERSHIP RENEWED

NLYS will continue its partnership with NDSU for their evaluation of the Reality Check program, our pride and joy, which is a series of lessons taught by SADD high school students to elementary students in grades 4-6. Jennifer R. Wenner, a Ph.D student in the department of Human Development and Family Science at NDSU, came to the advisor meeting at the Northern Lights Conference to discuss the importance of the evaluation process. NLYS hopes to continue this valuable relationship for years to come!

## A BIG YEAR FOR MINNESOTA

Northern Lights Youth Services and its Northern Lights SADD program are excited to say that we will be expanding our efforts in Minnesota in 2016-2017. State Farm has already committed to helping us with this financially, and proposals are under consideration with other potential funders, both public and private.

Our goal in Minnesota is not just to get the SADD program into schools, because health and safety issues and solutions to those issues are much deeper than that. Our goal is to cultivate partnerships between youth, schools, parents and other adults and entities in the communities who share a common vision for our kids. We also plan to host regional training sessions in Minnesota to make our programming more accessible to the over 100 chapters across the state.

Programming being made available to the chapters involve traffic safety, underage drinking and drug use, mental/behavioral health issues, as well as outreach to elementary students and the community as a whole. We want to equip our youth to take an active role in supporting their peers and making their communities a better place.

We are always on the lookout for helpful input from those of you who are reading this. If you know of potential partners, financial supporters, passionate youth leaders or key school personnel in Minnesota we should talk to, please contact [lee@nlsadd.com](mailto:lee@nlsadd.com). It takes all of us to create the changes necessary to support our kids! We can't do it alone.





# HEALTHY REALITY

NLYS is excited to announce that very soon, we will begin to work on a project to continue our Reality Check efforts at a junior high level. These series of lessons will continue to be taught by high school SADD members and will reinforce the lessons that students learned in Reality Check. These lessons will go even further than Reality Check lessons and provide more knowledge and support on SADD related topics including substance abuse, traffic safety, mental health and a strong emphasis on healthy relationships. Thanks to the North Dakota Department of Health, this project will be rolling out in North Dakota schools this fall!

## MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Very soon, NLYS will be offering a new and exciting way to contribute to the youth of Northern Lights SADD. Before we can reveal this opportunity, we need to survey the interest of our current, recurring donors. Randomly selected donors can expect a paper survey and stamped envelope with this newsletter. Your answers will remain private and will only be seen by the staff of NLYS so that we may cater to you and the students we serve. Please send your survey responses back as soon as possible and thank you so much for your support of this vital organization!



## GRADUATING SENIORS: WHAT'S NEXT?

Whenever I have to describe the amazing people I've met while I served on the NLAB, I can't help but think of fairytales. Each person has an amazing and distinct personality, and without the connections provided by SADD, I probably wouldn't have met them. The NLAB are my friends that I consider family, and they have all made my experience as student leader worthwhile. Next year, I will be attending Minnesota State University Moorhead and would love nothing more than to start a SADD chapter and continue making constructive choices. I look forward to returning to Northern Lights as a volunteer!

**-KATELYN D.  
GWINNER, ND**

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