

Students Make Smart Decisions

by Kara Wehmeyer
for the News Tribune

What do you consider smart decisions? The members of Calvary Lutheran High School's SADD chapter consider wearing their seat belts a smart decision. Therefore, they decided to encourage their fellow students to do the same.

The Students Against Destructive Decisions club was formed this year at Calvary. "I feel peer pressure is a problem in today's society. I do not want students to make choices they will regret later because their friends are doing things they should not be doing," commented Calvary's counselor Denise Crider. One of the activities the group decided to take part in was the Battle of the Belt campaign.

The Battle of the Belt campaign is a month-long competition between high schools throughout mid-Missouri and is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Transportation. Each school does two unannounced seat belt checks to determine the winner. On the first check done by Calvary, 88% of the students wore their seat belts. Throughout the rest of the month, students were constantly reminded to buckle up with the showing of videos, posters, handouts, and other announcements. "It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of just how important seat belts really are," sophomore Erin Blochberger said about the Battle of the Belt Campaign.

Near the end of the month, the second check was done. All the students checked were wearing their seat belts. By scoring 100%, Calvary not only won the competition, but they set high standards. No other high school has scored that high. "It means a great deal to me that our students care enough about themselves and their loved ones to make the choice to buckle up. I am very proud of the student leadership who set this goal and led by example to make this campaign a success," Crider added.

Members of MoDot's Arrive Alive Campaign announced this honor to Calvary students on December 29 between the Lion's home basketball games. "It was incredible to see one of our regions' schools get 100% in the Battle of the Belt competition. Every student and staff were buckled up when the survey was taken. I saw tremendous dedication and commitment from Mrs. Crider, Kara Wehmeyer, and the SADD group to not only reaching this goal, but also to encourage the habits and thoughts of all the kids and staff at Calvary Lutheran High School. We can only hope their benchmark will reach out to all citizens in the surrounding community, as well as the entire State of Missouri," commented Dianna Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator for Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. Calvary will receive a banner and \$350 dollar cash prize to encourage students to wear their seat belts. A traveling plaque was also started this year. Calvary will be at the top of the plaque to remind not only Calvary students, but also students throughout mid-Missouri, to buckle up.

Calvary's SADD chapter hopes to continue this campaign in the future and also help with other activities such as Red Ribbon Week.

Kara Wehmeyer is a sophomore at Calvary Lutheran High School.