

Remarks by Stephen Winkler, SADD Student of the Year, as read during the closing ceremonies of the 2008 SADD National Conference.

“Congratulations! Today is your day. You’re off to Great Places! You’re off and away!” Yes, you heard that right. I am going to make reference to the one and only, Dr. Seuss, because honestly who could state it more clearly?

We began this journey together, three days ago. And oh the memories we’ve made: painting ourselves instead of the walls during the community service project at Garcia Elementary School, laughing at and crying with some of the most inspirational and captivating speakers SADD has ever seen, and of sharing all of these memories with our new friends, or as I like to say “family,” that will stay with us forever.

It goes without saying, that over the past three days, your radiant **passion** has been unleashed. We’ve all witnessed how your **power** is insurmountable. And undoubtedly, you have revealed and embraced the **identity** that is SADD!

However, when you go home be careful not to get stuck in that waiting place. “Waiting for the fish to bite or waiting for wind to fly a kite or waiting around for Friday night or waiting, perhaps, for your Uncle Jake or a pot to boil, or a Better Break or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants or a wig with curls, or Another Chance. Everyone is just waiting. NO! That’s not for you!” When you come across this place, remember that radiant **passion**, find it, and harness it, so you can **soar to new heights**.

When you go home there may also be a time when ...

“You will come to a place where the streets are not marked. Some windows are lighted. But mostly they’re darked.” When this happens, when you feel lost, remember that SADD students have unique, indestructible **power**. No I’m not talking about bench-pressing 350 pounds. I’m talking about the **power** from within. Find that **power**, and allow it to carry you through the lonely times -- so you can **soar to new heights**.

And finally, when you go home ...

“You may get mixed up, of course as you already know. You may get mixed up with strange birds as you go. So be sure when you step. Step with care and great tact and remember that Life’s a Great Balancing Act. Just never forget to be dexterous and deft. And never mix up your right foot with your left.” Each of you has allowed your true, SADD **identity** to emanate over the past three days. So, when you are tested -- and find that you’re concealing your true **identity**, reveal it and you will **soar to new heights!**

As Sasha said in her opening -- you *are* a community of leaders. I hope this conference has allowed you the opportunity to rediscover the **passion** inside that makes this community successful while also attaining the knowledge and the **power** to strengthen this community, and soar to an **identity** that will always be remembered. It’s been great ... and I’ll see you all next year in D.C.!