

SADD teens urge driving safety for students



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By ANDY HEINTZ, Herald Staff Writer

Teachers, students and parents alike were given tickets Friday morning when they pulled into the Central Heights High School parking lot.

But it wasn't the police doing the ticketing.

No, the tickets came from members of the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) chapter at the high school. The students gave out the mock tickets along with a mint.

A message on the tickets read, "You have been officially issued a mock ticket."

The ticket stub also featured a picture of a person wearing a seat belt with "STOP" written above the picture and "BUCKLE UP" below it.

SADD members even gave out tickets to students who were buckled up to remind them to continue wearing their seat belts. They also set up a mini-concession stand where people could get doughnuts and juice.

Linda Allen, SADD sponsor and counselor at the high school, said it wasn't the first time SADD members gave out tickets this year.

"Driving safety issues has been one of our biggest projects," she said.

Allen estimated somewhere between 80 and 85 people at Central Heights were a part of the group.

Buddy Welch, principal of the elementary and middle school, as well as a driver's education instructor, said former Franklin County Sheriff Craig Davis stops by every year to show students a presentation on Franklin County wrecks. He said a lot of the incidents he shows are of people who were not wearing seat belts.

Davis ends his presentation with a story of a student fatality, in which a seat belt wasn't worn.

A Central Heights sophomore recently was involved in a car wreck; that incident magnified the importance of seat belt usage, Welch said.

"We had a student two weeks ago have a wreck and, if it wasn't for the seat belt, she wouldn't be here today," he said. "And she will tell you that, and so will her parents. She was very, very lucky to have a seat belt on."

He said the girl lost control of her vehicle on a gravel road while trying to dodge a deer. Welch said her car ended up going through a ditch before shooting up into a tree.

Central Heights will continue to concentrate on driver's safety this summer, Welch said.

Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) chapter at Central Heights recently received a \$500 grant from All State Insurance to promote safe driving, Welch said. It is the first year SAVE has had a chapter at Central Heights. Welch said SAVE is using the money to buy intoxication goggles that students will get to use while attending driver's education class in June.

"It gives you the same vision an intoxicated person would have," Welch said.

Students only will get to use the goggles when they are in the parking lot, Welch said.

An instructor will be in the car with the student — with a brake on the instructor's side of the car — to make sure nothing unsafe occurs.

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