

## Wibberg draws on upbringing, faith to avoid drugs and alcohol

By: Neal A. Johnson | Source: Unterrified Democrat

Linn senior Dylan Wibberg earned the Osage County Anti-Drug Community Action Team (OC-ADCAT) Student of the Month award for December, noting that he relies on his faith and the example his parents, Ron and Heather, set to remain drug and alcohol-free.

"My parents basically told me not to do them because they would mess up your life, and then you'll get hooked on them," said Wibberg. "They told me it was a waste of money because then you'll spend your money on drugs and alcohol instead of toward more important things. It will also hurt those around you.

"I would like to thank my parents for their hardworking mentality," Wibberg added. "My mom would always say to do my best at everything. Sometimes, you might only have one chance to do something right."

Wibberg added that his parents were adamant about never trying drugs but advised him to drink in moderation when he's legally able to do so. "They told me to take it easy," he said. "You can't let drugs or alcohol control you."

Due to his religious upbringing, Wibberg points to the Bible, which notes that moderation is key. "The classic story is that Jesus turned water into wine, but they did it in moderation, and it was at a party," he said. "And, in those days, they had to drink wine because the water wasn't that good, but they still moderated it."

School activities aimed at preventing drug use reinforced their message.

Wibberg also appreciates his circle of friends. "It's pretty easy because most of my friends go to Community Christian Church with me," he said.

Because of that support, he doesn't feel pressured to party or participate in drinking or taking drugs. "I avoid the whole scenario," Wibberg said. "I'm not a party type of guy."

He is not overly vocal about his opposition to drugs and alcohol. "I have a thought that everybody in my friend group just knows that drugs are wrong," Wibberg added.

However, he's a devoted big brother to Haley, a junior, and Connor, 6. "Haley is only about a year younger than me, but I'm going to be gone to college," Wibberg said. "I want to be a big brother they would be proud of, so I've talked to them about it and try to set a good example."

Band/Choir Director Shawn Smith nominated Wibberg because of his upstanding nature and willingness to help. "Dylan's a wonderful young man and always on top of things," said Smith. "He always wants to do the right thing and the band to do its best. He has a strong tradition, a good work ethic, and character. And I can always count on Dylan."

Smith, in his 17th year in education and second at Linn R-2, added that because of Wibberg, the band has six trombones. "Not one of them is behind because if there's a problem, Dylan will approach the student and have them play with him," said Smith, who has taught Wibberg the last two years. "He is very proactive and making sure that the trombone section is the best section of the band because he doesn't want to be part of anything less than the best."

High School Principal Erin Sassmann agreed. "Dylan is an amazing kid, always saying nice things to others," she said. "He's also super helpful. The other night, for example, at the band concert, Dylan stayed after to help carry everything down when some other kids left. He stayed there pretty much to the end. I mean, he's just an all-around good kid."

She enthusiastically supports his election as the OC-ADCAT Student of the Month. "He's definitely an upstanding student, and, even in the community, no drugs, no alcohol," said Sassmann. I mean, he's against all that stuff."

Part of the reason Wibberg is successful is that he keeps himself busy. He's a member of the Linn R-2 Community Chess Club state team, band, e-sports, and the Dungeons & Dragons Club. Wibberg also works part-time at Linn Thriftway — all with a 3.68 GPA.

Wibberg is one of the top players in the chess club and helps teach young players. "Chess teaches that you have to think many steps ahead to get what you want on the board," he said. "That translates into your life and how you want all the pieces to fit into place. Even if something goes wrong, and your literal or metaphorical queen gets taken, you could still get a stalemate or even win. Just because you lose one piece doesn't mean you're done for." In e-sports, he plays Super Smash Bros. and helps others improve their game during practices.

As he contemplates graduation next May, Wibberg said he's already excited about attending Central Christian College of the Bible in Moberly.

"I want to be a preacher," said Wibberg. "I look forward to going to college."

Smith is glad he has a little time left with Wibberg. "As a graduating senior, I'm really gonna miss him," he said.

OC-ADCAT Executive Director Lorie Winslow will present Wibberg with a certificate, and he will be eligible to apply for the annual Student of the Month Scholarship.

"I am so excited to showcase our seniors who have chosen to live a drug- and alcohol-free life," said OC-ADCAT Education Committee Chairperson Charlotte Bellsmith. "I know this is not an easy thing to do. The pressure on our teens to drink while still underage is still pretty severe."

For more information about OC-ADCAT, visit <https://www.ocadcat.org>.