

Kiwanis

KIWANIS CLUB OF RIDGETOWN

P.O. BOX 1642, RIDGETOWN, ONTARIO N0P 2C0

www.ridgetownkiwanis.com

email: admin@ridgetownkiwanis.com

NEWSLETTER FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2010

September 9 meeting:

Thanks to President-designate Alan for supplying notes and pictures from the meeting. Fourteen members welcomed three guests – Alan Gillard, A.J. Fordham and Andrea Fordham.

Happy \$\$ - Key Club President Jordan was happy that the first week of school was almost finished. \$ - Treasurer Gary was happy that the Ridgetown Aktion Club has donated 5 bedkits to SCAW.

President-designate Alan thanked everyone who attended the planning meeting and invited all committee chairs and 2010-11 board members to a budget meeting on September 21 at the home of Treasurer Gary and DP June.

Members were invited to attend the Division 4 caucus on Saturday, September 18 at the Kiwanis Seniors Centre in London.



President-designate Alan, Andrea Fordham, A.J. Fordham and Key Club President Jordan

Key Club President Jordan Dunlop introduced the guest speaker for the evening A.J. Fordham. A.J.'s mother Andrea grew up in the Ridgetown area. "A.J. has overcome some huge obstacles to be here with us tonight and he is going to share his story with us."

"Imagine the most helpless, hopeless feeling in your life. Now imagine that your eyes won't open, you have no expressive response to pain and cannot even make yourself roll over. Before January 20, 2007 I lived a typical life. I was on the school's track & field team, involved in racing endurance cars at Delaware speedway and worked at my Dad's car dealership.

On January 20, 2007 everything changed. I was involved in a car crash, sustaining a severe traumatic acquired brain injury and numerous skull fractures along with a broken femur. I was in a coma on life support for two weeks.

When I awoke I was unable to communicate, walk, eat or perform everyday tasks. In my rehab, I have had to re-learn all the basic functions of life that we all take for granted such as breathing, eating, walking, talking, reading, writing, remembering and learning. Rehabilitation has been challenging but my mindset through all of this is that I had to do it and to never give up.

I was able to return home after 103 days of intense rehabilitation. My rehab continues everyday even 3 ½ years after my accident." A.J. then showed a video of his journey to recovery and his ongoing daily struggles.

"Dr. Doug Fraser, in charge the night I was admitted to the Pediatric Critical Care Unit at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario and the team of doctors and nurses are all angels. Without their expertise I would not have had as successful a recovery. They saved my life but more importantly they gave me my life back. Because Children's Hospital saved my life I have now become passionate about sharing my story with kids so that they can become more aware of how life changing an injury can be.

We are so fortunate to have Children's Hospital in our backyard. This hospital sees more than 86,000 children in a year with more than half that amount coming from outside the city of London. It serves the area from Windsor to Thunder Bay as one of the major trauma centres.

Through the Children's Health Foundation's Raising Hope Campaign I can give back with my efforts to get my message into the schools as part of the proactive approach to prevent injuries before they happen.

Injury is the leading killer of Canadian children. One half of those deaths are from brain injuries and ninety percent of all injuries to children are preventable.

I openly share with kids the fact that we all feel like that won't happen to me. I didn't think it would happen to me either. I was an experienced endurance racecar driver, had experience around vehicles in the car dealership and had been driving some sort of motorized vehicle since I was young. I had no idea I would wake up in a hospital in a wheelchair, in diapers, not knowing what happened to me.

The video I showed doesn't show - For two months I was tube fed and not even allowed a drink of water or normal food. It doesn't show my many struggles in the hospital and since returning home. It doesn't show that my dream to attend NASCAR Technical Institute will never be realized, my continuing therapy and how my mother has put her life aside to help me everyday.

I urge other kids to think about what happened to me before they make a decision that perhaps they know they shouldn't and I hope it helps them to change their mind. Then I will have accomplished my goal of injury prevention."