

# STUDENTS AGAINST DESTRUCTIVE DECISIONS

A message from the SADD Student of the Year...



## Playing It Safe at Prom by Jacqueline Hackett

Somehow, those last few months of high school manage to involve the most diverse mix of feelings and emotions from soon-to-be graduating seniors. Spring Break is relaxing, but waiting for those late college acceptance letters couldn't be any more aggravating. The idea of graduation causes nerves to twitch; this is the last time you'll be together with the people with whom you've spent the last 12 years of your life. But at the same time, graduation acts as a threshold for the rest of your life, including the best summer ever and college to come in September.

Of course, there is also prom, that single event that has made everyone jealous of the seniors, ever since they saw their older siblings or friends get into a limo in years past. Chances are you're excited for this "rite of passage" of a high school life, but there are challenges ahead: finding a dress or renting a tux, ordering flowers and limos and prom tickets, setting up dinner reservations, hair appointments ... the list goes on. Prom has the opportunity to be one of the most memorable times of your adolescent life, but how do you want to remember this night? How will your peers remember you?

Despite the fact that entire educational careers have been shared with the individuals at your prom, something about the campy decorations and early 1990s dance music causes people to forget any bad feelings and embrace the upbeat ambience of the night. Guys open doors without thinking about it, girls compliment "so cute" dresses, and even the adult chaperones seem to be having a good time. Everyone puts a lot of time into planning the night, choosing whose house to use for photos, and what earrings go best with that purse. There's one other choice that teens need to think

seriously about: whether they choose to include drugs or alcohol in their prom plans. The decision seems easy enough for me. I'd rather remember everything about the night, not just up to the point where the alcohol shots set in. You don't want to say or do things that you'll regret. And the smell of marijuana smoke and vomit will not complement any cologne or the color of your dress.

If this is one of the last events you'll be able to share with your graduating class, prom is going to leave a lot of memories that are sure to come up at graduation, before college departure, and at the 10-year reunion. If you decide to drink and drive, there's even a chance that you won't make it to one of the after-prom parties, let alone your class reunion. The choice you make to have a few drinks is going to affect more people than you might think — your date, your friends, and your family.

Students Against Destructive Decisions, SADD, is working hard to help teenagers and communities come together to make it easier for everyone to pass up "a few shots before" or "a couple of beers after." SADD members across the nation will be celebrating prom and graduation substance-free, so you won't be alone in your choice not to drive impaired by drugs or alcohol. In fact, if you educate your own circle of friends about the consequences and dangers of underage drinking, drug use, and driving under the influence, it may be even easier for you to say "no."

The bottom line is that prom is a time for celebrating, not a time to take risks that can have life-threatening consequences. Make decisions to guarantee an amazing night and an event to make you proud.

Remember, **SAFE** really does equal fun! *Pageantry* encourages our young readers to embrace the SADD philosophy and to have a safe and fun *PromTime* season.