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SADD Nation Launches Year-Round Community Service Initiative to Honor 10th Anniversary of 9/11 and Celebrate Community Spirit

Marlborough, MA – September 8, 2011 – The back-to-school time of year offers a unique opportunity for American youth to give back to their schools and communities, and the National office of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) today announced the launch of its newest campaign: ***SADD Serves: Youth Giving Back.***

Celebrating 30 years of empowering youth and families, SADD continues its mission of providing teens across the country with model programs that encourage positive change and service to others. *SADD Serves* is designed as a year-long initiative guiding young people to initiate service projects to benefit their schools and communities in tribute to the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. SADD's mission of empowering youth encourages young people to embrace a sense of community spirit and take positive risks.

Like all of us, 19-year old Deanna Boucher will never forget what happened that day in 2001 even though she was only in third grade. She reflects that her generation has learned a lot growing up in the aftermath of 9/11. "I've grown from a scared eight-year-old to a young adult constantly working to give back and raise awareness about meeting the challenges around us," stated Deanna Boucher, now 2011-2012 SADD National Student of the Year. "SADD can play a vital role in making positive improvements through its chapter network nearly 10,000 strong. SADD students are not just *against* destructive decisions, we're *for* positive decisions, and community service is one of the best ways to make our world better," added Boucher.

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As seen throughout its three decades of service, SADD knows that service projects are one of the best ways to constructively engage youth, and positive risk-taking builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and personal growth. The rewards and experiences gained during a service project have the potential to make a considerable impact on not only those in need, but those serving as well.

According to SADD's national research on teen attitudes and behaviors, teens who challenge themselves by taking positive risks, such as joining an athletic team or volunteering to perform community service, are more likely than those who don't to avoid alcohol and other drug use. "Teens' risk profiles, whether they are risk seekers or risk avoiders, are also linked to their academic performance and overall emotional well-being," added Stephen Wallace, senior advisor for policy, research, and education at SADD and author of *Reality Gap: Alcohol, Drugs, and Sex—What Parents Don't Know and Teens Aren't Telling*.

"For years, parents and educators have steered young people toward activities they believe will help prevent poor decision-making. Now we have 'proof positive' it works. Although teens are hard-wired to take risks," Wallace stated, "this research makes clear that those risks don't have to be dangerous ones."

The ***SADD Serves: Youth Giving Back*** community service initiative provides a toolkit with sample project ideas, a SADD service calendar, a questionnaire to assist SADD students in choosing the right service project to meet their community needs, a sample action plan template, and media templates chapters can customize and use independently.

About SADD

For 30 years, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) has been committed to empowering young people to lead education and prevention initiatives in their schools and

communities. Founded as Students Against Driving Drunk in 1981, SADD has become the nation's leading peer-to-peer youth education, prevention, and activism organization, with thousands of chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges. SADD now highlights prevention of many destructive behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, substance abuse, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide. To become a Friend of SADD or more information, visit **sadd.org**, its newest resource for parents and caring adults at **parentteenmatters.org**, or follow SADD on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

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