



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2009

Contact: Stacey Hart
508-481-3568
shart@sadd.org

Denham Springs High School Group Receives National Accolade

Marlborough, Mass. – The Denham Springs High School SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) chapter in Denham Springs, Louisiana, has been chosen as the third-place winner of the 2009 SADD National Activity of the Year award for promoting positive decisions and prevention messages in an upbeat, innovative manner. The school formed its first drug awareness club in the late 1980s and officially became “Jackets Against Destructive Decisions,” a chapter of SADD, in 1990.

The chapter’s selection for one of the 2009 Activity of the Year awards marks the first time any one chapter has been recognized in all three categories of the prestigious SADD National awards. In 2007, Denham Springs High School received the Chapter of the Year award, and last year advisors Elise LeBlanc and Shannon Donze were honored with the Advisor of the Year award.

“The creativity and dedication of these SADD students is truly inspiring,” said SADD Executive Director Penny Wells. “Year after year, Denham Springs SADD has carried out SADD’s mission, empowering peers to make safe, healthy decisions. The students have touched the lives of many and helped create a safer, stronger community.”

The Denham Springs SADD activity, “The Magic of Motown Prom Fashion Show,” provided a safe, entertaining, alcohol- and drug-free night out for students. Showcasing prom attire, students modeled dresses and tuxedos provided by local businesses. In addition to introducing the models, the evening’s student hosts included throughout the event messages about prevention and the importance of good decision-making. During

intermission, the chapter introduced a guest speaker to talk about teen safety. After hosting a more sparsely attended traditional parent evening, Denham Springs SADD felt a fun evening such as this was the best way to share prevention messages with students and parents. The annual prom fashion show has become the most anticipated event of the year, and nearly 500 people attended this spring.

“We are very proud to receive this award. The Magic of Motown Prom Fashion Show provided an entertaining, safe and substance-free environment for students,” said LeBlanc.

“These students should be commended for all the work they have done. It’s an honor to work with such a dedicated group of teenagers,” added Donze.

The Denham Springs High School SADD chapter will be formally honored at an awards banquet at the SADD National Conference in Washington, D.C., this July. The chapter will receive a \$100 cash prize. Two additional SADD chapters will also be recognized for their hard work and dedication throughout the past year. Cocalico High School in Denver, Pennsylvania, was chosen as the first-place winner and will receive a \$500 cash prize. Conrad Weiser High School in Robeson, Pennsylvania, placed second and will receive \$250.

SADD, the nation’s leading peer-to-peer youth education, prevention, and activism organization, is committed to empowering young people to lead initiatives in their schools and communities. Founded in 1981, today SADD has thousands of chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges. SADD highlights prevention of many destructive behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, other drug use, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide. More information about SADD can be found at sadd.org.

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