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GLENDALE RESIDENT RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Phoenix, Arizona – SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) is proud to recognize Sharon Sikora of Glendale, Arizona, for her lifetime of courage, passion, and activism. SADD President and Executive Director Penny Wells presented Sikora with the SADD National Lifetime Achievement Award at the organization's 2008 National Conference in Phoenix last month.

"Sharon is an inspiration to everyone she comes in contact with," said Wells. "She has invested in young people because she believes in their power to create a safer, healthier environment for all of us. By working tirelessly with and for SADD students for over two decades, Sharon has earned SADD's highest measure of appreciation."

Sikora is a great example of turning tragedy into a springboard to help others. In 1981, the car she was driving was hit by an impaired driver and became engulfed in flames, causing her to suffer burns over 95 percent of her body. Her experience fueled a passion to assist and improve the lives of victims of crime throughout not only Arizona but the entire United States. Since the crash, she has endured more than 70 reconstructive surgeries, but she has also become a leading advocate for the rights of crime victims and youth safety issues.

Sikora has dedicated more than 25 years to volunteer service. She currently sits on the SADD National Board of Directors and the board of the Foundation for Burns and Trauma. Sikora is also involved with Arizona SADD and Phoenix Fire Department Fire Pals. She established the Arizona State chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Her outreach also includes assistance with Nevada Stop DUI and the Roots and Wings organization, a not-for-profit counseling organization.

"It was wonderful to receive a lifetime tribute for working with the youth of Arizona and the nation. I believe it is critical to reach out to teens in a positive, non-preaching manner," Sikora said. "I have lived to see many young people grow up, make positive choices, and become strong community leaders. I plan to keep working with young people for years to come, because they will be the wonderful adults of tomorrow."

For more than 27 years, SADD has been committed to empowering young people to lead education and prevention initiatives in their schools and communities. Founded in 1981, SADD has become the nation's preeminent peer-to-peer youth education, prevention, and activism organization, with nearly 10,000 chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges nationwide. SADD now highlights prevention of many destructive behaviors that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, substance abuse, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide.

Penny Wells and Sharon Sikora are available for interviews. Contact Communications Coordinator Stacey Hart at 508-481-3568 or shart@sadd.org to set up an interview.