



## **SADD Press Release:**

Student Leaders Come Together in St. Louis to Tackle  
Critical Issues Affecting Teens

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### **STUDENT LEADERS COME TOGETHER IN ST. LOUIS TO TACKLE CRITICAL ISSUES AFFECTING TEENS**

2004 SADD National Conference Draws Best and Brightest for Four Days of Prevention Education Aimed at Reducing Teen Drinking and Other Drug Use

Organization to Recognize Olympian and East St. Louis Native  
Jackee Joyner-Kersee with Lifetime Achievement Award

**ST. LOUIS, MO** - July 16, 2004 – Leaders from Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) chapters nationwide today joined together in St. Louis to continue their ongoing dialogue regarding how best to educate their peers and deal with the issues of underage drinking, other drug use, and promoting positive decision-making.

Hundreds of teens from across the county will participate in the annual SADD National Conference, which will include four days of motivational presentations, seminars, and activities aimed at sharing new approaches and gathering ideas that attendees can share with their classmates and develop into events for their local chapters.

SADD will also officially induct its 2004-2005 National Student Leadership Council, a group of 14 students who are responsible for helping lead the organization, creating and providing input on new programming, and representing SADD on regional and national levels. The Student Leadership Council is led by SADD's National Student of the Year Jacqueline Hackett of Harleysville, Pennsylvania.

"St. Louis and the State of Missouri are wonderful hosts, and we are delighted with the support from Mayor Slay, Governor Holden, and the First Lady of Missouri, Lori Hauser Holden, who has been an inspiration in her efforts to prevent alcohol use by children and teens," said Penny Wells, president and executive director of Massachusetts-based SADD National. "We are thrilled with this truly well-rounded, enthusiastic, and accomplished group of teens who are committed to improving the lives of their peers, and to giving back to the community while they are here."

The conference will include more than 40 workshops aimed at providing the students, advisors, and state coordinators in attendance with information about issues such as underage drinking, the physics of highway crashes, the increasing problems of drug and alcohol use in middle schools, dating violence, and creating strong community service projects. SADD conferees will also be involved in a blood drive with the local chapter of the American Red Cross and a safe-driving exhibition with the Ford Motor Company. Over the past several months, SADD students have also coordinated local school supplies drives in their home states, with the supplies to be donated to the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Boys & Girls Club of St. Louis.

The conference will conclude with an awards ceremony that will honor an organization and two individuals who have dedicated substantial time and resources working on behalf of children and



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teens and have been effective spokespersons for positive decision making. The 2004 SADD National Board of Directors Awards will include the following:

### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

This award is given to that individual or group that has consistently over the course of many years of his/her professional career advanced the interests of safety of young people, thereby directly benefiting the members of SADD chapters across the country. This year's award will be presented to St. Louis native Jackie Joyner-Kersey in recognition of her impact as a positive role model, her tremendous personal accomplishments, her work championing the causes of asthma awareness, education, and healthy lifestyles, and her commitment to community building. The attendees of this year's conference will present items raised in their school supplies drives to Yvonne Sparks Strauther, executive director of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation.

### **Outstanding Contribution Award**

This award is given to that individual or group who, in the recent past, has made a contribution that stands out in size, creativity, sacrifice, or commitment to SADD or to the themes of SADD: teens and alcohol, drugs, violence and other risky behaviors. This year's award will be presented to the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of governors' spouses, federal agencies, and public and private organizations that specifically targets prevention of drinking in the 9- to 15-year-old age group. The First Lady of Missouri, Lori Hauser Holden, will accept the award on behalf of the Leadership coalition.

### **SADD Distinguished Service Award**

This award is given to an individual or group who has served SADD with dedication and commitment, either over a sustained period of time or in a single, significant contribution. This year's recipient is MaryLou Vanzini of Marlborough, Massachusetts. Vanzini works in the SADD National office and has been with SADD almost since its inception in 1981. Most recently serving as Director of Administrative Services, Vanzini has held many positions within the organization, and she was instrumental in creating nationally-recognized prevention programs in partnership with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. In addition to her responsibilities at SADD, Vanzini has devoted many hours to youth and young adult issues in her community.

The awards will be presented in a formal ceremony on Sunday, July 18, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Pavilion Ballroom at the St. Louis Marriott Pavilion Hotel. The ceremony will also include the induction of the National Student Leadership Council and SADD National Student of the Year.

SADD is the nation's leading youth empowerment and prevention organization, with 10,000 chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges across the country. A peer leadership organization, SADD is dedicated to preventing destructive decisions, particularly underage drinking, other drug use, impaired driving, and teen suicide and violence. More information about SADD is available at [www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org).