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**YOUTH ACROSS AMERICA CELEBRATE SADD'S 25th BIRTHDAY AND RALLY
SUPPORT IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

***SADD Chapters Plan Special Event to Reflect on the Past and Raise Awareness
About the Serious Challenges Still Facing Teens Today***

Marlborough, MA (October 30, 2006) – For more than a quarter-century, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) has been empowering students to make a difference in the lives of their peers, saving thousands of young lives along the way. “SADD Turns 25: Lighting the Way,” a nationwide event, offers SADD students and their schools and communities an opportunity to celebrate this success and light the way for the next 25 years.

“SADD is a constant reminder for teens to lead a safe, healthy lifestyle and to help our friends make the right choices, too,” said Daniel Vocelle of Vero Beach, Florida, SADD National Student of the Year. “We are students standing up to make a difference.”

Nationwide Celebration

During the week of October 30 through November 3, SADD chapters will hold themed activities focusing on key issues such as underage drinking, other drug use, and safe driving. Many chapters are also holding special ceremonies on November 2, “SADD Lantern Night.” SADD students will bring together community members, including law enforcement officers, teachers, parents, and local elected officials.

“It’s a call to action to address the serious challenges facing young people,” Vocelle added. To make the event even more memorable and symbolic, homemade lanterns will be lit, signifying hope and remembrance and their commitment to keep youth safe. Governors and mayors across the country have issued SADD Day proclamations.

“SADD’s twenty-fifth birthday is an opportunity to both celebrate and to reflect: to celebrate the accomplishments of hundreds of thousands of teens and adults over a quarter-century and to reflect on the work that remains to be done,” stated Penny Wells, president and executive director of SADD. “Through consistent, thoughtful and creative contributions by young people empowered to help their friends, we will continue to make strides in saving teen lives.”

One of the largest SADD Birthday celebrations will be held in Vermont. On November 2, Wells will join youth from across Vermont for a press conference and lantern ceremony on the steps of the State House in Montpelier. Students representing almost every SADD chapter in the state will attend.

The History of SADD

SADD was founded at Wayland High School in Wayland, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1981 following the tragic deaths of two students in separate alcohol-related crashes that happened less than two weeks apart. Hockey coach Bob Anastas and a group of students decided to name their group Students Against Driving Drunk to capture the responsibility teens themselves had for their behavior. “If the problem is mine, then the solution lies with me” became their popular slogan. Realizing that parents needed to be more involved with their teens, a contract called the “Contract for Life” was developed and continues to be widely used today.

Making a Difference

This unique student-led effort turned into a national movement. In SADD’s first two years, 6,000 high schools across the country created chapters. Even more important, the number of teen deaths from drunk driving started dropping. In 1981, about half the states had drinking ages under 21. “Drunk” driving was the number-one killer of teens – more than 100 teens per week were killed in alcohol-related crashes. Over the next 10 years, through the efforts of SADD and similar organizations, the number of teen deaths dropped by almost 60 percent.

In 1997, in response to feedback from students themselves, SADD expanded its mission and adopted a new name, Students Against Destructive Decisions. Today, there are more than 10,000 chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges. While reducing impaired driving remains

a focus, SADD is dedicated to preventing *all* behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, other drug use, and teen violence and suicide.

More information about SADD is available at **www.sadd.org**. To find a SADD Birthday event planned in your area, contact Jennifer Baylis at 1-877-SADD-INC or jbaylis@sadd.org.

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