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Denham Springs High School Teachers Receive National Accolade

Louisiana SADD Advisors Honored for Empowering Teens to Make Safe and Healthy Decisions

Marlborough, Mass. – The SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) advisors at Denham Springs High School in Denham Springs, Louisiana, have been chosen to receive the 2008 SADD National Advisor of the Year award for their tireless efforts to promote positive teen decision-making. Elise LeBlanc has served as a SADD advisor for more than 20 years. Shannon Donze has been an advisor for the past four years. 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.

“Elise and Shannon deserve this special recognition of their strong leadership and their commitment to SADD over the years,” said SADD President and Executive Director Penny Wells. “They have touched the lives of hundreds of students and have helped create a safer, stronger community.”

Under LeBlanc and Donze’s leadership, the chapter has been extremely active, planning many JADD activities throughout the year, such as the chapter’s biggest fund-raiser and outreach effort, the prom fashion show. They spend countless hours working to provide opportunities for JADD students to participate in community-service projects and activities and organize the club’s meetings. LeBlanc and Donze have given students the courage to stand up in front of their peers to teach them about positive decision-making. They set a great example for the students and help improve teenage behaviors in the community.

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“The reason I enjoy being a JADD advisor is it enhances the quality of life for *all* students,” LeBlanc said. “Students, teachers, parents, and community leaders work together to accomplish our goals.”

“The message of JADD is life should be a positive adventure that only a clear mind can experience,” Donze said. “It’s an honor to work with such a dedicated group of teenagers.”

LeBlanc and Donze will be formally honored at an awards banquet at the SADD National Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, this June. Their chapter will receive a \$500 cash prize, and SADD will cover the cost for one youth and one adult chaperone to attend the conference.

“Mrs. LeBlanc and Mrs. Donze have paved a pathway of inspiration for us to follow and given us passion to fight destructive decisions,” said JADD student Jessica Johnson. “Our advisors guide us to achieve greatness, setting new goals for each of us. They have inspired each of us.”

For more than 25 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 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. For more information about SADD, visit sadd.org.

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