



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Advocates for Youth Safety Receive Awards at SADD National Conference

Marlborough, MA – SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) is proud to recognize the Office of the Surgeon General with the 2009 SADD Outstanding Contribution Award for Academic Excellence and Cheryl Neverman, a senior program manager with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), with the 2009 SADD Lifetime Achievement Award. SADD President and Executive Director Penny Wells will present the awards at the 2009 SADD National Conference Awards Banquet on July 14 in Washington, D.C.

The **Outstanding Contribution Award for Academic Excellence** recognizes extraordinary accomplishment in advancing SADD's mission to protect young people from alcohol, other drug use, violence, and other risky behaviors. SADD honors the Office of the Surgeon General with this award in recognition of its seminal work in an area critical to the health and well-being of America's youth. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking* is now a fundamental tool for educators, health-care specialists, policy-makers and parents.

In 2007, the Office of the Surgeon General issued the *Call to Action* to appeal to Americans to do more to stop underage alcohol use. The *Call to Action* was issued as a reminder that underage drinking has serious consequences and each person has the opportunity to prevent it. The Surgeon General's Office also wanted to focus on new research, which indicated that the developing adolescent brain may be particularly susceptible to long-term negative effects of alcohol use.

"SADD students have worked consistently for more than a quarter-century to help their peers resist the terrible harm caused by underage drinking in our society," said Wells. "We applaud the Office of the Surgeon General for bringing vital attention to underage drinking as a serious public health hazard."

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** recognizes extraordinary accomplishment in advancing SADD's objectives to promote the health and safety of young people and is given to an individual who, over the course of many years of one's professional career, has made significant contributions that have advanced the interests of safety of young people. SADD has chosen to honor Neverman as the recipient of this year's award in recognition of her dynamic leadership, enduring passion, and tireless commitment to the health, safety, and well-being of America's youth.

"Cheryl has been an inspiration to policy-makers, traffic safety and transportation professionals and, most important, young people, for many years," 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 on youth traffic safety issues, Cheryl has earned SADD's highest measure of appreciation."

Neverman has more than 30 years' experience in the injury prevention and highway traffic safety field as an educator, trainer, and national presenter. She is currently the senior program manager for the Impaired Driving Division of NHTSA, and one of her focuses is youth issues. Neverman also serves on the NHTSA Youth Team, which oversees and coordinates the agency's efforts for children and young people ages 8-24. Representing NHTSA, Neverman sits on numerous national task forces and committees, including the Federal Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Prevention of Underage Drinking, the Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, and the Healthy School Environment Panel for the Health, Mental Health and Safety in Schools Project. She also serves as Federal Advisor to the National Coordinating Committee on School Health and Safety, and she is chairwoman of the American School Health Association's Injury and Violence Prevention Council.

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**.

For more information about the 2009 SADD National Conference, contact Communications Coordinator Stacey Hart at 508-481-3568 or shart@sadd.org.

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