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Illinois Leader Receives National Award from SADD

Leading peer-to-peer activism organization honors visionary
in the health and safety field

Marlborough, MA – SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) is proud to honor and recognize **Michael R. Stout**, Director of Illinois Division of Traffic Safety, with the **2011 SADD Outstanding Contribution Award**, presented by SADD President and Executive Director Penny Wells at the 2011 SADD National Conference Awards Banquet “Celebrating New Heights” on June 28, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency O’Hare in Rosemont, Illinois, before more than 500 youth and adult attendees from 34 states across the country.

The **Outstanding Contribution Award** recognizes extraordinary accomplishment in advancing SADD’s mission to protect young people from destructive decisions, including dangerous driving practices, alcohol and other drug use, violence, and other risky behaviors. SADD honors Stout with this award in recognition of his dynamic leadership, creativity, and dedication to the health and safety of America’s youth. SADD values Stout’s innovative efforts over the past four years with a highly creative teen safe driving program and commends that program’s impact, involving schools across the state and ultimately helping reduce teen deaths by 49 percent from 2007 to 2009.

“Director Stout is a champion who understands and values the peer-to-peer model as a vital force in prevention education and this is especially evident in Illinois’s exciting program, Operation Teen Safe Driving,” remarked Wells. “SADD applauds the Director for empowering local students and creatively engaging schools to become part of the solution in the safe driving arena. By so doing, his efforts not only help protect our young people and others, but also set an example of the power of peer leadership and the value of the teen voice. SADD is proud to honor him.”

Stout has also been integral in the statewide campaign aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of texting while driving and ultimately reducing the number of cell phone-related crashes on Illinois roadways. During his tenure with the Division of Traffic Safety, Stout has also served on the Alcohol Abuse Task Force and Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's Graduated Drivers License Task Force. Stout has served as an officer and board member of the Governor's Highway Safety Association and also serves on numerous highway safety committees.

"More than 5,000 teens are killed in automobile crashes every year – the leading cause of teen deaths in the United States," noted Wells. "We encourage others to recognize the power of teens to mobilize their peers to prevent these tragic losses of life. This strategy has proven effective throughout SADD's rich 30-year history, and we feel confident it is key to helping teens make responsible decisions every time they get behind the wheel of a car," Wells added.

The four-day SADD National Conference provided youth from across the country with innovative workshops about the latest prevention education strategies, motivational speakers addressing crucial topics, and an opportunity to share best practices and have fun. Conference sponsors included TOYOTA, DCH Auto Group, the Global Road Safety Foundation and its Decade of Action for Global Road Safety 2011-2020, and the FDA / Center for Tobacco Products.

About SADD

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. To become a Friend of SADD or for more information, visit sadd.org and parentteenmatters.org or follow SADD on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

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