

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SADD ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT TO NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fellow Students Against Destructive Decisions State Coordinators Choose Kansas Leader to Serve as Representative to National Board

Marlborough, Mass. – SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), the national school-based peer-to-peer prevention education organization, today announced that Maria Torrez Anderson of Topeka, Kansas, has been appointed to the SADD National Board of Directors for a three-year term. Anderson will be the representative to the Board for her fellow State Coordinators, who come from more than 25 states and oversee more than 10,000 chapters and hundreds of thousands of active participants in schools nationwide.

“I’m honored and excited about the chance to serve on the Board of Directors and to represent my fellow State Coordinators,” Anderson said, “I have had the pleasure of working with state coordinators and numerous SADD Chapter Advisors over the past nine years. This experience allows me to share with the Board an understanding of their needs for innovative funding sources, recruitment methods, materials and new ways to communicate with a larger youth audience. I look forward to being a member of the Board and working with this outstanding national organization whose interest is to protect and educate our youth to make healthy decisions,” said Anderson.

“Maria has been a tireless advocate for the mission of SADD, working to ensure that Kansas teens are aware of the perils of underage drinking and other drug use and that they stay safe on the roads,” said Penny Wells, president and executive director of SADD. “Being chosen by her fellow State Coordinators as a representative to the SADD National Board of Directors is a great honor, and we are pleased that the national Board will benefit from her experience and the success that Maria and the Kansas Family Partnership have had in her state.”

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Maria Torrez Anderson serves as the Director of Programs for Kansas Family Partnership, Inc. (KFP) and coordinates Kansas SADD, Kansas Red Ribbon Campaign and the Kansas Youth Leadership Summit; all of these programs are statewide. As the director of programs at KFP for the past nine years, she has been instrumental in creating, leading and developing their youth oriented programs.

Anderson and SADD students have assisted in promoting three projects to the Kansas legislators over the last three years. The first project included SADD members going to the Capitol to deliver information to all legislators about the underage drinking statistics in Kansas. Another also involved hand-delivering materials to all legislators, this time to fix the flaw in the state Social Host Law, K.S.A. 21-3610c. Media coverage of the youth as they made their rounds in the Capitol helped promote the cause, including numerous media interviews with youth. By the end of the session, the new law went into effect. This year SADD chapters helped deliver to the Kansas Legislature a copy of the “State of the State – Regarding Underage Drinking in Kansas,” which provides up-to-date statistics for Kansas.

Anderson also serves as the State Coordinator for the Kansas Red Ribbon Campaign. Activities for the week, held each October, have increased under her leadership and with the efforts of the Red Ribbon State Planning Committee and SADD chapters. She also coordinates, develops, and plans the annual Red Ribbon Training Conference. Anderson and her committee plan and host an annual Red Ribbon Awards luncheon that recognizes the outstanding efforts of schools, community organizations and SADD chapters. The KS Student Leadership Council (SLC) members assist with the planning of the Red Ribbon Training and are keynote speakers at the Red Ribbon luncheon.

Another program Anderson directs is the Kansas Youth Leadership Summit, which focuses on stopping underage drinking and encouraging youth to wear their safety belts. This statewide summit is open to high school students and is funded by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Bureau of Traffic Safety. Anderson has directed the Summit since 2002, and KS SADD SLC members are youth trainers and leaders at this statewide event.

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.

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