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### **SADD's 2012 Prevention Convention Enhances Local Efforts**

*ODPS Proud to Support Leadership Training Geared Toward Preventing Destructive Decisions*

**COLUMBUS, OH (March 9, 2012)** — Students, parents, and safety partners from across the state gathered together today for the 2012 Ohio SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) annual conference which educates students and parents through a day-long training about the negative consequences of poor decisions and destructive behaviors.

Today's Prevention Convention, coupled with two prior conventions held in Cleveland (January 25) and Sharonville (March 8), offered the latest prevention strategies through a variety of speakers and safety education workshops to nearly 1,000 conference participants. These student and parent groups from across Ohio will take the tools they learned back to enhance their own community prevention work.

"We are proud to support SADD's mission, which falls directly in line with our commitment to saving lives and reducing injuries in Ohio," said Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Director Thomas Charles, who welcomed guests to the Convention. "Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds," Charles added, "and programs like this are critical in building awareness and taking action."

ODPS works to reduce alcohol-related deaths and injuries and keep Ohio's roads safe through the enforcement efforts of the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP).

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In addition, the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) coordinates and funds the efforts of DUI Task Forces and grants for local law enforcement and safety partners to combat impaired and unsafe driving. OCJS also promotes educational programs, coalition-building efforts and campaigns focused on highway safety.

“Law enforcement officers have made it their life purpose to make safety a priority,” said Ohio State Highway Patrol superintendent, Colonel John Born. “And I urge all of you to make safe, responsible decisions.” Born also encouraged students to become allies with law enforcement to keep the lines of communication open and to help contribute to a safer Ohio.

“Like the old adage, ‘It takes a village to raise a child,’ our Prevention Conventions bring together teens, parents, community members, and law enforcement,” stated Ricky Birt, Director of Ohio SADD, “and together we empower our youth leaders to return to their communities and change the tide of traffic safety.” Birt added, “These outstanding young leaders hold the keys, literally and figuratively, to making a positive impact.”

Also at today's conference, Ohio SADD honored FOX Sports Ohio, presenting the organization with the **2012 Ohio SADD PRO (Partner Reaching Out) Award**. Each year, the youth of Ohio nominate organizations they believe to have supported statewide traffic safety efforts. According to Birt, Fox Sports Ohio has been a tremendous ally of Ohio SADD and teens across the state who work to pass on safe driving messages with the goal of saving young lives.

SADD is committed to empowering young people to lead initiatives in their schools and communities to promote positive decision-making and healthy lifestyles. Founded in 1981, today SADD highlights the prevention of many destructive behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, substance abuse, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide. More information about SADD can be found at [www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org) or [www.ohiosadd.org](http://www.ohiosadd.org).

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