

Celebrate 30 With SADD

A Model Lantern Night Ceremony

SADD National encourages State Coordinators and Chapter Advisors and their SADD students to consider sponsoring a SADD Lantern Night Ceremony in their community in celebration of SADD's 30 years empowering youth and families. This event was originally developed as part of the organization's 25th anniversary celebration and was well received in many locations across the country. This year, SADD is designating Wednesday, November 30, 2011, as SADD DAY, and we hope you will consider conducting this event as a standalone or as the culmination event to a week-long awareness campaign. A sample proclamation request template and instructions are posted online at www.sadd.org in our Campaigns and Activities section along with our fun Lantern Making instructions.

Below are some suggestions for your Lantern Night Ceremony. Remember, your chapter may be small and can't use all these suggestions – or your community may have other pressing needs that you've identified. These suggestions are optional – feel free to use, if they suit your chapter.

Advance planning

- You need to find a location to hold the Lantern Night event. This could be a school, a community center, the town or city hall, etc. Make sure you begin planning the location early, so that you can secure a place for your event. Ideally, the room should be large enough to have an open area as people walk in to make lanterns and enjoy refreshments, as well as chairs and a podium for the later part of the event. Gather your mailing list of key local contacts in the youth health and safety field and communicate with them regarding a Save the Date flier or email.

Lantern making

- You might consider holding lantern-making events both at school and out in the community before the Lantern Night event. Possible locations for community lantern-making include community centers, libraries, city halls or government offices, shopping malls, etc. Look for other community events to link up with that might offer you the possibility of hosting a lantern-making station as well.
- You might also have time set aside – the first half-hour or so – at the Lantern Night event to make lanterns for those who didn't get a chance earlier. Make sure you have plenty of extra lanterns so those who show up without them are not left out!
- Instructions for making Lanterns can be found online at www.sadd.org.

Event Introduction

- When people first arrive, you could offer refreshments – light snacks and drinks. Or you could have pizza or another type of meal. You might consider seeking donations from local grocery stores, bakeries, or restaurants to provide these refreshments. Some people could make lanterns during this time, so you might have additional supplies available.
- Make sure your SADD chapter posts signs to direct people to the event if it is taking place inside a larger building. Have SADD students warmly greet those attending, explain what's going on, offer refreshments, help with the lantern-making project, etc.

Speakers

- Begin with a SADD student welcoming everyone, and thanking those who helped put the Lantern Night event together, including local officials, facility managers, local businesses that donated to the event, etc. The student should then talk briefly about SADD's proud history and the 30th birthday – the reason for the Lantern Night. Make sure to address the common misperceptions about SADD (state that SADD has a strong “no-use” message, mention the name change, the broadened mission, etc.) Talk about SADD's successes, such as the large drop in teen impaired driving deaths (teen deaths are down by 73 percent since 1981). And finally, address the challenges that still remain, including underage drinking.
- Use Lantern Night to not only celebrate the past, but show SADD's relevance to the burning issues of today.
- Invite speakers from the community, such as local elected officials, law enforcement personnel, health care workers, and others to talk further about what efforts have taken place. Speakers can provide new information, more statistics about underage drinking, and more. Elected officials can read the SADD DAY proclamation, if one has been issued. Most local officials will want to speak if they attend.
- Finish up the speaker portion with a return to the SADD student, who can talk about what SADD is doing to fight underage drinking and other destructive decisions. Give specifics of your chapter's campaigns and activities.

Lantern Night Ceremony

- The event should conclude with a lantern-lighting ceremony. We recommend using glow sticks for this purpose, for fire safety reasons. Most schools, city buildings, community centers, etc. will not allow open flames inside buildings. Look for donations or find a store locally where you can purchase glow sticks and the other materials for the Lantern Night event.
- Here are some suggestions for the ceremony. Feel free to make up your own script and emphasize areas of importance to your community.
- Make sure the audience is seated, each holding a lantern, and each with an **unlit** glow stick! It's important to ask people not to light the glow sticks until they are told to do so. You should explain the process – bending the stick until you hear a snap, then shaking gently to mix the chemicals – only **after** you've told them that they will light them much later in the ceremony. Once this is done, dim the lights, and have SADD students gather at the front of the room. One student should be the leader who will narrate the ceremony.
- The youth narrator should light a lantern, and place it on the podium to help illuminate him/herself and provide a focus for the room. Speak about the title of the event – Celebrate 30 With SADD: Lighting the Way. Often adolescence can be full of challenges, with the right answers hard to make out. SADD lights the way to good choices, and has worked to empower youth and to reduce destructive decisions for 30 years. SADD will light the way for future generations of youth in years to come as well. In this way, the lanterns can be seen as a way to remember the past, but also as a beacon of hope for the future.
- The narrator then talks about the broad mission of SADD. As s/he does, a SADD student steps forward with their lantern and lights it. For example: the narrator says “SADD was founded in 1981 as Students Against Driving Drunk. Since the founding of SADD, teen

deaths in alcohol-related crashes have been reduced by 73 percent. Fighting against impaired driving remains one of SADD's central issues." A student steps forward and says "I light this lantern to renew our commitment to reduce impaired driving among young people." As s/he does, the narrator or another assistant breaks a glow stick, and hands it to the student, who places it in the lantern as they speak. They then move to the side, remaining in the front of the other SADD students who stand waiting with unlit lanterns.

- One by one, the various areas of focus are named, and a student comes forward to light a lantern, always using the "I light this lantern to renew our commitment to ..." format. After you have gone through the issues, including risky and impaired driving, underage drinking, other drug use, teen violence and suicide, etc., the narrator says, "While SADD has worked diligently to reduce impaired driving and other destructive decisions over the last 30 years and has truly made a difference, there are still a number of young people who have lost their lives or been injured due to destructive decisions. As we light this next lantern, we ask that you observe a moment of silence." The student steps forward with a lantern, and lights it as they say, "I light this lantern to remember all those who have lost their lives or have been affected by destructive decisions." A brief moment of silence follows.
- The narrator thanks the audience for the moment of silence, and continues. "At this moment, across this state and across America, nearly 10,000 SADD chapters are gathering and speaking these same words. We're all celebrating our past successes, but we still have many challenges ahead. We will continue our critical work in the years ahead." The final student comes forward and lights the lantern as s/he says, "I light this lantern as a spark of hope for the future. I pledge that we will continue our important work, and light the way for the next generation."
- Now that a line of SADD students are standing with lit lanterns at the front of the room, the narrator says, "SADD is a nationwide movement of young people working to improve youth health and safety, but we can't do it alone. If you believe in our mission and want to offer your support, then please stand and light your lantern."
- After everyone is standing with lit lanterns, the narrator says, "Thank you for joining us in this important mission. Look around you – notice the lanterns. Each is handmade, each is bright and colorful, and each is unique. Here in this room we have students, teachers, parents, law enforcement officers, elected officials, and other community members. We come from different backgrounds, and have different opinions and views. The variety of the lanterns displays our diversity. This diversity is a strength when it comes to reducing destructive decisions. We all bring different perspectives to solving the problems. Together, we can keep youth safe and alive, and light the way for future generations."
- The narrator may continue by asking for help or support in upcoming SADD events, or outline campaigns the chapter is planning to do this school year. If the media are present, you can ask if the group will assemble together for a photograph of everyone holding the lanterns. You should also encourage people to walk around, introduce themselves, and take a look at and enjoy each other's lanterns.
- Make sure you have students thanking people who attended the event as they exit. This is a great time to hand out materials about upcoming events.
- Send handwritten thank-you notes to all key attendees.