

AMERICA'S HEROES

MADD Celebrates 25 Years And Saving 300,000 Lives

(NAPSA)—By helping to change the public's view of drunk driving, one organization has helped save more than 300,000 lives. For 25 years, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has saved lives and prevented injuries through activism, education and victim services.

A 2005 MADD/Nationwide Insurance Survey conducted by Gallup shows that 94 percent of Americans believe that driving under the influence of alcohol is a major highway safety problem.

Deterring drunk driving is key to solving the problem and the survey reveals that the public supports high-visibility crackdowns on drunk driving, such as sobriety checkpoints, as one of the most effective tools to deter drunk driving. Support for sobriety checkpoints jumped from 79 percent in 1993 to 83 percent in 2000 to 87 percent in 2005.

Increasing frequent and highly publicized checkpoints is just one of the ways the nonprofit organization aims to reduce alcohol-related traffic fatalities and injuries by 2008. Additionally, the organization will continue to support high-risk-driver legislation that will close lethal loopholes in the justice system, as well as help to pass primary seat belt laws in every state. The Gallup survey shows that the public supports these measures.

Founded by a handful of brokenhearted mothers, the organization has grown to about 600 affiliates and two million members, which include dads, daughters, sons, uncles, family and friends. Recently, the organization named its first male president, Glynn R. Birch.



While alcohol-related traffic deaths have dropped by approximately 44 percent since 1980, says Birch, nearly 17,000 alcohol-related traffic fatalities and half a million injuries still occur every year, and it is estimated that about three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash during their lives.

"We cannot celebrate mediocrity any longer. If nearly 17,000 people died on one day versus over 365 days, the public would be outraged. In order to end drunk driving, everyone must help support local law enforcement and legislative leaders in a quest to make roads safer for everyone," Birch added.

Timothy A. Hoyt, vice president of safety for Nationwide Insurance, said, "Nationwide has long been a supporter of MADD's efforts to make roadways across America safer for everyone. We believe it's part of our responsibility to be a good corporate citizen and have demonstrated leadership through national campaigns that improve highway safety. We join this cause to help ensure there are fewer drunk driving tragedies."

For more information, call 1-800-GET-MADD, 1-877-MADD-HELP (for victims/survivors) or visit www.madd.org.