

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 17, 2009

Contact: Rochelle Shirk
(714) 240-3461

DCH Tustin Acura

Beckman High School and Tustin High School Students Meet in D.C. With Legislators about the Safety of Teen Drivers

Washington, D.C. – Student leaders from the Beckman High School and Tustin High School SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) chapters met with members of the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate recently to discuss teen issues that affect teens ranging from the legal drinking age, to bullying in schools and traffic safety issues.

The legislative visit was the conclusion of the four-day 2009 SADD National Conference, which brought together over 500 youth and adults in Washington, D.C., July 12-15 to share best practices in educating their peers and promoting positive decision-making.

As part of the SADD National Conference, youth leaders from area high schools attended workshops aimed at providing students with information about topics critical to youth health and safety, such as underage drinking, teen violence and suicide, driving safety, diversity, and bullying. They participated in motivational activities and presentations aimed at exchanging new approaches and gathering ideas that they can now share with the community and develop into events for their SADD chapter.

Under the sponsorship of DCH Tustin Acura, two SADD chapters were formed at Beckman and Tustin High School this year. The student representatives - J.D. Swancoat, a sophomore at Beckman, and Allesandra Sanchez, a senior at Tustin - along with their faculty advisor Kevin Trevithick, a teacher at Tustin High and several students from other high schools, were among the California contingency to this year's event.

A special focus of this year's conference was youth advocacy, and students learned about public policy and working with legislators to accomplish their goals. The conference is held in a different city each year to afford young people a new cultural experience. In Washington, D.C., this year, students were provided an opportunity to participate in a rally on Capitol Hill to promote youth health and safety issues.

The students were also given the opportunity to meet with their representatives to voice their concerns and ask for support for several pending and new legislative items aimed to protect teen lives.

"We believe that it is the responsibility of our legislators to take action now to help protect the lives of the young people of our state and our nation," said Swancoat. "Too many avoidable tragedies occur too often and action is needed now."

These students advocated for more funding in the next Highway Bill to be directed to teen safety and awareness while driving. They also asked for consideration from Congressman Campbell and Senator Boxer to sponsor two bills. The first bill aims to prevent the legal drinking age from being reduced to 18. Of concern are the obvious risks that alcohol presents while driving, as well as the impact that alcohol can have on a young adult's brain. The second piece of legislation is a mandate for schools to have a bullying policy in effect or risk losing federal funding.

“SADD students from our school are dedicated to helping our peers make safe, positive decisions,” said Sanchez, President of the Tustin High School SADD Chapter. “It was exciting to meet with other youth who share the same mission. We have learned a lot from each other.”

Other activities co-sponsored by DCH Tustin Acura and its high school SADD chapters include Defensive Driving Training Courses held at the Toyota's Torrance campus this summer. Students who recently received their permits or driver's licenses had an opportunity to sit behind the wheel with a professional trainer to learn about the dos and don'ts of driving.

Several functions are being planned in the coming semester for SADD, according to Swancoat and Sanchez. “We are really excited about this program, and thank DCH Tustin Acura for giving us this opportunity. We are now going to have real competition between the two schools to see who is going to have highest membership in the coming year. We hope that more students could go to the SADD annual event next year. So we are going to work hard in our fundraisers.”

To learn more about SADD, or for help in starting a SADD chapter at your school, contact J.D. Swancoat at jswancoat@gmail.com, or Rochelle at DCHTustinAcura.com or Missy Thomas at socalsadd@hotmail.com, or visit www.SADD.org.

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. More information about SADD can be found at sadd.org.

About DCH Tustin Acura and DCH Auto Group

DCH Tustin Acura is part of the DCH Auto Group headquartered in South Amboy, NJ, which comprises 27 auto dealerships in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and California. Tustin Acura is one of the 12 dealerships in Southern California from Oxnard to San Diego. The company is highly invested in principles for success that value customers and employees. DCH Auto has made a commitment to continue their work with teen safety and education, through deeper commitments to the communities in which its dealerships operate and employees and customers live. The company recently launched its

teen safe driver program, Mindless Driving. Keep It Out Of Cars, campaign and is a sponsor of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). For more information, please visit www.DCHAuto.com.

###