

## **Chesapeake High Kicks off Annual Anti-Substance Abuse Campaign**

By Hayley Gable for The Pasadena Voice  
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With prom season now in full swing, local high schools are promoting anti-drug and anti-drinking activities in an effort to demonstrate the dangerous consequences of alcohol and substance abuse.

Chesapeake High School's SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), has spent recent months raising awareness through its annual Substance Abuse Prevention and Education campaign. The campaign spends the months of April, May and June organizing programs such as Prom Promise Pledges, Casket Walks, a Grim Reaper Day, a Community Awareness Day, and the display of wrecked cars involved in fatal car crashes.

Jennifer Bender, AP Psychology Instructor at Chesapeake High, founded the school's SADD organization after learning of the several fatal accidents within the community and discovering that there were no active drug education or prevention programs within the school. Currently, there are 20 members of SADD at Chesapeake and the group typically meets once a month to target issues such as suicide, teenage dating violence, depression and drug and alcohol abuse.

The "Prom Promise" has been a successful part of the campaign, with it gaining over 289 student signatures so far this year. The purpose of the prom promise is to have students pledge that they will not participate in alcohol or substance abuse. At Chesapeake High School, a "prom promise wall" is even featured in the cafeteria where students can sign their name publicly.

Chesapeake also organizes a "Grim Reaper Day" where the school highlights casket displays to make note of students' deaths as result of drinking and driving. The visuals serve as an authentic reminder to students of how the choices they make can affect the entirety of their lives.

For the past two years, Chesapeake has also brought attention to the consequences of alcohol abuse by displaying wrecked cars that have been involved in fatal accidents. The cars are featured on the lawn of Chesapeake's front entrance each spring to serve as an additional reminder to students. This year, Anne Arundel County Police Department and North County Towing have both assisted Chesapeake's SADD group in this part of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Educational campaign.

The school typically showcases 2 vehicles each spring; however, one of the cars was broken into and stolen from soon after it was put on display. "Although one of the cars was recently stripped and violated, we will continue to move forward with our mission," said Bender.

Additionally, SADD members at Chesapeake participate in a community awareness day where they educate the fifth grade classes at Jacobsville Elementary School on the prevention and abstinence of substance abuse. "Making good choices will save lives," said Bender.