MADD Canada, Mothers Against Drunk Driving has been very active during 2007 – 2008. The organization supported legislators in enacting new federal and provincial laws. MADD Canada volunteers made important contributions in the fight against impaired driving in their communities across the country. We can look back over the past year with a great deal of satisfaction at all that we have been able to accomplish.

The federal government passed significant new laws. MADD Canada first began asking for these changes more than eight years ago, we finally saw the results of all our hard work. These new laws have eliminated conditional sentences for those convicted of impaired driving causing death and impaired driving causing bodily harm. The travesties of justice that saw impaired drivers who killed a loved one and leave the justice system with house arrest are a thing of the past. MADD members’ contact with MPs, the scores of petitions, and our appearances before legislative committees, all helped to push the new sentencing law for violent crimes through Parliament.

It was also our active participation on Parliament Hill — with the Prime Minister, Justice Minister and many, many MPs — that proved successful in having new drug-impaired driving legislation passed. This new law introduced significant changes, it provides the legal framework for police to apprehend and charge drug-impaired drivers. It closes loopholes in our law that will eliminate the Carter Defence and Last Drink Defence. It gives police the authority to test drivers in a crash where there has been a death or serious injury. At every step of the way, our organization and its members provided continued support to get this Bill through the Parliamentary process and enacted into law.

On a Provincial level, MADD Canada has also made great strides in advancing its policy agenda. Many jurisdictions have introduced new legislation and others are taking serious looks at introducing new impaired driving legislation. Some of these initiatives are stronger administrative roadside suspension programs, enhanced graduated licence programs and the introduction of effective ignition interlock laws. The Rating the Provinces Report Card initiative is giving us the framework to work with the Provinces to provide safer roads and more effective impaired driving laws.

MADD Canada’s powerful public awareness campaigns have delivered the message to drive sober throughout the year, particularly at critical times such as long weekends and holiday times. The Project Red Ribbon campaign had a successful launch event in Ottawa with the support given by RCMP Commissioner William Elliott. Our many volunteers from coast to coast worked alongside police forces and community leaders through the holiday season in efforts to prevent incidents of impaired driving. Through the summer months, MADD volunteers urged Canadians to participate in Campaign 911. This new awareness drive is prompting more and more Canadians to phone police when they see a suspected impaired driver. Our consistent and constant messaging, to fly a red ribbon, and to urge people to call 911 have helped raise the consciousness of Canadians to separate the acts of drinking and driving. From the popularity and impact of our awareness campaigns, I believe our efforts are making a real difference.
Chair’s Message continued

This past year has seen the organization come through a process of renewal and change in the way we operate. I wish to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors who have been proactive in dealing with the changing nature of our organization. In this year, the Board has passed and enacted new By-Laws and a new Code of Conduct. It has instituted a more transparent way of reporting to the membership. Throughout this period of change, the Board always remained focused on the mission of MADD Canada, “To stop impaired driving and to support the victims of this violent crime.”

Our National Office has continued to provide excellent supervision for our many programs and services. MADD’s extremely well received multi-media assemblies reached record numbers of high school and elementary students across the country. MADD Canada’s outreach and support services to victims and their families were again the source of our most important work for Canadians. On this note, I want to thank all MADD volunteers who have taken Victim Services Volunteer (VSV) training and are contributing in this special, meaningful way in their communities.

I would sincerely like to thank all of MADD Canada’s list of sponsors, government funders and individual donors for the support they give to our programs and services and to our public awareness activities. Your financial support and community leadership is vital in helping MADD Canada to accomplish its goals. We are incredibly grateful for our sponsors’ participation and we are proud to be working with them.

Finally, I wish to extend a very special thank you to the tens of thousands of Chapter volunteers and Community Leaders across Canada, who are helping to make a difference in their communities. You are the heart and soul of our organization, you are the caring people of MADD, who reach out to support those in need, and who speak up to help stop so many needless tragedies. Whether it is distributing ribbons or materials to the public or supporting local victims through their challenges, each of your actions is important. Together we are accomplishing our goals. As Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Thank you MADD Canada volunteers for all your efforts and for such a great year.

Carolyn Swinson
Chair of the National Board of Directors

Chief Executive Officer’s Message

In my many meetings with community leaders, corporate sponsors, police, elected representatives and government officials, one thing I can report back to our membership is a unanimous sentiment that ‘MADD Canada is making a difference in the fight against impaired driving in our country.’

Canadians from all walks of life see members of MADD Canada as valuable partners, trusted advisors and effective messengers in advancing solutions for safer roads. Canadians who have been impacted by the crime of impaired driving see the organization as a helpful resource, a caring respite, and a safe haven where they may share and learn how to cope in the aftermath of their personal tragedy. For those who are part of our organization, or who have come to know our support services and awareness programs, MADD’s strengths and our capabilities are well recognized and respected.

This endearing reputation has afforded us a leadership role in eliminating impaired driving. It is a reputation and a role that MADD Canada works to sustain. For this reason, as good as this past year was with the success of our public policy agenda, MADD Canada is already engaging key stakeholders in an essential dialogue on technology. For example, MADD Canada is urging the development of mandatory alcohol interlock programs for all convicted impaired drivers. MADD Canada continues to work with other international traffic safety organizations to develop the technological vaccine for impaired driving -- a sensor which will not allow vehicles to start when a driver has consumed alcohol above a pre-set limit. Where laws and public awareness programs have been able to reduce impaired driving incidents, fatalities and injuries, technological advances may very well eliminate the crime altogether.

Our successes with policies such as eliminating conditional sentencing, establishing a drug-impaired driving legal framework, and narrowing evidence to the contrary defences, are a statement on the soundness of our public policy approach. The organization compiles the latest world expertise and experience, and provides policy decision-makers with the facts they need to forward more effective laws. In this manner, MADD Canada continues its pursuit of specific policy initiatives that will make a significant difference in the number of lives saved: a zero BAC to 21 graduated licensing program, enhanced administrative roadside suspensions, lower BAC limits, and the introduction of random breath-testing.

A very important part of our mission is our support to victims and their families and friends. The organization continuously searches for new ways to provide more support and services to the ever-growing number of Canadians impacted by impaired driving. We are looking at ways to increase our capacity to help; providing more support and training for victim services volunteers, growing services like the death notification program for emergency services personnel, and increasing the on-line and printed resources that provide victims with timely references and guidance.

In many cases, we want to do more. Yet, MADD Canada is stretching to improve its programs and services while working within its new financial reality. With the necessary changes to our fundraising activities that have resulted in reduced revenues, there has been a belt-tightening at every level of the organization. The future strength of MADD Canada rests in the efforts
Chief Executive Officer’s Message continued

being made today to forge new partnerships and increase new revenue sources. Our organization is actively exploring new financial opportunities, and this effort includes working with volunteers at the local Chapter level to develop new revenue streams. Our goal is to create strong fundraising programs that will support the full range of activities and services our membership has come to expect of the organization.

We have experienced tangible progress in recent years. This has, in turn, enhanced MADD Canada’s reputation as a leading voice in the fight against impaired driving. Much of the credit for the progress and our solid reputation must go to the Chapters and volunteers in more than 100 communities across the country, all possessing a steadfast commitment to MADD Canada’s mission. Given our collective determination to see an end to impaired driving, I am excited about the prospect of us building on the success we have recently realized with the new federal and provincial laws and with our growing victim support services. There is still a great deal of work before us; I know we are up for the challenge.

Andrew Murie
Chief Executive Officer

Highlights

MADD Canada Victim Services
• Emotional support through Chapter and 1-800 line
• Print and On-line Resources for Victims
• Referrals to community groups/agencies for assistance
• Injury Resources
• Helping victims know their rights under the law
• Court accompaniment and support during the criminal trial process
• Advocating for victim rights in law
• Annual Candlelight Vigil of Hope and Remembrance & Victims’ Weekend
• Victims’ Tributes, Memorial Wall and On-line Tribute to Victims
• MADD Canada’s Roadside Memorials

MADD Canada Programs and Services
• Victim Services Volunteer (VSV) training
• Court monitoring
• Death Notification Training
• Bereavement Education Program
• Project Red Ribbon
• Campaign 911
• Strides for Change
• Faces of MADD
• Radio and T.V. Public Service Announcements
• madd.ca
• On-line Research Library with publications, statistics and research papers
Victim’s Message

“

It should never have happened.”

It was supposed to be a celebration. Four carloads of teenagers had stopped by a restaurant in Perth, Ontario on their way home from a high school graduation party. After getting a bite to eat, the lively bunch squealed out of the parking lot and hopped onto Highway 7 headed towards Kanata. It had obviously been an exciting night. Caught up in this excitement, they began to play some sort of daring leap frog passing game with their vehicles.

Suddenly, one of them pulled out right in front of an oncoming tractor trailer and this triggered a devastating chain reaction of collisions. As one horrifying crash after another changed one precious life after another, their celebration turned to violence.


On June 27, 1999, my 18-year-old son, Stanley William Thomson, chose to get into a vehicle with an impaired driver. He paid for that choice with his life. Four of his school mates also died. Eleven other people were seriously or permanently injured.

Information provided by the survivors is that the teenagers had not been drinking but they had been smoking pot. OPP constables reported that they found a significant amount of narcotics in the vehicle of the driver who had caused the crashes. Toxicology reports showed that the driver did indeed have marijuana in his system. What were they thinking?

To lose a child is unbearable. Losing a child in this violent way, knowing it could have been so easily prevented, is even more unbearable. One day my son was graduating from high school. The next day we were picking out his casket. That wasn’t supposed to happen. It should never have happened. The funerals were two hours apart — five in one day. It was too much for families, students, teachers, friends and our community to handle.

In the weeks that followed Stan’s death, I asked my daughter, “Where did your Mom and I fail? Why did Stanley get in the car that night?” She replied, “You didn’t fail. You did teach us about the dangers of drinking and driving. But not about drugs.” That was a poignant moment. After that, I began to notice that more and more victims were becoming injured or killed as a direct result of people making choices to drive while impaired by drugs — and yet public awareness and our country’s laws had not yet caught up to this dangerous reality. We had a long way to go.

I joined my local MADD Canada Chapter and later served as its President. Over the years I have spoken to 15,000–16,000 teenagers and kids. Many of them tell me that it’s easier and cheaper to buy a bag of dope than it is to buy alcohol or cigarettes. This is a big problem.

I also take the time to speak to the media and to parents. It amazes me how many parents in my generation do indulge in recreational drugs and need to be educated just as much as their kids. Every generation needs to understand that impaired driving is impaired driving no matter what mind-altering substance you may ingest.

On June 27, 2008 — incidentally nine, long years to the day since my son was killed — I was interviewed by eight different media reporters. New federal laws were about to come into effect that will make it easier for police to apprehend and charge impaired drivers. As of July 2, 2008, if you are caught driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the Tackling Violent Crime Act holds you fully accountable for your actions.

Fighting for this legislation has taken years but we’re now one step closer to making our roads safer. We do expect to face some constitutional challenges, in part because the science behind detecting impairment is different for drugs than it is for alcohol. However, countless experts contributed to the conditions of this legislation and the process is very thorough. If there is reasonable suspicion that the driver may be impaired — either by alcohol or drugs — the driver must undergo Standardized Field Sobriety Tests by the roadside. Only if the driver fails will they be taken to the police station to meet with a highly trained Drug Recognition Expert who will then conduct a combination of interviews and physical observations. Only if the driver fails these too will a bodily fluid sample be demanded to narrow down for certain which specific class of illegal, over-the-counter or prescription drugs have been ingested. Especially when a fatal crash has occurred, I think it’s only fair to determine whether or not the driver was fit to drive in the first place.

MADD Canada’s volunteers and supporters will keep reaching out to kids, parents, schools and the media. The decision to drive while impaired remains the number one criminal cause of death in this country. We want to change that. Together, one step at a time, we can make our roads safer and keep our loved ones alive.

-- Stan Thomson’s father, Gregg

A few years ago, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Toronto Police Service, and MADD Canada produced and distributed a video entitled Not Ready to Go that chronicles the story of the multi-vehicle crash that killed Stanley Thomson and his four school mates. Gregg Thomson is one of many who was featured in this powerful and graphic production, which can be ordered by schools or viewed free as a streaming video on MADD Canada’s website: www.madd.ca.
SPONSORS AND DONORS

A special THANK YOU to the following sponsors, who have made leadership commitments to MADD Canada and its mission:

Allstate Insurance Company of Canada
Allstate Canada has supported MADD Canada’s work for over 15 years with a deep commitment to safe and sober driving. Allstate Canada is an Official Sponsor of MADD Canada and Campaign 911, the Title Sponsor of Project Red Ribbon, a National Sponsor of MADD Canada’s High School and Elementary School Multi-Media programs and a partner on MADD Canada’s impaired driving research and liability publications.

General Motors of Canada Limited
GM Canada has been a sponsor of MADD Canada for the last 4 years. GM Canada is the Presenting Sponsor of MADD Canada’s High School Multi-Media program. Safety and community initiatives are key pillars of GM Canada’s community investment strategy. GM Canada’s sponsorship has educated hundreds of thousands of students on making the right choice not to drive impaired by alcohol and/or drugs.

#TAXI
If you drink, don’t drive! Call #TAXI (# 8-2-9-4) from your cell phone and you’ll be connected to the first available taxi company or the taxi company of your choice — 24 hours a day, seven days a week, anywhere in Canada. #TAXI has sponsored MADD Canada for the last 5 years. #TAXI is the Title Sponsor of MADD Canada’s Campaign 911, Official Sponsor of MADD Canada’s High School Multi-Media program and Official Sponsor of Project Red Ribbon. #TAXI’s commitment to safe and responsible behaviour makes them a natural partner of MADD Canada.

LCBO
LCBO employees across Ontario have encouraged their customers to support anti-impaired driving initiatives by participating in Project Red Ribbon and other public awareness initiatives. In recent years, LCBO and MADD Canada have partnered on innovative provincial advertising campaigns, using creative media — from cinema, to outdoor billboards, in bar and restaurant washrooms, and on radio and TV. LCBO is an Official Sponsor of MADD Canada.

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Together, we will stop impaired driving, save lives and prevent injuries.

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