NCADD – OC

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCY – ORANGE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

Orange County, CA – According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), "Alcohol use by persons under age of 21 is a major public health problem. In 2008, nationally there were approximately 190,000 emergency rooms visits by persons under the age of 21 for injuries and other conditions related to alcohol**.** On average, underage drinkers consume more drinks per drinking occasion than adult drinkers. People aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States. More than 90% of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinking."

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – Orange County/ Community Alliance Network (NCADD-OC/ CAN) is supporting Alcohol Awareness Month to encourage local communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues. This April, NCADD-OC/ CAN will emphasize the important public health issue of underage drinking and educating youth about the dangers alcohol can place on their bodies. With Spring Break and Prom around the corner, there is no better time to educate high school students on reasons to stay alcohol, and other drug free.

Some important basic facts about underage drinking from the CDC Fact Sheet:

- "Alcohol is the **number one drug of choice** among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs."
- "Youth who start drinking **before age 15** are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after age 21."

Reducing underage drinking is critical in securing a healthy future for Orange County's youth. Unfortunately, it remains relatively easy for teenagers to get access to alcohol and, despite serious concerns, kids are flooded with media messages that glamorize alcohol use, increasing the likelihood that they will drink themselves. It will require a cooperative and community-based effort from parents, schools, community organizations, government agencies, alcohol manufacturers and retailers, and young people themselves to decrease youth access to alcohol.

NCADD-OC/ CAN continues to work toward preventing and reducing underage drinking in the cities of Anaheim, Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, and Dana Point. Prevention strategies include promoting the **Minor Drinking – Major Problems** media campaign, conducting educational workshops, planning community forums on the issue of underage drinking, and providing Responsible Beverage Service trainings to off-sale liquor establishments.

For more information on Alcohol Awareness Month and about the Underage Drinking Prevention Project, please contact Grace Tan at 949.595.2288 x315 or gtan@canoc.org.

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