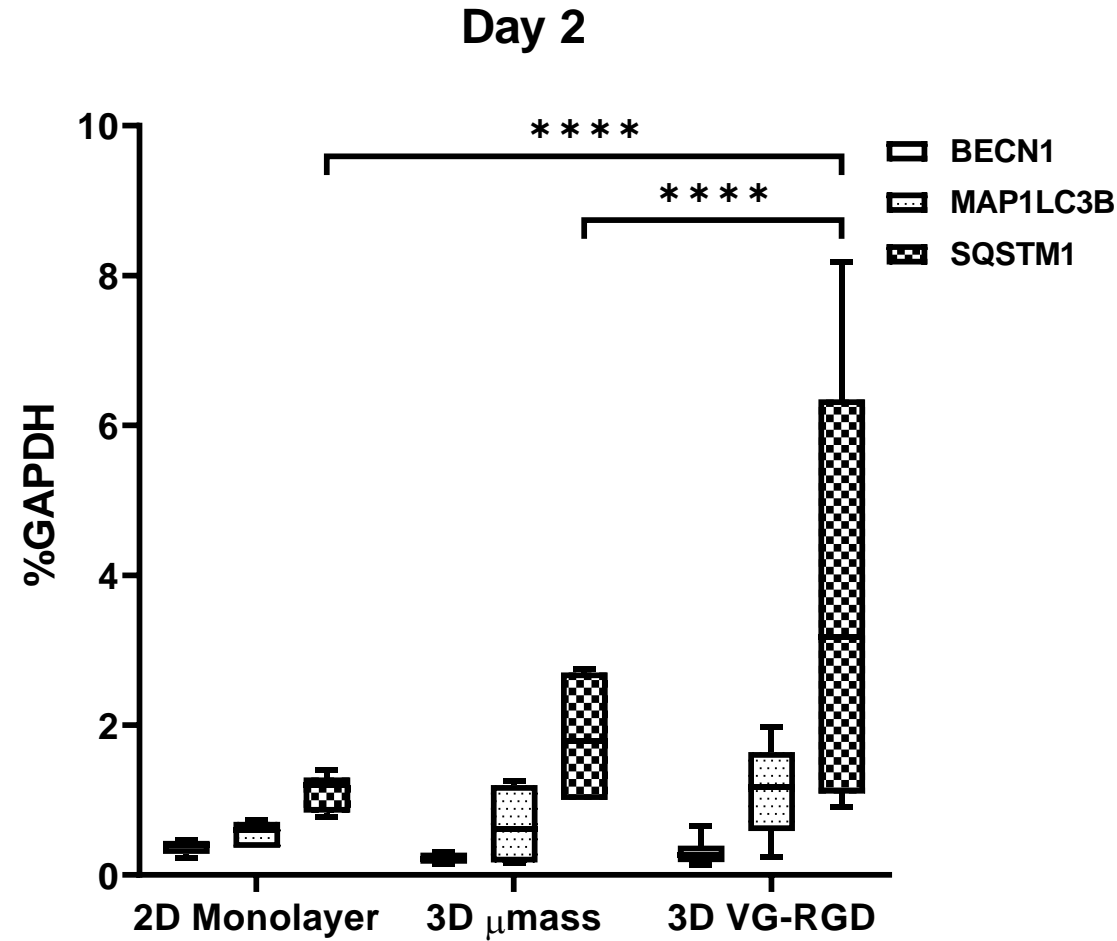


**Figure S1.** Safranin immunohistochemical staining of hASCs in 3D  $\mu$ masses at day 28 stimulated with TGF $\beta$ 3, BMP6 and TGF $\beta$ 3+BMP6. Scale bars= 500 $\mu$ m. Real-time PCR analysis of COL2A1 and ACAN genes expression of hASCs in 3D  $\mu$ masses in basal (day 2) and after chondrogenic stimulation with TGF $\beta$ 3, BMP6 and TGF $\beta$ 3+BMP6 (day 28). Data were expressed as % GAPDH (housekeeping gene) and represented as Box-plot with median, minimum, and maximum. Kruskal-Wallis with Dunn's multiple comparisons test was used for statistical analysis: \* $p<0.05$ ; \*\*  $p<0.005$ .



**Figure S2** Real-time PCR analysis of *BECN1*, *MAP1LC3B*, *SQSTM1* genes on hASCs in 2D monolayer, 3D  $\mu$ masses and VG-RGD at day 2. Data were expressed as % *GAPDH* (housekeeping gene) and represented as Box-plot with median, minimum, and maximum. Kruskal-Wallis with Dunn's multiple comparisons test was used for statistical analysis: \* indicate differences between autophagic markers; \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ .