

## Service Projects

### **National Youth Violence Prevention Week 2004**

NASC encourages all student councils to learn more about the 2004 National Youth Violence Prevention Campaign. This is an opportunity to help focus on effective ways to prevent and reduce youth violence on your campus and in your community. The campaign was founded by National S.A.V.E. (Students Against Violence Everywhere) and The Guidance Channel.

Read more about this program and find valuable resources for use at the local level through the following links:

[www.violencepreventionweek.org](http://www.violencepreventionweek.org)  
[NYVPC Press Release](#)

### **Stuff-a-Bus**

Ennis (TX) HS coordinated a competition between the seven schools in its district to see if they could stuff a bus full of materials for Helping Hands of Ennis. Each school had the bus on its campus for four days and students were challenged to fill it with nonperishable food items, coats, and blankets. Student council members weighed the bus at the end of the four days. Coats, blankets, and money were counted based on a scale that provided equal poundage value: a dollar was worth eight pounds, a new coat 186 pounds, and a new blanket 136 pounds. The school that collected the most was recognized as the Champion Collector and received free drinks provided by Coca Cola.

### **Kids Count**

Student council members at Mason (OH) HS contact the nurses at the Pediatric Care Center who work with terminally ill children to obtain wish lists for the kids and their family members. They match each child with a first period class. Class members work together to fulfill the wish list. A student council member is assigned to each first period class to help coordinate the efforts and inspire teamwork.

As gifts are purchased, they stay in the first period until pick-up day. On pick-up day, student council members wrap and tag all the presents and group them according to families. The last day before holiday break, nurses pick up the gifts for delivery. In January, the nurses bring a photo collage of some of the recipients with their gifts with a thank-you card.

### **Senior Evening with the Arts**

The student council at Washington (MO) HS invited more than 400 senior citizens for an evening with the arts. Council members served desserts, the Strolling Strings performed along with a select group of the Chamber Choir. During the dessert and coffee time, senior citizens viewed art displays and demonstrations by the art students. Afterward they were treated to a special performance of the fall play Lend Me A Tenor.

## **Family Fun Night**

Every year the National Honor Society at Richfield (MN) HS works in collaboration with the local library to sponsor a family night held at the library, the park, and the community center. The evening consists of ice skating, snow golf, warm fires, and story reading, as well as an informal dance for middle level and elementary students.

## **Alumni Tent**

At the Homecoming football game at Pinconning (MI) Area HS, the National Honor Society sets up a tent where alumni from each year can sign in. NHS members serve cider and cookies to alumni. The sign-in lists are also published in the local newspaper. "This gives returning PHS grads a chance to see who from their class has come to the game, to announce class reunions, etc.," said Vickie Tobias NHS member. "We have received many positive comments about this service."

## **High School Preview**

The National Honor Society and student council at Hixson (TN) HS collaborate to give eighth graders a taste of what high school has to offer in their "Give Hixson High a Try" project. Eighth graders from the local middle schools come to Hixson for a day of leadership games, a tour of the building, and performances by choir, jazz band, drama, and cheerleading groups. Following a pizza lunch, the eighth graders were able to look around at a club fair where each club had a booth to tell about its activities.

## **Welcome Packets**

Student council members at Lyons (KS) HS are assigned to new students to greet them and show them around the school. The ice is broken between them by giving the new student a welcome packet containing fun and useful items including:

- A school mascot folder that has a campus map
- Coupons for getting into a school activity (such as a dance or an athletic event) free
- Discounts at the concession stand
- Brochures from the Chamber of Commerce about the community
- A city map
- Coupons or handouts from businesses in the community
- Candy or gum
- A special handwritten note to welcome the new student.

## **Grocery Bag Drive**

The National Honor Society at Mount Notre Dame HS in Cincinnati, OH, holds a paper and plastic bag drive each fall for a local foodbank. The drive is set up as a class competition, with each grade level seeking donations of bags from grocery stores and

other sources. Last year, more than 50,000 bags were collected and donated to a Cincinnati foodbank that uses the bags to package goods and distribute them to people in need.

### **Senior Citizen Dinner**

Working with the local job corps culinary arts program, the student senate at Denison (IS) HS organizes a turkey dinner for senior citizens each year around Thanksgiving. They publicize the event in the paper and on radio stations to attract attendees. Members of the student senate serve the meal.

### **Community Service Day**

A small group of upperclassmen student council members at Shorecrest Upper School in St. Petersburg, FL, organize a schoolwide community service day. They find the names, locations, and needs of various organizations within the community at which students and advisers can volunteer. Students sign up for their top three choices and groups are organized with a chaperone to volunteer. "This is a great way for students to get involved in the community, plus they get community service hours toward graduation for a full school day of work," says student council member Lindsay Petty.

### **Service-a-Thon**

As a way to combine community service and fundraising, the student council at Air Academy HS in Colorado Springs, CO, has sponsored a Community Service-a-Thon for the last two years. Each student committed to 15 hours of community service through the first semester for a total of 600 hours as a group. Each student submitted 10 names and addresses of individuals they thought would support them in this endeavor. A local marketing firm created a database from those names (for a fee) and handled tracking, communication, follow-up, and postage, allowing the student council to focus on completing the service.

"Once our goal of 600 hours was accomplished, money started coming in," said Diane Wilborn, student council co-adviser. "This combination of community service and fundraising allowed us to take our focus off of selling cookie dough, candles, and chocolates, and direct our energies toward servicing our school and community more effectively."

All the funds raised from this event over the last two years (almost \$9,000) were redistributed back into the community through charitable donations. "This event allowed us to come together as a group for some of the community service events and created a much more externally-focused group. These were benefits we did not even anticipate," said Kim Madden, student council co-adviser. "The company we worked with would allow us to do any type of 'a-thon,' but we are completely sold on the community service for the many positive benefits."

## **Service Station**

A bulletin board installed in the hallway at Wooster (OH) HS serves as a posting spot for community service opportunities for National Honor Society members and other students who want to become involved in service. NHS members send letters to more than 50 community social service agencies and service clubs inviting them to send information on service opportunities with them. The agencies or clubs design a flier with the necessary information and mail it to the school. NHS members post it on the "Service Station" bulletin board for all interested students.

## **Board Game Drive**

To collect board games for a local children's shelter, student council members at Papillion LaVista HS in Papillion, NE, sponsored a class competition to see which class could bring in the most games. The winning class received a pizza party.

## **Bandfest**

A daylong charity concert played by eight local high school bands provided a fun activity and a way for students at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis, IN, to give something back to the community. A committee of student council members organized the event, which involved reviewing demo tapes from local bands and arranging for a stage and sound system to be used on the football field. The event was publicized on local high school radio stations and students from all schools were invited to attend.

As planning for the event progress, other groups in the school began helping with the concert. The foreign language clubs set up food booths, the National Honor Society set up carnival booths, and the Father's Association donated funds to have T-shirts printed. All proceeds from the day were donated to a local charity that provides care for a paraplegic teen.

## **Kick Butts Day**

Thousands of young people have been working to combat the epidemic of youth tobacco use. Kick Butts Day, held this year on April 2, is an annual initiative started in 1995 that encourages activism and leadership among elementary, middle, and high school students. Sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Kick Butts Day provides an excellent opportunity for student organizations to educate their peers about the dangers of tobacco use by planning activities for their schools and communities. A wealth of materials to help in planning anti-tobacco events is available from [www.kickbuttsday.org](http://www.kickbuttsday.org).

Some ideas for Kick Butts Day activities include:

- Elementary Presentations-A group of high school or middle level students visit an elementary school class and make a presentation about how tobacco hurts the

- body. (The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' website at [www.tobaccofreekids.org/abc/](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/abc/) has photos to help show the deadly-and disgusting-effects of tobacco use.)
- **Merchandise Dump**-Hold a contest between classes or grade levels to see which class can fill trash cans with the most tobacco merchandise (e.g., lighters, ashtrays, T-shirts, caps, jackets, backpacks, etc.) with brand-name logos on them. Conduct a rally to chuck the collected items into a huge dumpster. For an even more dramatic effect, see if a local hospital will let you conduct the event on its property using a trash bin specially marked for toxic or dangerous substances. Be sure to send out a press release and call reporters to announce the upcoming dump.
  - **Six Feet Under**-A variation on the merchandise dump is to dump all the merchandise you've collected into a coffin and bury it. You can even create a stuffed dummy of the Marlboro Man and conduct a mock funeral as you lower him down.
  - **Grim Reaper Skit**-Create a skit for an assembly featuring the Grim Reaper meeting with tobacco executives who sell their souls in exchange for power and wealth. The Grim Reaper whips up a secret recipe for disaster that's guaranteed to hook and kill millions of people.
  - **Mock Trial for "Mr. Butts"**-Stage a mock trial and play the roles of the defendant, Mr. Butts, a cigarette who is charged with poisoning people's lungs and causing addiction and lung cancer; the judge; the prosecuting attorneys, who try to prove the dangers of cigarette smoking; the defense attorneys, who argue that smoking is a personal choice; witnesses; members of the jury; and a police officer, who swears in the witnesses.
  - **Poster Contest**-Conduct a poster contest by having students submit original designs with logos and slogans for an anti-smoking campaign. Send the winning entry to a local newspaper.
  - **Speak Out**-Have students write to local elected officials describing their feelings about the tobacco industry and ads targeting young people. They may wish to suggest the passing of local ordinances banning billboards within a certain radius of schools. They may also wish to ask the officials if they accept or have ever accepted money from tobacco companies, and why they do or don't.
  - **Letters to the Editor**-Have students write letters to the editor of local papers, discussing young people and the tobacco industry. Any evidence that tobacco ads target young people is always a hot topic. Encourage students who are comfortable with the subject to include personal stories about how tobacco has affected them and their families.
  - **Kick Butts Day Proclamation**-Contact a local elected official, such as a mayor or city or county council representative, and ask him or her to make a proclamation declaring an official "Kick Butts Day."

### **Baby Food Drive**

National Honor Society members at West Valley HS in Spokane, WA organized a baby food collection effort to benefit a local food bank. Students signed up for blocks of time

over a weekend to stand outside a grocery store and hand out fliers asking shoppers to buy jars of baby food to donate. They found people to be very cooperative since baby food is fairly inexpensive.

### **Career Day**

As a service project to the members of their school community, the National Honor Society at Clements HS in Sugarland, TX, sponsored a career day where juniors and seniors interested in a particular field of study were allowed to leave class and attend presentations made by professionals in that field. NHS members contacted members of a variety of professions to obtain the speakers, prepared a schedule of presentations from which students could choose, hosted a breakfast for the speakers on career day, and escorted the speakers to their rooms.

### **Dressed for Success**

The National Honor Society at Northern Highlands Regional HS in Allendale, N.J., organized a clothing drive for adults on welfare who are seeking jobs but lack appropriate attire to interview for or hold a job in a business office. They collected business suits, blouses, skirts, shirts, jackets, ties, and shoes that were donated to local country services for distribution.

### **Grad Night**

Pomperaug HS in Southbury, CT, organizes an all-night party following its graduation ceremony to help students refrain from using alcohol to celebrate. Once at the party, students are not allowed to leave until morning. The community helps sponsor the event by donating prizes and money. Parents and teachers decorate and organize activities in the gym. Each senior receives a personalized collage of photographs sent in by parents.

### **Prom Rescue**

Recognizing that some seniors might not be able to afford the expense of attending prom, the student council at Duluth (GA) HS covers the expenses for four senior boys and four senior girls to attend. They solicit donations of dresses, tuxedos, and dinner from local merchants and pay the cost of the tickets from student council funds. It is handled confidentially through school administrators so the student council members don't know who receives the assistance.

### **Special Needs Prom**

Each year the student council of Penrridge HS in Perkasié, PA, hosts a prom for a local facility of special needs adults. Held in the school cafeteria, the event features refreshments, a disc jockey, and student council dance partners. "Our guests come dressed in their best outfits. They hear the music and want to dance and this is where our council members join in. We become dance partners for the evening," says student

council adviser Mike White. "It is a spirited evening filled with laughter. Our students enjoy hosting the prom as much as our special friends from the community."

### **Senior Ball**

Student council members at Phoenix (NY) HS organize a yearly dress-up affair for senior citizens from nursing homes in their community that includes a buffet and dancing. The seniors--many of whom are in wheelchairs--are transported by bus to the school where they are greeted by student council members. A highlight of the event is group wheelchair dancing where everyone goes side by side and holds hands. Student council members enjoy the interaction and enjoy getting to learn "new" dances from the seniors.

"Every year our students are deeply touched by the connection made with these very special people," said Stacey Cook, student council president. "The seniors are just as touched because they realize that these young adults are taking their time to reach out and go back to their time and enjoy their music with them. It's a small thing that means a lot to both parties," she said.

### **Senior Citizen Computer Classes**

Members of Lion's Quest, a community service group at Evergreen Park (IL) HS teamed up with senior citizens in their community for a six week course in how to use the computer. Each Wednesday the students teach their senior partner such things as how to use a word processor, how to surf the Internet and use e-mail, and even introduce them to playing games on the computer. At the end of the six weeks, the senior citizens have an opportunity to show the students how much they have learned.

### **Buckle Up for Safety**

To emphasize safety and increase the number of students wearing seat belts, student council members at North Community HS in Minneapolis, MN, stand in the parking lot each morning for a week in February or March and check the cars to make sure occupants are buckled up. In addition they hang posters of crashed cars in the school and conduct awareness activities. Each day they count how many people are buckled up and how many are not. After the week they compile the data to present a report at a safety conference.

### **One Homeless Night**

To raise money for the homeless and raise awareness of the plight of homeless people, FCCLA members of Pomperaug HS in Southbury, CT, collect pledges in preparation for spending a night outside. Organizers provide large cardboard boxes from local stores and on the assigned date, participants arrive in the evening for one homeless night. The evening is spent quietly and the event goes on rain or shine, although in case of inclement weather participants can bring tarps.

### **Drawer Drive**

National Honor Society members at Booker T. Washington HS in Tulsa, OK, advertise their "Drawer Drive" with posters of stick-figures wearing construction paper boxer shorts. They collect adult-sized underwear and socks, which are donated to a local day center for the homeless. When clients come to the center they are given the opportunity to shower, eat, and receive toiletries, including new socks and underwear.

### **Santa Letters**

Hillsboro (MO) HS National Honor Society members get a chance to play Santa each year in a collaborative effort with the local elementary school. Students in kindergarten, first, and second grades write letters to Santa which their teachers send to the NHS. Each Honor Society member receives a class to which to write responses. Members then dress up as Santa's helpers, distribute the letters with candy canes to the children, and help them read their letters.

### **Weatherizing Homes**

Montwood HS in El Paso, TX, organizes the student councils in their district to weatherize homes of low income residents in their area. They solicit donations of weatherizing materials from hardware and home improvement stores, then perform the work on about 20 homes each year.

### **PB&J Sandwiches**

Realizing that giving is not always about money, the National Honor Society members at Bishop Shanahan HS in Downingtown, Pa., purchase or collect donations of peanut butter, jelly, bread, and sandwich bags for a weekly sandwich making session. Every Tuesday a team of NHS members make sandwiches and one person delivers them to a local shelter for abused women for the children in the safe house. Overheard during the sandwich making: "Don't be stingy with the peanut butter-remember, a kid is going to eat this."