

## GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT YOUTH AND SCHOOLS

- Prevention programs have proven effective in the elimination of smoking.
- Youth-based community programs that identify social influences and provide skills to resist them have led to reduction in smoking onset.
- Programs that focus on short-term negative consequences, including social undesirability and physiological impairment, are most effective.
- Adding youth-oriented mass media enhances effectiveness of youth-based community programs.
- Since smoking behavior develops along a series of stages that begins when students are in sixth grade, smoking prevention needs to be initiated earlier than high school.
- Staying smoke-free in school probably means a person will never start.

## YOUTH CONTEST IDEAS

Contests are a fun way to actively involve students in their own tobacco education. Below is a list of contest ideas that can be incorporated into Great American Smokeout<sup>®</sup> activities:

- Hold a contest for the best stop-smoking creation: a poster, essay, song, debate, radio or TV commercial, home video, editorial, poem, slogan, banner, cartoon, joke, comedy routine, non-smoking pledge, or rap.
- Work with local radio or TV stations to sponsor a public service announcement (PSA) contest. Students write the script for the PSA and a local radio/TV station produces it. The winning entry could be broadcast during the news on Thursday, November 15, as part of the Great American Smokeout celebrations in your community. **Be sure and coordinate with your local American Cancer Society communications staff person if you want to contact the media.**
- Work with a local outdoor advertising company to sponsor a billboard design contest. The students could create an antismoking billboard that the outdoor advertising company would put on billboards as part of local Smokeout celebrations.
- Have a contest between students and teachers in which students challenge teachers who smoke to quit. If student smokers are willing to identify themselves, this contest can also work between students.
- Hold a contest for the best persuasive letter students write to their parents asking them to quit smoking, and ask the local paper to print the winning letter on the day of Smokeout. Work with your local American Cancer Society office to implement these ideas, to serve as contest judges,

- Work with cheerleaders to develop anti-tobacco cheers. Hold a district-wide cheerleader contest. Select winning cheers to share on your local TV PSA, media event, or radio message.

## **ADDITIONAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

Here are some more ideas for programs that your local American Cancer Society can help implement in schools as part of your Great American Smokeout activities:

- Incorporate anti-tobacco messages, such as
  - smoking experiments in Science
  - essays on smoking in English
  - smoking equations in Math
  - effects of smoking in Health
  - review of cigarette ads to determine whom tobacco companies target with their ads in Social Studies
  - review of tobacco issues in current events
- Use American Cancer Society curriculum and information found on [www.greatamericansmokeout.org](http://www.greatamericansmokeout.org).
- Have students research and write stories for the school newspaper about the social and health consequences of smoking.
- Invite a motivational speaker who has “quit the habit” to give youth motivation and the power to say no. The speaker can talk about how he/she did it successfully and how quitting smoking has improved his/her life.
- Ask the school newspaper to cover tobacco issues, including health effects, cost of using tobacco, social ramifications, and the marketing practices of the tobacco industry.
- Put on a Smokeout comedy show at a school assembly. Aspiring stand-up comedians can perform routines and skits about how difficult it is to quit smoking and how many people die from tobacco use.
- Organize high school and junior high students to put on a show for elementary school students in your district. The older kids learn from writing and producing a show while the younger kids learn from people they look up to.
- Encourage students to “adopt” their parents or other loved ones that smoke. Students can promise to provide moral support and keep a watchful eye on those who are trying to quit as part of the Great American Smokeout.
- Invite high school athletes, cheerleaders, and band members to talk to elementary or middle school students about why they don’t smoke.

## **SAMPLE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT PROCLAMATION FOR STUDENTS**

Whereas, The students of **(name of school)** take great pride in our future and our health, and

Whereas, We show our community pride by working toward a healthier, smoke-free generation for those younger students who look to us to set a good example, and

Whereas, Not starting to smoke is the healthy thing to do, and

Whereas, We know that more Americans die each year from smoking-related diseases than from AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, fires, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined, and

Whereas, It's just not cool, and

Whereas, The American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout is held the third Thursday in November to encourage young people not to start a lifetime of addiction to nicotine,

Therefore, I, **(name)**, **(school president)**, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 15, 2007, as Great American Smokeout Day at **(name of school)**, and in doing so, I urge all students of **(name of school)** to show we are united in taking this positive action to a more promising, healthy future.

## **GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT PROMOTION IDEAS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Many college-age students have smoked for years because they started as teenagers. Now many college smokers want to quit. The key to success is to hold Smokeout activities in a highly visible, popular place where most students will go during the course of the day. The college quad, cafeteria, or student unions are ideal locations.

- Work with the student body president to proclaim November 15 as the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on campus. The student council can vote on the issue to get other students interested in participating in Smokeout.
- If dorms are not already smoke-free, work with the student council to establish smoke-free dorms or a smoke-free campus policy.

- Promote the American Cancer Society cessation resources on campus. Call 1-800-ACS-2345 for advice and materials for smokers who are trying to quit. Posters, business cards, ad slicks, and postcards may be available through the American Cancer Society at [www.greatamericansmokeout.org](http://www.greatamericansmokeout.org).
- Meet with the editor and staff of the campus newspaper to discuss the health effects of tobacco and to explain the propensity for starting to smoke in order to look “cool.” Ask the paper to take an in-depth look at the reasons people smoke, the addictive nature of cigarettes, and the marketing practices of the tobacco industry.
- Meet with campus radio station DJs and ask them to participate in and promote the Great American Smokeout activities on air.
- Ask the management at popular bars and hangouts to go smoke-free for the day.
- Ask a photographer from the college yearbook staff to take photos of Smokeout events to be included in the school memories.
- Work with the communications and film department to produce a public service announcement for local broadcast, urging students not to smoke.
- Ask the communications and film department to work with local high schools to produce a video for elementary schools explaining the dangers of using tobacco.
- Set up a competition among campus fraternities and sororities to help smokers quit.
- Ask your American Cancer Society to provide antismoking posters, brochures, or newsletters to display in the student union and cafeteria.

*Your American Cancer Society staff representative will be happy to work with you to meet your college's individual needs. More information can also be found at [www.greatamericansmokeout.org](http://www.greatamericansmokeout.org), [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), or by calling 1-800-ACS-2345.*