



# UNITE Club Activity Suggestions

All of the ideas contained in this document were gleaned from actual projects conducted by UNITE Clubs during the 2006-07 school year and included in entries for the UNITE Club of the Year contest. These ideas are offered as suggestions to help new or existing clubs plan their programs. Feel free to adopt or modify any of these projects to fit your club's size and available resources.

## Questions?

For assistance or more information about any of the activities or ideas mentioned contact:

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For more information about UNITE Clubs, to request a UNITE Club manual (updated for 2008-09 school year), download on-line forms or learn more about any aspect of Operation UNITE visit:

<http://www.operationunite.org>

## Organizational and Event Tips

- Choose club events early in the year – there's nothing like a date on the calendar to keep the planning process moving.
- Club members should decide what projects they are interested in pursuing. Get permission and go for it!
- If possible, hold club meetings weekly. Regular routines afford more interaction, greater visibility, and opportunities for more students to take part.
- When handing out items, be sure to include a tag with contact information for your club, a drug-free message, along with the toll-free treatment helpline (1-866-424-4382) and drug tip hotline (1-866-90-UNITE) numbers.
- Involve school nurses, counselors, lunchroom staff, bus drivers, custodial workers and central office staff in projects.
- On themed days, reward the classroom with greatest percentage of participants with ice cream or pizza.
- On the Friday of an anti-drug week celebration reward all students in the school because "they are all winners for being drug-free." This would be a great Red Ribbon Week activity.

- Looking for speakers? Start within your school. Parents and guardians are involved in many professions; grandparents offer an interesting glimpse of times past. This could also be a demonstration or musical performance. Conclude by discussing how drugs interfere with being able to perform or enjoy these various hobbies and job activities.
- Don't be afraid to elect UNITE Club officers who have never before led a club or sports team. Remember: Involve everyone!
- To get the biggest impact at the lowest cost, partner with other school clubs when holding events.
- Invite community and business leaders to serve as judges for contests. This promotes awareness and gets more people involved with your school.
- Keep a scrapbook. Not only will it provide memories, but you will have ideas that can be used by future club members. It is also nice when it comes time for the UNITE Club of the Year award nominations. Involve all club members in this project.
- Ask parents and businesses to donate gifts for prizes and food items for club events.
- Don't rely on just one awareness promotion. Keep the message current by attending lots of school academic and athletic events (especially football, basketball, soccer and baseball contests) and distribute handouts. Remember you are trying to reach everyone, so mix up your audience. You will also spread the word to other schools!
- Utilize hands-on projects and make sure club members -- not only the sponsors -- are responsible for the planning process.
- Be sure to send thank-you notes to anyone who helps your club.

## Club Promotions

- Logo contest. Give your club an identity. Reward the winner.
- Slogan contest. It is handy to have a catch phrase to use on promotional materials and give focus to your club's efforts.
- T-shirt design contest. A T-shirt promotes pride, gives students an identity, and stands out when they are working on a project. It is also an excellent way to promote the anti-drug message. (Designs must be approved in advance by Operation UNITE.)
- Conduct a pizza party for parents, businesses and other volunteers (don't forget your principal) who have helped make your club a success.
- Take photos at each event and submit to your local newspaper with a brief description of what happened, who was involved, when and where it took place, and the purpose for the event.
- When electing officers, ask each candidate to submit an essay about why they want to lead the group. Share these with the entire school to inspire others to join.
- Designate a certain day of the week or month for members to wear their anti-drug club T-shirts.
- Challenge every club member to "invite a friend" to become involved. Set a goal for new members and reward the group with pizza or ice cream if they succeed.
- Create a club mission statement. This is similar to the slogan, but gives you an opportunity to explain your club's purpose in greater detail, usually two or three sentences.
- Maintain a hallway bulletin board about club activities and to provide drug information. Make sure to include a calendar of upcoming activities. Change monthly.
- Begin each UNITE Club meeting with the Anti-Drug Pledge.
- Have your school cheerleaders learn and perform UNITE cheers.
- Have students write Public Service Announcements and ask local/school radio stations to let members record them. You can also recite them over the school public address system.

## Slogans, Mottos & Themes

- “Be a Smartie, Don’t Do Drugs” – students hand out Smarties candy during an awareness program or activity. This is a great, inexpensive project for a pep rally, open house or ball game and was one of the most popular activities conducted by clubs.
- “Drugs R Not For Me”
- “Band Together Against Drugs” Day – students wear a bandanna or headband to school
- “We’ve Got Better Things to do Than Drugs”
- “Kick Butt” day – promote getting cigarettes out of your life as part of The Great American Smoke-Out
- “Hide From Drugs” or “Fight Against Drugs” Day – students wear camouflage clothing to school
- “Shade Out Drugs” Day – students wear sunglasses to school
- “Can Drugs” drive – students collect canned soup or other canned items then donate them to a local shelter or food pantry
- “Join Hands and Stand UNITED Against Drugs” – students may make a human chain around the hallways or school
- “Don’t Be a Dum-Dum, Don’t Use Drugs” – students hand out Dum-Dum suckers with this anti-drug message attached
- “Walking Off Drugs” or “Walk All Over Drugs” Day – students conduct a march against drugs with posters and cheers
- “Shoot Hoops, Not Drugs” – (1) attend a regional UNITE summer camp program conducted by Jeff Sheppard; (2) after-school non-league basketball games or shoot-arounds
- “Tie Down Drugs” Day – students (including girls) wear ties to school
- “Be Like Me, Stay Drug-Free”
- “Pair Up Against Drugs” drive – students collect pants for the Family Resource Center
- “Dancing Off Drugs” Day – students have dancing competition
- “Follow Me, I’m Drug-Free”
- “Don’t Let Drugs Twist Your Life (Mind)” – students hand out snack bags containing pretzels or Twizzlers candy. This is a potential activity for lunchtime.
- “Strike Out Drugs” or “Bowl Down Drugs” Day – students participate in an indoor bowling competition (label each pin with a drug name)
- “Don’t Waste Your Life” – students decorate school trash containers. Consider partnering with the PRIDE Club. (Permission is required if you want to use permanent markers or paint.)

- “Too Smart To Start” or “Be Smart, Don’t Start”
- “Boot Out Drugs” Day – students wear boots to school
- “Dodge Drugs Day” – students play game of dodge ball
- “Wipe Out Drugs” Day – (1) students wear surfer clothing to school; (2) see how many students you can weave together – over shoulder, through legs – in a single line with rolls of toilet paper
- “Don’t Let Drugs Sneak Up On You” Day – students wear sneakers to school
- “Crazy” Day – students have “crazy hair,” “inside out clothes,” “PJs,” “mix-n-match,” “crazy face,” house shoes,” etc.
- “Trust In Me To Be Drug-Free”
- “Racing For A Drug-Free Life” – any type of fun/silly competition
- “Safe Night Out” – promote trick-or-treat safety awareness just before Halloween
- “Hopping Off drugs” Day – students skip rope
- “Be a ROLL-Model; Stay Drug-Free” – students pass out mini Tootsie-Roll candies with an anti-drug message
- TEAM – Through Education And Mentoring
- “Hands Off Drugs Wall” – Create a large poster with bare tree branches. Everyone who pledges to be drug-free gets to have their handprint (painted or traced and cut out of paper) and name placed on the tree as leaves.

## Education, Mentoring, Service & Activity Programs

- Attend annual UNITE Youth Summit and other educational/training programs.
- Implement the “Too Good For Drugs” curriculum. Tie club events into the current class topic. Schools interested in learning more about the curriculum and how it may be used to promote awareness should contact UNITE Education Director Debbie Trusty at 1-800-OP-UNITE (1-800-678-6483) or [dtrusty@centertech.com](mailto:dtrusty@centertech.com).
- Hold special graduation ceremonies for students completing the “Too Good For Drugs” curriculum.
- Attend your county’s UNITE Coalition meeting. Take your officers or entire club. Students might share ideas of concern to your club, volunteer to become involved in a coalition project, or simply observe and thank the members for making your community safe from drugs. (Coalitions will usually hold recruitment dinners, benefit singings and drug-awareness programs that would be perfect for youth participation.)
- Conduct a “Students UNITE Against Drugs Week,” “UNITE Spirit Week” or “Stay Drug-Free Week” separate from traditional Red Ribbon Week activities. Have themes or activities for each day. (Of course, celebrate Red Ribbon Week at the end of October as well.)
- Role-playing exercise. After discussion on the effects of tobacco and marijuana, students practice responses on how to react if their peers or others offered them any type of drugs.
- “Take PRIDE in Your World” event. Have students join with the PRIDE organization and conduct a community clean-up day.
- Conduct a “UNITE Bowl” football game. Best if both teams are within UNITE counties. Ask local businesses to sponsor admission for local students. Prepare anti-drug public service announcements to be read by the announcer during each break in the action. Plan special half-time ceremonies involving a special guest speaker and local/state officials. Have cheerleaders do anti-drug cheers. As a bonus, hold an after-game dance.
- Invite Health Department representatives (or other health care professionals) to conduct presentations on the dangers of alcohol and tobacco.
- Conduct an anti-drug rally with former University of Kentucky basketball standout Jeff Sheppard. This may be used to begin a UNITE Club, promote membership growth in an existing club, or as part of an overall anti-drug week promotion. (To schedule a visit contact Carlos Cameron at 606-330-1400 or [ccameron@centertech.com](mailto:ccameron@centertech.com).)
- Engage your county court clerk in club elections. Ask them to bring an actual voting machine to use in the process.
- Conduct activities in conjunction with National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (every September).
- Encourage everyone in the school and community to sign an anti-drug pledge. This could be set up as a challenge between classrooms.
- Pass out cards giving students tips on how to say “no” to drugs.

- Design an anti-drug poster or banner; hang in the hallway for all students, faculty, staff and visitors to sign. Make this a special occasion.
- Invite a member of your city police, county sheriff's office, state police post, school resource officer or UNITE drug task force detective to speak to your club.
- Celebrate National Meth Awareness Day (November).
- Have your club examine current policies related to drugs in your school/school district. Discuss how these policies could be improved and present your findings and recommendations to the school Site-Based Council and School Board. This could include petitioning your school system to adopt a drug-testing policy for students and staff.
- Hold a "Back-To-School Splash" swimming event.
- Invite a member of your Emergency Medical Services provider to speak to your club and show the rescue vehicle and equipment.
- Contact a local after-care or rehab group and invite members to speak to your class/school on how drugs impacted their life.
- Create a drama team. Have students write their own script (conduct a script-writing contest) and perform this play for the school and public.
- Conduct a Spooktacular Halloween costume contest/dance.
- Using items in the news, have club members discuss lessons that could be learned. This may provide an opportunity to teach about the legal and judicial systems.
- Involve your club in "Hooked On Fishing, Not On Drugs" activities. Contact your county coalition, UNITE coalition coordinator or the UNITE website for more information.
- Conduct an essay contest on "What Being Drug-Free Means To Me."
- During meetings hold a discussion about what UNITE means to your students, your school and your community. Be as specific as possible and avoid being judgmental about the responses. Contact your UNITE Coalition Coordinator for ideas and help in organizing this event.
- Show an educational video and follow with a group discussion to make the topic relevant to your students. Check the UNITE Resource Library or your school library for appropriate materials.
- Conduct a "Random Acts of Kindness" event. Document activities by having students complete a report saying who they helped and what action they performed.
- Have students put on the "Fatal Vision" glasses to see what happens when their vision is impaired. (Try to walk a straight line or shoot a basketball.) Contact your local Kentucky State Police Post to request these glasses.
- Conduct a "Plant the Promise" project. Plant flowers (perhaps some you have grown) around your school or local nursing home.
- Hold a discussion about pop culture and look for underlying messages about drugs.

- Conduct an anti-drug song, skit or other routine at school athletic or academic competitions, a PTA/PTO meeting, a School Board meeting, or during a school-wide assembly. Be sure to invite your principal to participate. Use existing material or have your students create their own.
- Conduct a food drive and donate the collected items to your local Family Resource or Youth Services Center, a local organization for the needy, a homeless shelter, or church ministry. (You can check with the recipient agency and give bonus points for donations of their most needed items.)
- Conduct an “Aloha Social” at the end of the school year to promote a drug-free summer.
- Rotate students between stations (set up by community volunteers and professionals) focused on the negative effects of alcohol and other drugs. This could include personal testimonials from families or individuals with connections to your school who have seen the devastation of drugs first-hand.
- Have students wrap gifts for pre-schoolers at Christmas time.
- Have middle and high school students explain to elementary students about the district’s drug-testing policies and how it might affect their ability to play sports or drive.
- Go Christmas caroling at a local nursing home.
- Use food stations to demonstrate the effects of drugs. Students visit different stations and receive a treat as each message is discussed. For example: 1) Eating a flavored ice treat too fast leads to “brain freeze.” Discuss how using drugs causes permanent “brain freeze.” 2) A regular Oreo cookie represents what they are like when young. If they stay drug-free they grow up to become a double-stuffed Oreo. But if they take drugs, they are like the chocolate crème Oreo – all muddled and dirty.
- Decorate classroom and entrance doors with drug abuse prevention slogans. This could be conducted as a contest.
- Take a field trip to your local jail or detention center. Call the UNITE office if you need assistance in planning this event.
- Have high school or middle school UNITE Club members speak one-on-one with elementary students about the dangers of drug abuse. This gives them positive role models.
- Conduct a “Scare out Drugs” campfire program of stories and songs.
- Conduct a UNITE poster contest. Display *all* entries in the hallway for at least a week prior to voting. Try timing the display to an open house to maximize exposure.
- Adopt a local soldier serving overseas and send monthly care packages and notes.
- Participate in NEA’s Read Across America Day (March 3, 2008) program to support literacy. (Dr. Seuss birthday card project in 2006-07 school year.) For details visit <http://www.nea.org/readacross/index.html>.
- Invite community leaders to speak with students about their experiences in school and how important it is for them to be good role models to younger students.

- Take a field trip to your city or county government meeting. Give a brief presentation and invite community leaders to become involved in fighting drug abuse.
- Decorate all school trash cans with anti-drug messages. This could be conducted as a contest. (Permission may be required before starting this project.)
- Participate in a community parade (homecoming, Christmas, annual festival, etc.) and have club members decorate a float, vehicle or simply make signs that you carry.
- Conduct a “Hugs Not Drugs” sweetheart dance on Valentine’s Day.
- Invite a law enforcement K-9 unit to visit your school and demonstrate a search for drugs.
- Have students write and perform an anti-drug puppet show.
- Have high school or middle school UNITE Club members perform an anti-drug skit to elementary students.
- Conduct a “Books and Breakfast” event. Invite parents, board members and law enforcement officers to come and read with students and enjoy honey buns and hot chocolate. (This is also an opportunity to earn Accelerated Reading points.)
- Conduct an “Operation Teddy Bear” drive. Give donated Teddy Bears to needy children or to the EMS for children that are victims of illness, accidents or come from drug-endangered homes.
- Teach club members how to say they are drug free in sign language.
- Conduct a “Help A Veteran Everyday” project – a campaign to collect pennies for local veterans.
- Collaborate with EMS, police, coroner, fire departments to stage a “Prom Promise” drunk driving re-enactment. Have students play the “victims” and “drunk driver” and let agencies react as if it was a real wreck site.
- Pass out anti-drug information at school or community events.
- Hold a “Lock-In Fun, Lock-Out Drugs” overnight lock-in event at your school. Plan games and activities for the entire night (many students won’t sleep) and have guest speakers.
- To begin anti-drug awareness efforts before children enter school, partner with local day care centers. Club members could read stories or play games in order to create positive role models. When these youngsters start school they will have older students to turn to if they need assistance and make their transition easier.
- Decorate grocery bags. Ask a local market to donate paper bags. Once decorated return them to the store for use by their customers. Be sure to include a note in each bag explaining your project.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation on your club’s activities. Present at a Site-Based Council, PTA/PTO or School Board meeting.
- Participate in a Relay For Life or similar event in your community.
- Conduct an anti-drug march and rally at school to raise awareness.

## **Fundraising Ideas (for the Club or for Charity)**

- Conduct a poster contest and charge 25 cents per vote. Open the voting to parents.
- Conduct a special clothing day (see themes) but only those who pay \$1 may participate.
- Conduct a penny drive. Reward winning classroom.
- Conduct a “Testing Kick-Off Day” with fun games and other activities. Charge 50 cents per game.
- Ask teachers to bring their favorite dessert (preferably home-made) to an event and auction them off.
- In conjunction with an art contest held in the fall, compile the winning designs on a calendar and sell throughout your community for about \$5 each. Include drug-free messages and information about your club and county UNITE coalition. (A good partnership project.)