Quick Programming Ideas

What are Campuses Doing?

Although every campus is unique in how they approach their Safe Spring Break programming, the campuses that have successful educational programs year in and year out seem to do a few things in common. In the upcoming pages we will highlight several campuses that ran top-notch Safe Spring Break programs last year. Here are several ideas that all affiliates can use to help students find their way to a fun and safe spring break.

Awareness Tables/Pledge Signing

Probably the most common element of Safe Spring Break programming is an awareness table that includes a variety of health information pieces as well as a chance to sign the Safe Spring Break pledge. Some campuses have handouts on safe sun protection and on issues such as alcohol poisoning and predatory drugs. Other groups make mocktails and give them out as incentives for people to sign the pledges. Other groups create short quizzes on health topics and give prizes to everyone who fills out the right answer. Still others invite professionals, such as the local police department, to assist in talking about impaired driving with students. These tables can be set up in high-traffic areas on campus throughout your Safe Spring Break Campaign.

Safe Spring Break Survival Kits

If students are heading off campus to begin their break, why not give them something to take with them? Some campuses prepare Safe Spring Break Survival Kits that include:

- sunscreen
- health education pamphlets
- toothpaste
- condoms
- energy bars
- impaired driving prevention messages
- lip balm
- low-risk drinking guidelines
- alcohol poisoning information
- list of fun activities for those spending break at home or school

This is also a great place for some of the SNAPSHOT OF A SAFE SPRING BREAK giveaways. You can also give items as prizes or incentives for signing the pledge or answering a quiz correctly.

Be a Buddy Campaign

In addition to safe spring break pledge card signing, you could also have students sign on to be a sober friend or “spotter” during safe spring break by helping to watch out for a friend’s personal safety. Provide safety tips on protective behaviors that can be used. Use wristbands, or safe spring break incentive, to get students to sign the buddy pledge.

Speakers

Many campuses bring speakers to their campuses during their Safe Spring Break Campaign. Some schools use local speakers. For example, your campus might choose to find a speaker who focuses on impaired driving prevention or alcohol poisoning as these are two main concerns that come up when discussing spring break. Whether you choose your local community speakers or use a national speaker agency, find speakers with a meaningful message and schedule it when you can attract a good audience.

Health and Fitness “Check-Ups”

If one of the things we are promoting is healthy lifestyles, why not provide a health “check-up”? Some campuses have members of their health and wellness office in the student union or in a high traffic area providing body fat tests and nutrition info, blood pressure checks, stress management info, lung capacity testing, etc. Other schools offer demonstrations on kickboxing, aerobics, and self-defense. One school made massage therapists available to give 10-minute massages to students free of charge! Also include prize giveaways throughout the day.

Athletic Events

Given the fact that many campuses are in midterms right before spring break, sometimes a little stress relief is in order. Some campuses try to provide “study breaks” by sponsoring fun athletic events as part of their week of programming. Ideas have ranged from midnight basketball to pool parties to volleyball tournaments (and even one campus that does a huge Mud Volleyball competition!) Not only are these
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events fun and healthy, but they provide a social outing and substance-free stress relief.

**Seatbelt Awareness**

Not only do we promote sober driving as part of Safe Spring Break, but seatbelt use as well. Any activities you can do to encourage the use of seatbelts, be it signs, checkpoints at campus exits, or seatbelt relays in the quad, can only assist in our efforts to help everyone make it back safely after break.

**Impaired Driving Awareness**

To tackle the impaired driving issue, one school washes windshields at a popular intersection on campus and gives students a non-alcoholic beverage while they are stopped. They also receive a card that states, “Your windshield has been cleaned compliments of your university peer educators. That’s what friends are for, please don’t drive impaired.”

**Driving Course**

Many schools set up a golf cart driving course on campus in collaboration with their local police departments, using visual impairment goggles. Students drive a golf cart while wearing the goggles to simulate an impaired driving situation. The students go through a driving course to become aware of their slowed reaction time and the danger of driving while under the influence of alcohol. After they complete the course they are given information concerning DUI laws, fines, etc.

**Sexual Assault/Predatory Drug Prevention**

Given the combination of sex and alcohol that accompany some spring break trips, many campuses do awareness and prevention activities on sexual assault and predatory drugs. Some campuses use peer theatre or role-plays to highlight dangerous sexual situations. Some campuses do role-plays to show how easy it is to slip something into your drink if you are not careful. Other campuses have offered short training in self-defense and steps to take if you think someone is a potential sexual predator. All of these programs are great educational ideas, even apart from spring break.

**Passive Programming**

Given the amount of information available on spring break related issues, some schools have created bulletin board displays for residence halls and Greek houses on safe traveling, sun and skin care, risks with alcohol and sexual assault, and healthy eating during spring break. Other schools hang a “Stall Story” newsletter in the bathroom stalls addressing issues of safety and spring break. Some provide the resident assistants with an information packet giving them the latest information on alcohol and other drug issues and ask them to design bulletin boards on their floors. The best one wins a cheesecake party for their floor or a gift certificate to their university bookstore. Another idea is to have the RA’s turn the project over to the residents on the floor so they learn a lot more about the topics because they design and work on the boards themselves.

**Candlelight Vigil**

As a sign of remembrance, some schools hold a candlelight vigil every year during Safe Spring Break on the issue of impaired driving. At this event distribute candles to each participant and have one second of silence for each person who was killed in the state during the previous year due to an alcohol related crash. Usually in conjunction with the vigil is a keynote speaker who speaks on impaired driving, such as students who have been in crashes, parents of students who have been killed, representatives from the local MADD chapter, etc.

**Progressive Party**

Another creative programming idea is a progressive party held in the Residence Halls. Each hall throws a different theme party (Mardi Gras, a Luau, Arcade, 80’s Party, etc.) in the lobby of their hall for one hour with each party starting at a different time. Each hall also has a different educational theme (drinking and driving, alcohol poisoning, sex under the
influence, alcohol and academic performance, etc.) where students either see a program, participate in an activity or get educational materials. Students who attend each party have their names put in a drawing for a big prize such as an iPod, or TV donated from a local business.

**Party Planning and Hosting**

One GAMMA chapter sponsors a social every year with the purpose of educating fraternities and sororities about responsible party planning and hosting. This is an alcohol-free event to demonstrate fun ideas for substance-free mixers. One theme idea is “Rock-A-Hula-Luau” with island food and decorations, a beach volleyball tournament, and karaoke.

**“Don’t Be a Dum-Dum... Know the Facts”**

A GAMMA affiliate created this program that was a great success! GAMMA printed some general college alcohol statistics and information about the two most popular date rape drugs and then attached a dum-dum lollipop! They targeted women specifically, because many are unaware of the effects and symptoms of date rape drugs. The budget for the program was relatively small because they made the handouts the size of index cards and dum-dums are very inexpensive. This campus proved that an inexpensive program can be very effective with students.

**Some Other Fun Ideas**

There are hundreds of great ideas that campuses create when they connect creativity with health promotion. We have received reports from campuses that have done a “Guess How many Condoms in the Jar” contest, free automobile safety checks that include car maintenance of tires, hoses, brakes, etc., before you leave campus, Frisbee golf tournaments that span the entire campus—just to name a few! Get busy planning your Safe Spring Break now!
Using a Positive Social Norms Approach

How Does Social Norming Work?

That is a more complex question than it perhaps appears on the surface, but here is a simple answer. Two premises need to be understood which will help you understand why the Social Norms approach works. First, you need to believe that most students want to be “normal,” or in the majority, whatever they perceive that to be. The second premise is that most students have the skills and the desire to take care of themselves. They do not need to be taught these skills, simply motivated to use them.

A critical aspect of positive social norms and social marketing is that the behavior you are highlighting is positive and healthy. Often when we do health awareness campaigns we spend the majority of our time telling people to avoid negative behaviors and remind them of how a segment of the population (almost always a small minority) is engaging in destructive behavior. What positive social norms marketing attempts do is remind people that a majority (and hopefully a vast majority) is engaging in positive and healthy behavior.

What the social norming concept requires is for you to do research on your campus to find out what students do and what students believe. By conducting research and surveys about attitudes and behaviors, you will be able to find out the “true norms” on your campus, such as “most students drink 4 or less drinks when they party,” or “most students chose not to drive their car after they have been drinking.”

The second requirement is for you to make your campus aware of the true norm. Students are currently making decisions using a perceived norm. By giving students the truth, in a way they will believe, many will re-think their decisions based on these new, true norms.

How Does This Apply To Safe Spring Break?

When you are conducting your Safe Spring Break programming, remember to remind people that most college students practice low-risk behaviors when it comes to alcohol use, driving, sexual decision-making, and personal safety.
Campus Model Programs

Here are some great programs offered by campuses to make Spring Break programs successful.

**University of Texas Pan American**
**Group Name:** Bacchus and Gamma Peer Educators

**Program Goals/Objectives:**
1. Raise awareness of impaired driving and loss of coordination and judgment that comes with excessive drinking
2. Educate students about DUI laws
3. Provide experiential impaired learning activities to promote safety
4. Promote fun without alcohol

**Title:** Slide Into a Safe Spring Break

**Target Audience:** All students

**Program Description:** Slide Into Safe Spring Break was an event to promote having fun without drinking to excess and provide information on personal safety risks when under the influence. We contracted with a company to provide inflatable rides and competition events for fun. We developed an obstacle course using mini tricycles and used our fatal vision goggles and student tricycles. Tables were set up with various information and resources on impaired driving, safe sex, and assault.

Participants were given free food, live music, games, and mocktails. Skittles candies were slipped into some of the mocktails to show how easily someone can slip something into your drink and the importance of watching your drinks and avoiding drinking from common sources or opened bottles or cans.

**Promotion and Publicity:** Letter from the peer educators to students, Hawaiian leis distributed with safe sex messages

**Collaboration:** Various community agencies, Planned Parenthood, Mujeres Unidas, Student health Services, Counseling, Residence Life

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University of Texas Pan American
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University of California, Riverside

Group Name: Golden ARCHES Peer Health Education Program

Program Goals/Objectives:
1. Raise awareness of impaired driving issues
2. Educate students about DUI laws
3. Provide experiential impaired driving prevention learning activities

Title: Mock Field Sobriety Test

Target Audience: All students

Program Description: The impaired vision goggles are used during awareness campaigns as a way to attract students to an educational booth and to also utilize an experiential learning strategy to address impaired driving issues. The booth is set up on a busy campus sidewalk to simulate an impaired driving checkpoint. Three impaired driving goggles of varying strengths demonstrate low, medium, and high levels of intoxication. The goggles are used to test a participant’s motor skills and coordination. Activities include trying to make a basket, throwing/catching a flying disk or ball, and a driving course with cones and a golf cart. Utilizing a campus or community police officer to administer a Field Sobriety Test (FST) to a student wearing the goggles has been one of the most powerful strategies. This activity provides the officer with an opportunity to educate the students on often unknown aspects of the DUI laws. Most students are familiar with the BAC limits for driving, but many are not aware that even if a person is under the legal BAC limit, he or she can still be cited for a DUI if the officer feels the person did not complete the FST satisfactorily. By going through this demonstration with the students, an officer can discuss what police officers look for, how to prevent impaired driving, how to make safe decisions, and reinforce laws and policies that address impaired driving issues.

Promotion and Publicity:
1. Posters
2. Newspaper ads

Collaboration:
1. Golden Arches peer educators
2. Campus or community police officers

Budget: Cost of Fatal Vision Goggles ($300-$500)

Duration: One day of safe spring break programming.

Contact Information:
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West Texas A&M University

Group Name: PULSE (Peers Understanding, Listening, Speaking, Educating)

Program Topic: Spring Break: Safe Sex/STDs, Impaired Driving Prevention, Safety Tips

Program Objectives:
1. Provide an interactive program about spring break
2. Prepare students for spring break with awareness information
3. Promote healthy sexual choices
4. Have fun and inform people about PULSE.

Target Audience:
Entire student body

Program Description: We had many different activities including a mattress with sheets on which we asked students to sign if they would sleep in the bed. We received a lot of attention and curiosity about the bed but told students that we would reveal the purpose for it the next day. The signatures on the bed represented how sexual diseases are transmitted between people who have multiple partners. We posted a sign containing an explanation and statistics about sexually transmitted diseases next to the bed. Dum-Dum suckers and condoms were placed on the bed with attached information about safe sex and safe spring break tips. This was the main activity of the day and it attracted the most attention.

We also handed out goody bags filled with all types of things for a safe spring break. These were passed out to people who participated in our guessing game and the signing of the bed. This drew in even more people because they wanted to know what was in the bags. The bags contained sun block, deodorant, condoms, flyers, pamphlets on alcohol abuse prevention, candy, lotion, and shaving cream. We also handed out free water and soft drinks to promote non-alcoholic beverages for a safe drink during spring break.

This program turned out to be a huge success. We counted over 250 signatures on our bed. Our message to have a safe spring break was well-received; the students saw our program as unique as well as entertaining and very informative.

Promotion and Publicity:
1. Flyers
2. Side walk chalk all over campus with campus alcohol usage statistics
3. On Campus Radio Station announcements the week prior through the last day of the event
4. Peer education website
5. Facebook announcement
6. Campus activities calendar

Budget: We had a small budget. Fortunately we only had to pay for the sheets and pillow for the bed, the water and soft drinks, candy to go in goodie bags, copies for the flyers

**TIP: Always check with your Student Activities, Recreational Sports and Greek Life offices: they usually get large shipments of shaving cream, vitamins, hair care products, health bars, sunscreen, and MUCH more for giveaways to their groups. They are probably more than happy to share and help get rid of them.

Collaboration:
1. Residential Living (for the mattress that they let us keep for future programming)
2. Medical Services (for condoms and ibuprofen we put in goodie bags)
3. Recreational Sports (they had sample sunscreen bottles and health bars for goodie bags)
4. Greek Life/Interfraternity Council (for the shaving cream)
5. BACCHUS, MADD, Texas Alcohol Beverage Control (for informational brochures)

Duration: Our event was two days (Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:30-1:30) Although this could have easily been a one day event. It is a good program that can be done in one day or up to four days!

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Baldwin-Wallace College – GAMMA

Group Name: Certified Peer Educators

Program Goals/Objectives:
1. Educate resident hall members and fraternity and sorority members on ways to make safe and healthy decisions during spring break. Specific topics included responsible drinking, sexual awareness and sexual decision-making, and keeping your body healthy.
2. Educate in a fun and interactive way.
3. Promote collaboration between Greek Life and Residence Life.

Title of Program:
Sex on the Beach

Target Audience:
The Greek community

Program Description:
Sex on the Beach was mainly for the residents of fraternity and sorority hall, but was also publicized throughout the entire Greek community and within the other residence halls throughout campus. It was an interactive program that had several different activities going on at once. Each activity was used to educate students on various topics and issues that students may encounter during spring break. These topics included drinking responsibly, safe sex and sexual responsibility, and taking care of your body in hot weather (i.e. using sunscreen). The feel of the event was a beach party. Students could move about the first floor of the building to play each of the games/activities.

The activities included:
Root Beer Pong – Students had the opportunity to play a non-alcoholic version of beer pong, a game that is stereotypically a form of binge drinking. In order to play, students had to read a card which included the 0-1-3 rule. For the first half of the game, they could play normally, however for the last few cups, the students were required to wear the “Beer Goggles” (supplied by the Center for Alcohol Related Education Office) in order to simulate a drunk feeling.

The Envelope Game – Each student was given an envelope. Throughout the activity, participants were asked to exchange envelopes with people whom they socialized with and felt comfortable giving their envelope to. At the end of the activity, they were asked to open the envelope that they ended up with, which revealed where their sexual responsibility has led them. Inside the envelopes it said things like sexually transmitted infection, abstinence, protected sex, etc. A wrap-up discussion was held after each round of this activity.

The Game of Life – A life-size board game was set up in one of the lobby entranceways. Similar to the actual board game, participants moved throughout the board based on spring break questions that were asked of them. For example, after answering a question, they could land on a “beneficial” tile and end up with a situation such as “you got a good tan.” On the other hand, they could land on an “unfortunate” tile and end up with a situation such as “you ended up in a Mexican jail and don’t remember how you got there!” After making it though the game board, students had the opportunity to swing at the piñata, which was filled with condoms and candy.

Beach Patrol – Throughout the event, several GAMMA members served as the Beach Patrol. These students walked around with beach balls that had spring break related questions on them, based on what they had learned in the other activities. If the Beach Patrol threw a beach ball at you, you had to answer the question where your thumb landed.

In the main lounge, which was decorated with a beach theme, mocktails and other finger foods were provided for attendees. There was a kiddie pool filled with condoms and pamphlets related to sexual responsibility. Certified Peer Educators also had a table set up where they demonstrated how to properly use a condom. Students were able to participate in condom races at this table.

At the end of the event, the Resident Assistants held a raffle of donated and purchased prizes. Prizes included “beach party fun kits” (sun block, travel game, sunglasses, first aid kit, etc.), Target gift cards, and an IPOD. Tickets for the raffle were given to students.
Promotion and Publicity:

- Large posters were hung in residence halls, student union and the cafeteria
- Signs in the shape of palm trees were hung in the residence hall where the program was held
- Announcements were made at Greek Council, IFC, Panhellenic Council, and President’s Roundtable meetings
- GAMMA members sat at a table in the student union giving away safe spring break kits, which included a flyer for the event
- On the night of the event, GAMMA members walked through the hall with a megaphone announcing the event

Budget:

A total of $383 was spent on this program. GAMMA members and the Resident Assistants requested funding from several resources on campus. They included:

- Heritage Hall programming account - $43
- Heritage Hall Council - $150
- Inter-Residence Hall Council - $25
- Health Promotions Grant Board - $75
- Director of Residence Life - $90

Collaboration:

- Resident Assistants in the Greek residence hall
- Inter-Residence Hall Council
- Certified Peer Educators
- Health Promotions Grant Board
- Center for Alcohol Related Education

Duration: The event was held from 9:00 PM – 11:00 PM on the Wednesday night before spring break began.

Contact Information:
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If you have ever taken part in an Alternative Spring Break where instead of heading to a beach, you went with a group to volunteer to build a playground or teach children, you know how powerful these events can be. More and more campuses are sponsoring alternative breaks through their volunteer offices or by working with a national agency called Break Away.

The Eight Components of a Quality Alternative Break

Strong Direct Service: Programs provide an opportunity for participants to engage in direct or “hands-on” service that addresses critical but unmet social needs.

Orientation: Participants are oriented to the mission and objectives of both the break program and the host agency or organization with which they will be working.

Education: Programs establish and achieve educational objectives to give participants a sense of context and understanding of both the region in which they will be working and of the problems they will be addressing during the break.

Training: Participants are provided with adequate training in skills necessary to carry out tasks and projects during the trip. Ideally this training should take place prior to departure, although in some instances it may occur once participants have reached their site.

Reflection: During the trip, participants reflect upon the experiences they are having. Applying classroom learning and integrating many academic disciplines should also occur. The site leaders should set aside time for reflection to take place, both individually and in a group setting.

Re-orientation: Upon return to campus, there should be a re-orientation session for all participants where they can share their break experiences with one another and with the greater campus community and are actively encouraged to translate this experience into a lifelong commitment to service.

Diversity: Strong alternative break programs include participants representing the range of students present in the campus community. Coordinators should recruit, design, implement and evaluate their program with this end in mind.

10. Alcohol and Other Drug Free: Programs must be aware that issues of legality, liability, personal safety and group cohesion are of concern when alcohol and other drugs are consumed on an alternative break. Programs should provide education and training on alcohol and other drug related issues as well as develop a policy on how these issues will be dealt with on an alternative break.

About Break Away

Break Away, the Alternative Break Connection was founded in June 1991 as a national network of schools and community organizations dedicated to increasing the quality and quantity of alternative break programs. Break Away’s mission is to promote service on the local, regional, national and international levels through break-oriented programs that immerse students in often vastly different cultures, heighten social awareness, and advocate life-long social action. Break Away is committed to helping schools and organizations implement alternative break programs that go beyond many typical volunteer vacations. Break Away teams spend months preparing for their experience by educating themselves about the social issues and the community they will be serving, while also teambuilding and receiving an orientation to the other elements of the program.

If your campus is one of the charter schools in the Break Away organization, more than likely an alternative break is being planned already. Check to see how you can become involved, if not for this year, then for next. If you are not sure if your campus is a charter school, or you are interested in becoming one, contact Break Away at the following address, phone number or email address:

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