

## THE STEERING COMMITTEE

An All Night Celebration is a tremendous undertaking, which requires the involvement of many parent volunteers. To lead this group you will need organized leaders. A chairperson, treasurer, and secretary (loosely termed "officers") and the major committee chairpersons will make up your steering committee.

For the first celebration, it doesn't matter whether the members of the steering committee or the celebration chairperson are recruited first. *It is important that they are able to work well together.* Negative or uncompromising persons are difficult to work with on a committee such as this. Sometimes it is impossible to avoid dissension, but try to minimize it and keep it from adversely affecting the celebration.

The composition of this committee will vary from community to community depending upon the school's size and location. Make a concerted effort to ensure racial, ethnic, and economic balance (equal to school population) on the committee, as it will make all of the major decisions. Each committee members should be an enthusiastic self-starter and committed to expending the necessary time and energy it will take to make this celebration a success.

Each member should be willing to take an active roll in planning and preparation. He or she should not expect to come to an occasional meeting to give his or her opinion but, rather, to play a major role in recruiting chairpersons and workers and in organizing and implementing the celebration. Some of the tasks will be to:

1. Choose a celebration theme
2. Approve a budget
3. Set celebration guidelines
4. Choose the activities
5. Enlist the support of necessary persons
6. Obtain adequate insurance coverage
7. Find sponsors or endorsers (if desired)
8. Locate a facility to hold the celebration
9. Find committee chairpersons and workers
10. Find a way to "sell" students- on this idea
11. Ensure safety of all volunteers and graduates.

The more visible the committee is within the school, the greater the enthusiasm and support of the faculty and administration.

## OFFICERS OF STEERING COMMITTEE

**CELEBRATION CHAIRPERSON:** This person is ultimately responsible for the entire celebration and will make the greatest time commitment of all. The major task of the chairperson is to coordinate the work of ALL committees. Know what each is trying to accomplish and try to keep him or her on track. Many schools use two or more co-chairpersons. The first three items on the list below are probably the most important skills to look for in a chairperson.

- \_ Enthusiasm
- \_ Organization and leadership skills
- \_ Ability and willingness to delegate
- \_ Good relationship with school administration
- \_ Willingness to be the public relations spokesperson
- \_ Ability to conduct meetings
- \_ Ability to keep committees committed to their tasks
- \_ Ability to supervise and coordinate preparations and wrap-up activities
- \_ Ability to remain calm under pressure

It is recommended that you have a senior parent as chairperson and a junior parent as a co-chairperson or assistant chairperson. The following year that parent (who is then a senior parent) becomes the chairperson and a new junior parent is recruited. This gives great continuity and should be used for all committee chairpersons.

## CO-CHAIRPERSONS

If co-chairpersons are selected, be sure each co-chairperson knows his or her responsibilities. Carefully define whether "co"-chairman means the assistant to the chairperson or equal partners. No matter how the co-chairs are selected—volunteer, appointed, or elected, it is important that they be compatible and share all information regarding the celebration. If using PTA sponsorship, be sure its by-laws will allow more than one chairperson.

**TREASURER:** The treasurer has a critical role. Even if the celebration is sponsored by another organization with a treasurer, it is important to have a committee member keep track of finances. Tasks should include but are not limited to the following:

1. Open a checking account or have new signature cards signed by appropriate persons on already established account using appropriate E.I.N.—*See chapter on "Legal Matters"*. As a safeguard, consider requiring two signatures on all checks with no more than one signature from any one family (authorized signers should not be married to each other). If sponsorship of the celebration is accepted, certain safe guards **MAY** be required.
2. Prepare an estimated budget for the committee's approval, updating as necessary. **NOTE:** a budget is simply a plan of how the committee will spend the money; plans can change as resources become available.
3. Maintain a running balance to be reported at each Steering Committee meeting.
4. Maintain accurate records of all income and expenses.
5. Prepare a final financial statement to be given to the sponsoring organization or used to file tax forms. This statement **MUST** contain a record of
  - ALL income—cash, items, and services whether donated or from fundraising efforts and
  - ALL expenses including donated items used as prizes.
6. File proper tax forms, if required. If your celebration is sponsored by another organization, such as PTA, give all of these records to that organization's treasurer. Pass along documentation (receipts, cancelled checks, etc.) so they can produce it if required to do so by the I.R.S. *See "Legal Matters" section for information on what is needed to file I.R.S. Form 990 or 990EZ.*

*See chapter on "Legal Matters".*

**SECRETARY:** Duties should include but are not limited to the following:

1. Take notes at all meetings so important information can be passed on to next year's committee. It serves no purpose to "re-invent the wheel" every year when some ideas have already been proven successful or unworkable.
2. Handle all correspondence, including Thank You notes to contributors.
3. Notify Steering Committee of meetings.
4. Serve as historian—clip news stories, keep photos.

### **MEETINGS**

Meetings need to be held approximately once a month beginning early in the school year. If this is a first celebration, meetings may need to be held more often as celebration time nears—perhaps bimonthly beginning approximately four to five months before the celebration and weekly beginning one to two months before it. Expect to spend a lot of time on the telephone between meetings.

If this is not the first celebration, the number of meetings will depend on the organizational skills and experience of the overall chairperson(s) and the various committee chairpersons. It may be desirable to have an open meeting once a month particularly in succeeding years as more persons become experienced and/or interested and want to have input in the celebration plans.

### **MAIL**

**BE SURE THE SCHOOL OFFICE KNOWS YOUR COMMITTEE EXISTS.** Virginia Operation Prom/ Graduation frequently hears chairpersons were unaware of workshops or the Honor Roll because they didn't get their mail which is addressed to: All Night Celebration Committee, \_\_\_\_\_ High School. Some of your mail may arrive as early as the first week of school.

Consider where items will be sent. Some things will be sent to the school regardless of where the committee may request so make arrangements

with the school before the mail gets lost and be sure whoever sorts the school mail knows the names that may be on the envelopes or packages that arrive. Students, parents, and teachers may also wish to drop things off.

Many schools put a rural delivery mailbox decorated with celebration theme and logo on the front counter in the school office. Don't forget to check the box regularly from the time plans are announced until a month or so after the event (mid-summer may still bring a donation or bill).

### **GETTING INFORMATION TO THE PARENTS**

1. Use the school newsletter.
2. Use a committee to call every student's home in the evening. (Yes, even some of our large schools have done this—and quite successfully! Don't forget to ask for their help after telling them about the project.)
3. Ask for mailing labels from your school. Most school systems will allow the Steering Committee sets of mailing labels from their respective school offices for direct mailings to the parents.

NOTE: Directory information (name, address and phone number) is usually easily obtained for these purposes. Most school systems strictly forbid selling it, giving it, or using it for any purpose other than to disburse information directly related to a school-related activity. DO NOT give labels to any other organization whether they are one of your major donors or another nonprofit organization offering to help you.

4. Send information to local newspapers.
5. Use school's automated calling system to remind parents of meetings, deadlines, or other important information.
6. Seek the assistance of the PTA or school Administration, to speak at a scheduled parent meeting.

### **TRANSITION TO NEXT YEAR'S CELEBRATION**

Save all reports from committees to be passed on to the new Steering Committee and pass on all

preceding years' reports for the new committee's use. It is helpful to invite some of the underclass parents to the celebration (or to serve on committees) so they may obtain first-hand knowledge. Having senior/junior parent committee co-chairs also helps. This allows at least a term of two years with people moving from assistant chairperson to chairperson.

The steering committee and/or chairperson should try to identify possible successors. They should arrange, through the school administration, to hold an initial meeting before school ends in the spring (possibly even before the celebration has been held). Give them some background about the various positions used for the current celebration, as many will be unfamiliar with the project or the way it is organized. Volunteer to work with the NEW Steering Committee until they are organized and all positions filled for the next celebration. Invite and urge all prospective volunteers to attend the present celebration and to help with last minute set-up the night of the celebration.

The main advantage of having these new committee members in place before the current celebration takes place is they will be looking at the celebration facility, activities, food, etc., with more interest in details about what, when, where, and how every-thing is done. Encourage them to help with set up, decorating, and clean up as they will then know exactly what they would like to save. If there is more than one celebration in your area, ask the new committee members to make contact with the other chairpersons, and try to visit more than one celebration to see first-hand how different groups of parents rise to this challenge. Don't forget to allow other schools to visit your celebration.

### **OUTGOING CELEBRATION CHAIRPERSON**

1. Hold wrap-up meeting for this year's celebration. List the successes and what needs improvement in the future.
2. Collect reports from each committee chairperson.
3. Confer with treasurer and determine any outstanding bills. Make sure all bills are paid, then arrange for signature transfer on

- all bank accounts.
4. Review the "thank you" list and have one committee member mail any additional thank you notes/ letters. Don't forget to thank the school personnel and committee members! Be sure thank you notes meet Virginia and federal tax law requirements: *Virginia Law: all donations \$5 and over must be acknowledged, if it is requested; Federal Law: acknowledgment of all donations (cash and in-kind services and items) valued at \$250 or more must include name, address, and name of actual item donated as well as value of item.*
  5. Develop or update donor database.
  6. Clean out and inventory all celebration equipment and supplies. Store the items properly or they will most likely need to be thrown out next year.
  7. Write overall celebration report, including chairperson's report.
  8. Complete Honor Roll Award application, if applying for an award or grant.
  9. Give all materials to next year's celebration chairperson.
  10. Enjoy your summer!

### **INCOMING CELEBRATION CHAIRPERSON**

1. Read all materials from all previous celebrations.
2. Read "Celebrate Life! Planning Guide."
3. Check with secretary in school office to find your mail box to receive mail addressed to your committee.
4. Review equipment and supplies. Make notes for repairs and additions.
5. Fill the key committee positions.
6. Write a letter about next year's celebration, to include in August mailing. After-Prom mailing goes to all juniors and seniors. After-Grad letter goes to seniors only.
7. Prepare article for inclusion in first school newsletter to be mailed to parents.
8. Host a parent meeting in September.
9. Request time on the agenda and/or set up a display table to recruit volunteers on Back-to-School night in the fall.
10. Look for information about Virginia Operation Prom/Graduation workshops in the fall and recruit persons to attend.
11. Rest up for the spring!



## CELEBRATION SITE

**Having** the celebration is more important than the facility **where** it is held. While students like going to new and different surroundings, **the school is a viable option and may even be the best option.**

A couple of large rooms where all of the activities can be crammed together may work better than lots of small rooms. Students **like** to be crowded. They have more fun if there is lots going on in a small space and **lots** of noise. Putting one activity in each room can cause a celebration to die simply because the students feel there is no excitement. They like to watch their classmates doing other activities while they do something entirely different. They also like to watch other activities while they wait in line. **They want the constant reassurance that they are not the only ones still there.**

It is extremely important to reserve the use of the facility as early as possible. *A year ahead is not too early.* **If possible,** try to reserve an entire 24-hour period including the day of the celebration and a few hours after in order to have unlimited access to all areas that will be needed for decorating and clean-up. If two or more schools will be using the same site, particularly on successive nights, consider using the same theme and sharing many decorations, thus saving money, time, and effort for each school. *Be aware, however, that many facilities will only give you access a few hours before the celebration begins which means your decoration and activity committees will need to be super organized.*

It is important to develop a good working relationship with the owner and/or manager of the site where the celebration is to be held. Someone who is thoroughly familiar with the facilities and with access to keys for all areas should be readily available before, during and after the event.

**DAY of GRADUATION:** Since graduation ceremonies are held at various hours of the morning, afternoon, and evening, arrangements will need to be made for the committees to decorate and store celebration supplies in the facility without interfering with the parents' needs and desires to attend graduation and have some family time before the celebration begins. Suggest to parents and students that family celebrations might be less rushed on the night *before* graduation. Junior class parents are a good source of help in getting the site ready at the last minute.

Several things to look for when considering a celebration site. **The facility should:**

- **Be in a safe location** with the ability to be secured against uninvited guests. Lighted parking areas will make both the students and the workers feel more secure in getting to and from the celebration.

- **Have enough space** to hold several simultaneous activities. Students **like** crowds and want constant reassurance that their classmates are also still present and having a great time; **pack as much into each area as safe and possible.**
- **Be an all-weather facility.** Decorations usually must be put up several hours before the celebration; some activities would be ruined in rain. Rescheduling due to inclement weather would defeat the purpose of *AFTER* Prom or *AFTER* Graduation.
- **Have a food serving area.** All food can be prepared elsewhere and served at the celebration. Use a refrigerator truck if necessary. Food preparation can be done on site only if the kitchen is equipped with a commercial exhaust vent hood and fire suppression as required by fire regulations.
- **Have access to a telephone.**
- **Allow decorations.**

### FINDING THE SITE

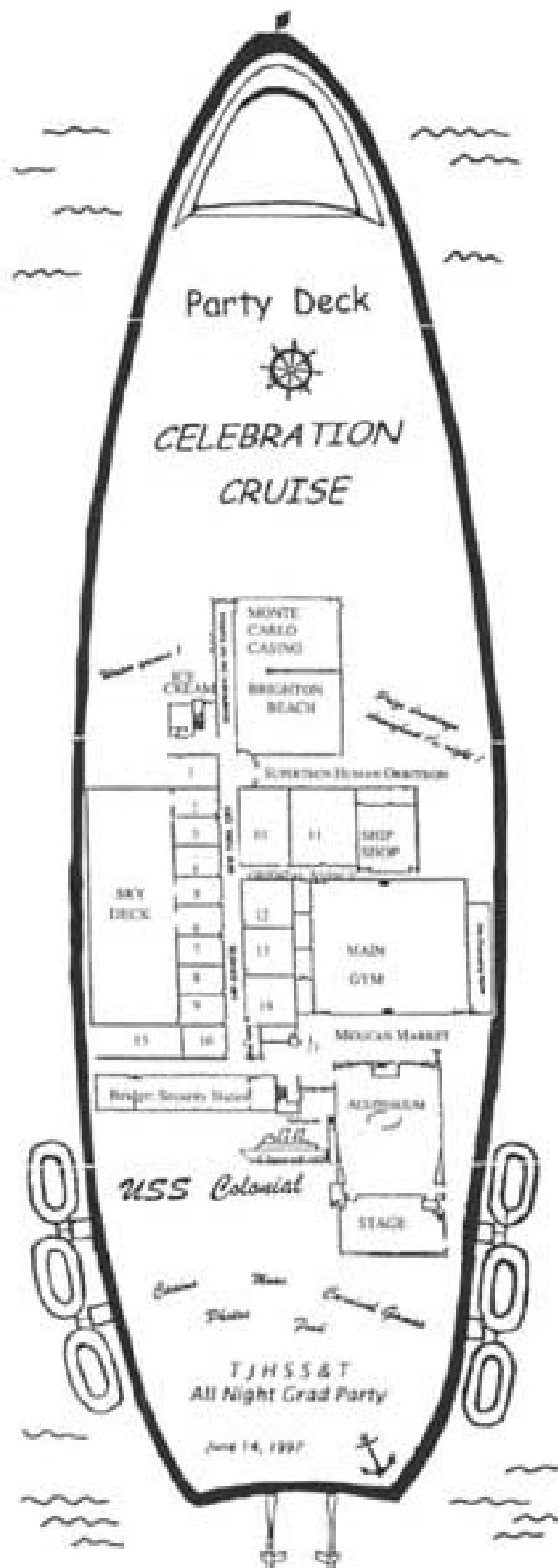
Some communities will have a number of suitable buildings in which a celebration of this type can be held while others may be limited to the school. Some will be competing with other high schools in the same area while some communities may be looking for a large site where a celebration can be held for two or more high schools who are joining together to have one celebration. The list below should at least provide a starting point to find a site. **Be aware that some of these may not allow you to bring in your own (donated) food and beverages.**

- School (elementary, middle, high)
- Community or recreation center
- National Guard armory
- Shopping mall
- Empty building or store in strip mall
- Grange Hall or similar facility
- Church or synagogue
- Health or athletic club
- Indoor swimming pool
- Theater or theater complex
- YWCA, YMCA, or similar facility
- College student union building
- Warehouse or storage facility
- Masonic, Oddfellow Hall, or similar facility
- Elks, Moose, American Legion, VFW Hall, etc.
- Party boat (some accommodate 500-750 persons)
- Bowling alley, skating rink, racquet club, etc.
- Indoor stadium, convention center, or similar facility
- Firehouse
- Barn
- Restaurant
- Hotel
- Country club

Thomas Jefferson High School  
for Science and Technology  
Fairfax County.  
Graduation Celebration held in  
high school.

The layout for the celebration  
attendees doesn't have to look  
like your school building!

- 1 Fruits & Veggies, Fruit drinks
- 2 Body painting
- 3 Tattoos
- 4 NY Deli: subs & sodas
- 5 Fortune Teller
- 6 Neck Massage
- 7 Manicures
- 8 Movie Room
- 9 Portage to Sky Deck
- 10 Fortune Cookies, Egg Rolls
- 11 Changing Room
- 12 Baggage: P-Z
- 13 Baggage: H-O
- 14 Baggage: A-G
- 15 Volunteer Lounge
- 16 Clinic
- 17 DJ, Prize Drawings, Time Capsule



#### Monte Carlo Casino

- Black Jack
- Poker
- Craps Table
- Roulette
- Soda/drinks

#### Brighton Beach

- Balloon Darts
- Nerf Darts
- The Loo
- Koosh Ball Toss
- Regatta
- Ring Toss
- Putt Putt Golf
- Bank Shot
- Mug Shots
- Popcorn-Pretzels

#### Ship Shop

- "Buy," Get Stuff
- Open 2-3:30 a.m.

#### Sky Deck

- Sponge Wars
- Robbles
- Water Balloons

#### Main Gym

- Velcro Wall
- Laser Tag
- Bungee Running
- Bouncy Boxing
- Virtual Realty
- Gladiator Jousting

#### Mexican Market

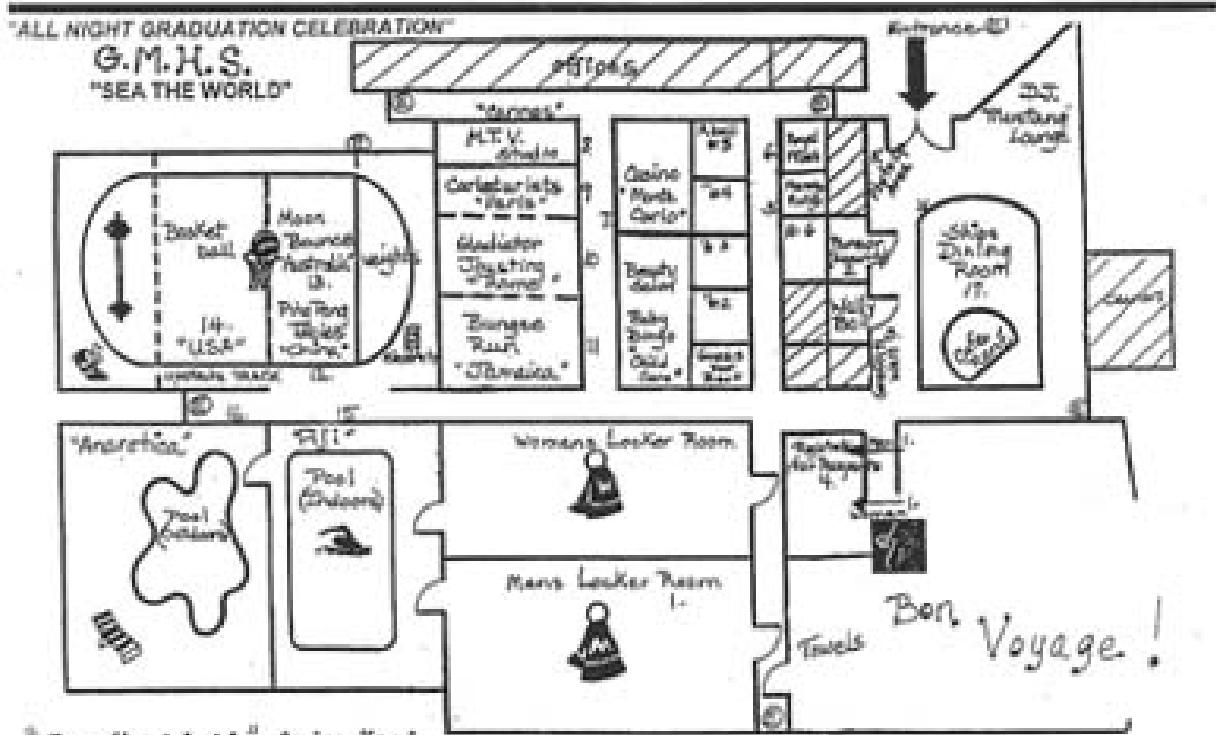
- Salsa/Chips
- Pepe's Pizza
- Burritos
- Mexican Jail
- Breakfast (after drawing)

#### Auditorium

- Bands
- Video Clips
- 4:30 a.m.: Grand Prize Drawings

Sample Layout Plan

George Mason High School,  
Falls Church, Virginia



"Sea the World" Cruise Key:

- |                    |                             |                |             |               |               |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Restrooms       | 4. Registration-Information | 7. Monte Carlo | 10. Rome    | 13. Australia | 16. Anarctica |
| 2. Purser-Security | 5. Miami                    | 8. Cannes      | 11. Jamaica | 14. U.S.A.    | 17. Food      |
| 3. Gift/Wall       | 6. Anika                    | 9. Paris       | 12. China   | 15. Fiji      |               |

→ First Aid go to Registration +

Not available for use: jacuzzi; sauna; tanning beds; free weights

## CELEBRATION GUIDELINES

### *Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!*

Specific celebration rules should be established well in advance and publicized to students, parents, community, and security personnel. This will let everyone know *exactly* what is expected. It is helpful if the celebration rules are as uniform as possible throughout the state:

- No alcohol or other drugs will be allowed.
- Students must arrive at the celebration by a pre-designated time. (Let them know what time they *must* be there.)
- Students may leave any time they wish but may **NOT** return.
- Door prizes—or at least grand prizes—are not distributed until breakfast and **MUST** be claimed **in person**.
- Celebration is limited to eligible class members (and their dates, for After Prom, only). (Determine *exactly* who is eligible—and who will be admitted as guests.)

It is important to establish the fact that this celebration is NOT a lock-in. Students may leave whenever they wish, but they may NOT return.

The following questions are brought to your attention—**BEFORE** the celebration plans are made. Each celebration committee should make its own decisions and should discuss each of these items **annually** because different parents chair the celebrations and committees. Not only will this procedure assure that these are the rules the committee wishes to follow, but committee members will understand WHY certain rules are being made and, therefore, be more willing to follow them. ***Be sure all your rules are well communicated to the parents as well as the students.***

**1. WHO WILL BE INVITED?** This may sound like a silly question until the committee really begins discussing *who* will be admitted. After-prom and graduation celebrations each bring their own set of problems of attendance eligibility.

#### ***Graduation:***

- *Will it be only graduates from your school?* Some seniors may not graduate until after summer session, others will come back to finish with next year’s class (and will technically be the class of ‘next year,’) while others will simply drop out. This will entail working closely with the class counselors. Be aware that many times all of the non-graduates are not known until a few hours before the graduation ceremony. Figure out how you will monitor this situation both before (it may entail ticket refunds) and at the door as graduates enter your celebration.
- *Will former members of the class who have moved away but are back to attend graduation as guests be invited?* Assume they would have graduated with these students if they had not moved away.
- *What about married students?* Spouses should NOT be considered “dates.” Yes, there are high school seniors who are married and/or have children. Think back to when you were a teenager or were first married. Most newlyweds are unwilling to let their spouse attend a co-ed party without them. This really is a different situation than bringing a date. Let the spouse come but draw the line there—NO babies, small children or siblings should be allowed to attend. If necessary, arrange a babysitter.
- *Will students be allowed to bring a date from outside the invited group?* NO. Reasons why dates are not invited to grad celebrations:
  - \* For every person who wishes to bring a date, there will be one who will not attend because s/he has no date.
  - \* If underclassmen attend as seniors’ dates, the celebration will not be the exciting event intended for them at a later date.
  - \* Older dates or dates from other schools may cause control problems.
  - \* How will graduates feel about having siblings attend as someone’s date?

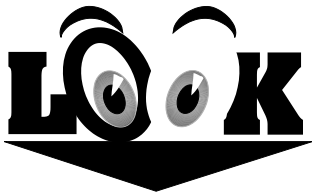
Publicize the celebration as “the last time for the class group to be together *as a class*.” Keep in mind that limiting the celebration to graduates (no dates), makes celebration planning easier, as the same theme, activities, and decorating ideas can be used from a previous year’s celebration since all celebration attendees will be new. Many schools report that seniors complaining about this rule later say they were glad the celebration was for seniors only because it seemed more special. Most grad celebrations limit attendance to graduates *only* with exceptions made for foreign exchange students, former class members who would have graduated with the class had they not moved away, and married student’s spouses. Non-graduating seniors are treated as guests (allowed to attend but not allowed to win major door prizes or grand prizes).

**Prom:**

- *Will students who do not attend prom be allowed to attend?* Some students do not attend prom because they don't have a date, can't afford it, or for religious reasons. Allowing them to attend the After-Prom Celebration will give them a positive memory of prom night.
- *How will underclassmen and non-student dates learn about rules?* Many schools report having students who had to forfeit door prizes because their underclass dates had early curfews. Be sure ALL parents at the school have an opportunity to know about the rules and reasons the celebration is being held.

Most prom celebrations allow everyone eligible to attend prom to also attend the celebration and bring a *friend* (not necessarily a date) *regardless* of whether they attend the prom.

After you have set your guidelines, be sure to inform the security, reservations/tickets, and prize committees. It is *very* embarrassing to draw a non-eligible student's name as the grand prizewinner. The eligible students will be upset, the ineligible student may be embarrassed and angry when you announce he or she is not eligible or request that the prize be returned, and you will be embarrassed.



**WHAT TIME WILL THE CELEBRATION BEGIN?** It is advisable to set deadline when students must arrive in order to be admitted. Start the celebration before that time. This allows for an “entry window.”

**Graduation:** Midnight seems to be a good deadline in many communities because it allows most graduates' time with family or friends, yet the celebration still begins on the same day as graduation. (Celebration would start by 11 p.m.) Some communities bus graduates directly to the celebration from graduation ceremonies that end very late.

**Prom:** Take into account the time prom ends, where it is held, and whether students will want to change their clothes; however, don't allow too much time. Many have chosen to open the celebration doors at the same time prom ends (or even slightly earlier) as some students leave prom early or do not attend prom.

**WHAT TIME WILL THE CELEBRATION END?** It is important to keep the celebration going until daylight. Students want to stay up *all night*; once it's light, they have accomplished that, will be tired, and will most likely go home to bed rather than to another party or

somewhere to watch the sun rise while drinking.

Try to keep the students occupied until at least 5:00 a.m. Sending them out on the street at 3:00 a.m. is asking for trouble. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security about them being too tired to do anything but go to bed just because the adults feel that way—or *your* child insists everyone will be too tired to stay longer than that. Most celebrations (prom and graduation) last 5-7 hours; beginning at midnight and releasing students somewhere between 5 and 6 a.m.

**HOW LONG MUST ATTENDEES STAY? WILL THEY BE ALLOWED TO RE-ENTER THE CELEBRATION?**

If the idea is to hold a celebration where no alcohol or drugs are present, then, ideally, no one should be allowed to re-enter the celebration because alcohol and drugs can be kept outside or in cars. If students *must* go to their car for forgotten items, send them with security escorts. It is recommended that one of two escorts, accompanying a female student, be a woman. This protects everyone.

If a student attendee chooses to go home before the celebration has ended, s/he may NOT re-enter. *Students should sign out with name and time if they choose to leave early.* Should an emergency occur, it is important to know how many people are in the building and who they are. Also, if someone is missing the next day, it is important to know if that person left the celebration early.

**Graduation:** Each steering committee must decide if and how parents of students who leave the celebration will be notified. Many students are 18, so are legally “of age.” Many parents, however, feel they should be told if their son or daughter leaves the celebration early.

**Prom:** Consider the issue carefully. Many students will be minors, some will be of ages 18 to 21, others will not be students at the school. Should both sets of parents of couples be called? Should calls be made to non-student dates' parents?

**Prom/Grad:** If the decision is to make calls, who will make them—a parent volunteer or the student? If it costs money, who pays? Should the phone number be provided by the student, taken from a school-provided list, or will a permission slip be required which lists a phone number where parents may be reached during the night?

Most Virginia schools insist that students sign out showing their names and the time if they are leaving before the celebration is officially over. Most call parents if students were expected but did not attend, and many call parents if students leave early. NOTE: Be careful about getting the students' names correctly. Several schools have reported students signing out with an incorrect name so that when the phone call is made it does not go to *their* parents. Most after-prom committees do not call parents of dates who are not students at the school.

**WHAT ADULTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND? WILL ADULT RELATIVES AND SIBLINGS BE ALLOWED TO HELP DURING THE CELEBRATION?** Students probably will be quick to state that **no** adults should be present but:

- Many adults will be needed to make the evening run smoothly and to satisfy the insurance requirements. Be sure everyone has a job so students don't have the feeling they are being watched.
- Favorite teachers and administrators can be fun to have at the celebration helping with the activities.
- Grandparents and siblings may be best used in some capacity **before** the celebration such as decorating, preparing food or prizes, setting up, or addressing thank-you notes. Siblings will have their own celebration at a later date. **Volunteers should be at least 21 years old.**
- Having all or most adults in attendance in simple "costumes" (blend with theme) or "uniforms" (dark slacks/skirts, white shirts) will blend them into the celebration and help students forget the adults are someone's parents.

**WHAT IF A STUDENT ARRIVES OBVIOUSLY DRUNK OR SMELLING OF ALCOHOL?** Will parents be called? Will the student be sent home via his/her parent or police? If not totally disorderly, will the student be allowed to "rest" in a special room and join the celebration later? *Consider the liability issue if allowing a volunteer to drive the student home.*

This has not been a problem in most areas, but definite plans need to be made BEFORE the celebration so there need be no arguments or discussion if it should happen. There are many different opinions on how this should be handled. Discuss and decide what best fits the philosophy of **your** steering committee. Be sure all security people know how the situation is to be handled. **The students need to be aware of the consequences** of arriving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

***NO** student should be allowed to drive if he or she has been drinking. Be prepared. Most committees across the state report that making the rules clear before the celebration has virtually eliminated problems in this area.*

**Graduation:** Since these students have graduated, the school rules cannot be held over their heads (suspension if caught using alcohol or other drugs, etc.). It is really important that this issue be discussed by the committee *before* the celebration to avoid later problems.

**Prom:** If a student with a date is in this condition, will the other person be allowed to stay? What if s/he is not a member of the eligible class/classes; will this make a difference in what happens? Keep in mind that school is still in session and that most schools have a policy in place

regarding alcohol and other drugs which usually involves suspension (and, as such, may also determine whether a senior may "walk" at graduation) so the decision may be totally out of the committee's hands. Check with your school's administration for guidance *before* the situation arises.

**WHO WILL TELL PARENTS WHO ARRIVE OBVIOUSLY DRUNK OR SMELLING OF ALCOHOL THEY ARE NOT WELCOME?**

Amazingly, this has happened at some celebrations. Try to make it clear in the letter to volunteers that the NO ALCOHOL, NO DRUGS rule applies to them, too. Turning them away will be a very unpleasant task and will probably fall to the main chairperson or the security committee chairperson. In many cases, one mixed drink or beer can cause the adult to smell of alcohol which sends a very mixed message to student participants: adults cannot get through this celebration without alcohol so why should the students?

**IF THERE IS MONEY LEFT AFTER THE CELEBRATION, WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH IT?**

NOTE: The Virginia Solicitation of Contributions Law, Section 57-57 N. states: *"No person shall use or permit the use of the funds raised by a charitable solicitation for any purpose other than the solicited purpose or, with respect to funds raised by general appeals, the general purposes of the charitable or civic organization on whose behalf the solicitation was made."* Be sure the choice made by the committee meets this code.

Following are some suggestions currently being used at various Virginia celebrations:

- Leave money for following year's celebration—early cash is always needed for deposits and supplies before donations or reservation money become available.
  - Purchase equipment that can be used at these celebrations for years to come (games-of-chance equipment, other activity equipment, decorating equipment, etc.)
  - Give extra cash prizes at end of celebration (always leaving a cushion in case of unexpected bills—building damages, borrowed items that are lost or misplaced, forgotten bills).
  - Give "mystery" scholarship to be determined after all bills have been paid—2-3 months following celebration.
  - Purchase a small "thank-you" gift for facility or high school for helping with the celebration.
- NOTE: Amount spent should be a token amount—approximately \$100 maximum.
- Have a balloon drop as the last activity of the night.
    - Have some balloons filled with confetti, and some filled with cash.

The following suggestions do **not** meet the guidelines set by the contribution law in Virginia as stated above and, therefore, **are illegal unless SPECIFICALLY NAMED in your solicitation letter:**

- Use money to fund other alcohol/drug-free school events during school year.
- Put excess into PTA/PTO, Booster Club or school bank (or other sponsor) account for general use.
- Give money to worthy community charity in honor of school, class, or students.
- Give money to graduating class for the first class reunion—remember, the money was collected for an alcohol/drug-free celebration; the first reunion will probably be in approximately five years and will almost certainly feature alcohol since all students will be of legal drinking age by then.

If excess money will be spent for any other projects or activities (other than those directly associated with this celebration—or next year’s), include information in the solicitation letter stating how the excess money will be spent.

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## **WE’VE DECIDED ON OUR GUIDELINES, NOW WHAT?**

After deciding on reasonable guidelines, adhere to them as closely as possible. There will always be someone seeking an exception and it is impossible to please everyone. Keep in mind the main purpose of the celebration is to keep the students alive and safe.

Remember that *sometimes we must be flexible*. Do what is reasonable and best for the **student**.

## **SAMPLE GUIDELINES**

### **“The Wild Wild West” After-Prom Celebration**

Madison County High School, *Madison County*

1. Only MCHS Juniors and Seniors and their dates may attend. Dates must be ninth grade or above. Prom attendance is NOT required.
2. Casual dress is appropriate for the celebration.
3. No alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products are allowed.
4. No admittance if prior use of alcohol or drugs is suspected. Anyone suspected drinking or using drugs will be referred to the authorities for further evaluation.
5. Personal belongings may be checked for alcohol or drugs upon entry.
6. For parental information, celebration goers must sign in upon arriving, and sign out when leaving.
7. Celebration hours are 12:00 midnight - 5:30 a.m. Doors open at 12:00 midnight and close at 1:15 a.m.

8. Students may leave the building at any time, but will not be readmitted to the celebration. You may call \_\_\_ \_\_\_ at \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ on May 4 for sign out information.
9. Students attending until 5:30 a.m. will receive a FREE After Prom Celebration T-shirt.
10. Door prizes will be awarded and students must be present to win.
11. Tickets will be available during lunch at MCHS during the week of the prom. There is NO CHARGE for tickets picked up at that time. However, there will a non-refundable cost of \$3.00 per ticket purchased at the door on prom night. Tickets are required for entry to the celebration.



### **“Beach Luau” Graduation Celebration** Potomac Senior High School, *Prince William County*

1. You must arrive between 11:00 p.m. and midnight. LEAVE YOUR VALUABLES AT HOME. NO CASH IS NEEDED. YOUR PARENTS’ DONATION COVERS ALL OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FOOD!
2. You may leave at any time (using the front lobby door), but you may not re-enter the celebration. You will be asked to sign out, giving your name and the time you leave. YOUR PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN YOU LEAVE.
3. All belongings will be checked at the “Baggage Claim” upstairs outside of the pool balcony. You will have access to this area all night. Put all of your purchases and prizes in the Baggage Claim.
4. Wear comfortable white-soled gym shoes (NO HARD SOLED STREET SHOES). Pockets or hip packs may come in handy to hold your “Beach Bucks.” WEAR YOUR GRAD NITE T-SHIRT. Bring your swimsuit and towel.
5. Bring items for inclusion in the time capsule (photos, ticket stubs, etc.)
6. All “Beach Bucks” that are not spent can be “willed” (\$5,000 maximum) to a member of the Graduating Class of next year. This can be done after the Final Auction.

**REMEMBER! THIS IS AN ALCOHOL-FREE/DRUG-FREE CELEBRATION. PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA LAW, THE POLICE ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE YOU INTO CUSTODY IF YOU ARRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS.**

**“Take a Ride on the Express” Grad Celebration**  
Broad Run High School, Loudoun County

**Q: Why should I come?**

**A:** You’ve suffered through years of school, term papers, projects, and exams. NOW YOU DESERVE TO CELEBRATE together before going your separate ways. And celebrate you will. There will be entertainment, games, prizes, and food all night long. One student present that evening will win a chance for a new car at the grand prize drawing 27 June.

**Q: May I bring a date?**

**A:** Generally not, unless he or she is a member of the BRHS Graduating Class and is graduating in June or following completion of courses during the summer. There are no exceptions. The decision of the BRHS guidance office on June 19 (graduation day) on who is or who is not a graduate is final. Foreign Exchange students, spouses of seniors, and former students who would have graduated with this class if they did not move are also welcomed.

**Q: How late may I arrive, and when is it over?**

**A:** Graduates may arrive between 11 p.m. and midnight. They will not be allowed to enter after midnight. The celebration will be over at 6 a.m. No alcohol or drugs allowed nor anyone that has been using either one. If any graduate violates this rule, he or she will be assigned an adult “buddy” and encouraged to spend some quality time with him or her before being allowed to enter the celebration.

**Q: Is this celebration a lock-in?**

**A:** Absolutely not. You may leave whenever you want, but you will be asked to sign out, and you will not be allowed to re-enter. Also, you must be present at 5 a.m. to be eligible for the prize drawings. Please note: If you leave early, we will call your parents and ask them to speak to you before you leave the Ashburn Village Sports Pavilion.

**Q: What should I bring with me?**

**A:** Here are some suggestions: You will need a beach towel, bathing suit or swim trunks (no cut-offs), court sneakers for Wally Ball, bath towel, personal items such as deodorant, toothbrush, shampoo, comb/brush, hair dryer, and a camera. You will be assigned a private locker. Please make sure your personal items are clearly marked.

**Q: What do tickets cost? Are there any ticket incentives?**

**A:** Tickets are \$20 this year. Incentives will be given out. Tickets will be available the night of the celebration.



**Gold Rush, Graduation Celebration.**  
Loudoun Valley High School, Loudoun County.

Thank you for joining your classmates on the golden streets of the Lovettsville Community Center to celebrate the ‘GOLD RUSH’ for a memorable evening!!!

Get your shovels, sluice box, and pan and meet us at the General store (Lovettsville Recreation Center) from 11:00 p.m. until 5:00 a.m. Your ticket allows you admission to General Store and surrounding “mines” between **11:00 p.m. and midnight ONLY, so be on time!** When you arrive at the store, you will receive a packet containing ‘casino money’ & tickets for free gifts.

Once you reach the Gold Miner’s Daughter hotel, you can check your gear at the area provided. Keep your claim number on your hand in order to get your items back at the end of the evening.

Casual clothing is recommended—no heels (wear sneakers or casual shoes). Don’t forget your swim gear and towel to dry off after a dip in the ‘swimming hole.’ While walking through the mining town, enjoy swimming, volleyball, tennis (bring your own racket and balls), and many other golden activities.

During the evening, you can saunter your way up to the Casino and Carnival games, enjoy Caricatures, the Tattoo Parlor, the Video DJ, Jousting, Sumo WRESTLIN’, the Gyro (weather permitting), and the Great BUNGEE Run.

The General Store will be serving ‘chow’ all evening and you can make your own sundae too!

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Admission between 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight **ONLY!!! PLEASE BE ON TIME!!**

All activities and food are included in the price of the ticket. No “real” cash is necessary. **EVERYTHING IS FREE!!**

Certified lifeguard and first aid personnel are present. Accidents and injuries must be reported to a worker immediately.

Absolutely “NO SMOKING” in the Recreation Center. You can ‘hit the trail’ and leave the celebration at any time, but if you leave the ‘gold mines,’ you cannot return.

**PRIZES**

Drawings for a variety of prizes will be held throughout the night. Drawings for the major prizes will be held between 4-5 a.m. All prizes will be awarded at this time and you must be present to win.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an important part of the entire celebration process. It is true that a small group of people can do everything that is needed to make this event happen. But, having lots of help makes it easier, more fun, and more successful with more students in attendance. *Be sure to find a way to use everyone who wants to help.*

Some of the ways volunteers can be recruited:

- Notice in school newsletter
- Letter mailed directly to parents of class members eligible to attend celebration
- Local newspaper articles
- Phone calls by committee chairpersons and/or volunteer co-ordinator
- Sign up tables at Back-to-School Night and other school or PTA functions
- Personal conversations at school athletic events
- Letters to community service clubs and organizations
- Letters or phone calls to ministers and rabbis in community requesting info to be placed in newsletter

The volunteer coordinator needs to know ALL of the celebration plans and the needs of ALL of the committees. When someone volunteers to “help wherever needed,” the coordinator needs to be able to tell them what is needed. ***If a parent volunteers, FIND SOMETHING FOR HE OR SHE TO DO!!!*** *Nothing makes people more unhappy than being begged to volunteer and then never hearing from anyone after they offer to help.*

**It cannot be said often enough: The more parents of eligible students you have involved on your committees, the more students you will have at your celebration.**

Parents who help in any way with these celebrations almost never host a teen party where alcohol is served. Get as many parents as possible involved on committees. Let them know what it is you need them to do. Spell out **exactly** what is needed in a flyer or newsletter.

Below is a Sample Letter to Parents outlining the many volunteer areas available to them:

### ATTENTION ALL PARENTS

As you look forward to September 7th, I'm sure that a smile breaks across your face as you think about how peaceful your home is about to become. Before you lose that smile, I'd like you to think forward to June 22 next year: Graduation Night for Broad Run High School's Graduating Class. After all of the kisses and hugs are finished that evening and the last flash from a proud parent's camera momentarily brightens the darkening sky, our seniors will head off to their all night, Drug and Alcohol Free Graduation Celebration. This celebration will be unlike any other celebration that they have attended. Why? Because of parents like you.

The success of this celebration depends upon parent volunteers—lots of them. And for the past several years, parents have always come forward to help. As the chairman of Project Graduation, I would like to extend my personal invitation to parents of freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors to join with me and a dedicated cadre of parents who have already volunteered their time for next year's celebration.

With this event, there is no such thing as 'too much help.' Parents of underclassmen are especially welcomed, for two reasons: first, you will need the experience and exposure to this activity to better prepare you for the time when your son or daughter becomes a senior and it's your turn to run the graduation celebration; you'll be experts at that point. Second, and perhaps more importantly, volunteer parents of seniors will have a Herculean task on the 22nd of June trying to prepare for their child's graduation as they wrap up last minute details associated with the all-night celebration. Parents with no seniors, who are members of the Project Graduation Team, will have only half the workload.

The goal of this team is to create an atmosphere that will leave a lasting impression in the memory of our graduating seniors. If you would like to be a member of that Team, please contact me, (blank), at (phone #) . Thank you so much!

Please contact (name) at (phone #) if you are able to help. Remember, without your help, this celebration can not be a success. Each committee will have years of previous experience to draw upon and a comprehensive how-to guide to help them along the way. Previous volunteers are always available to provide guidance. There is no need to 'reinvent the wheel.'

**ACTIVITIES:** If you love partying with hundreds of teenagers, you'll love working on this committee. Members are responsible for planning, setting up, and running the games that will amuse, challenge, and beguile the seniors. Games of chance, carnival games, athletic games—you name it. There are dozens to choose from, all previously tried and tested. Let your imagination go wild. The entire Ashburn Sports Pavilion is available, including the pool and racquet ball courts. Activities also provides the musical entertainment.

**CLEANUP:** If you have a strong back, and do not mind getting up early in the morning or dirtying your hands, this committee is for you. This committee provides a FRESH group of volunteers at the end of the celebration who clean up, dismantle, store, return items, and disburse left-over food. The primary work begins immediately following the celebration at 6 a.m. The assignment is to return the Ashburn Sports Pavilion to its original state by 8 a.m. and conclude their tasks shortly following that.

**DECORATING:** If you are artistic and love to create things, this is where you will be most effective. This committee is one of the largest and one of the most intensive. It is responsible for decorating the Ashburn Sports Pavilion in the theme established by the seniors. This committee will be composed of many sub-committees, one for each major area of the pavilion (such as entrance, stairwell, hallways, etc.). Members of this committee begin their assignment as soon as the theme is established.

**FUNDRAISING:** If you have a lot of business contacts and are skilled in the fine art of persuasion, this is the place for you. This committee has a very demanding and critical job to perform. The assignment is to provide items and money, through donations from parents, business establishments, and community associations, that will cover the cost of the celebration. This committee also coordinates the major fund-raisers throughout the year, such as the Meadow Muffin Contest.

**PRIZES:** If you never have a problem figuring out what type of presents to buy your friends and relatives, you will definitely want to join this committee. Money from fundraising and gifts from local businesses will be used to create an almost endless flow of prizes that will be given out during the celebration. These prizes will vary from simple door prizes, to major gifts.

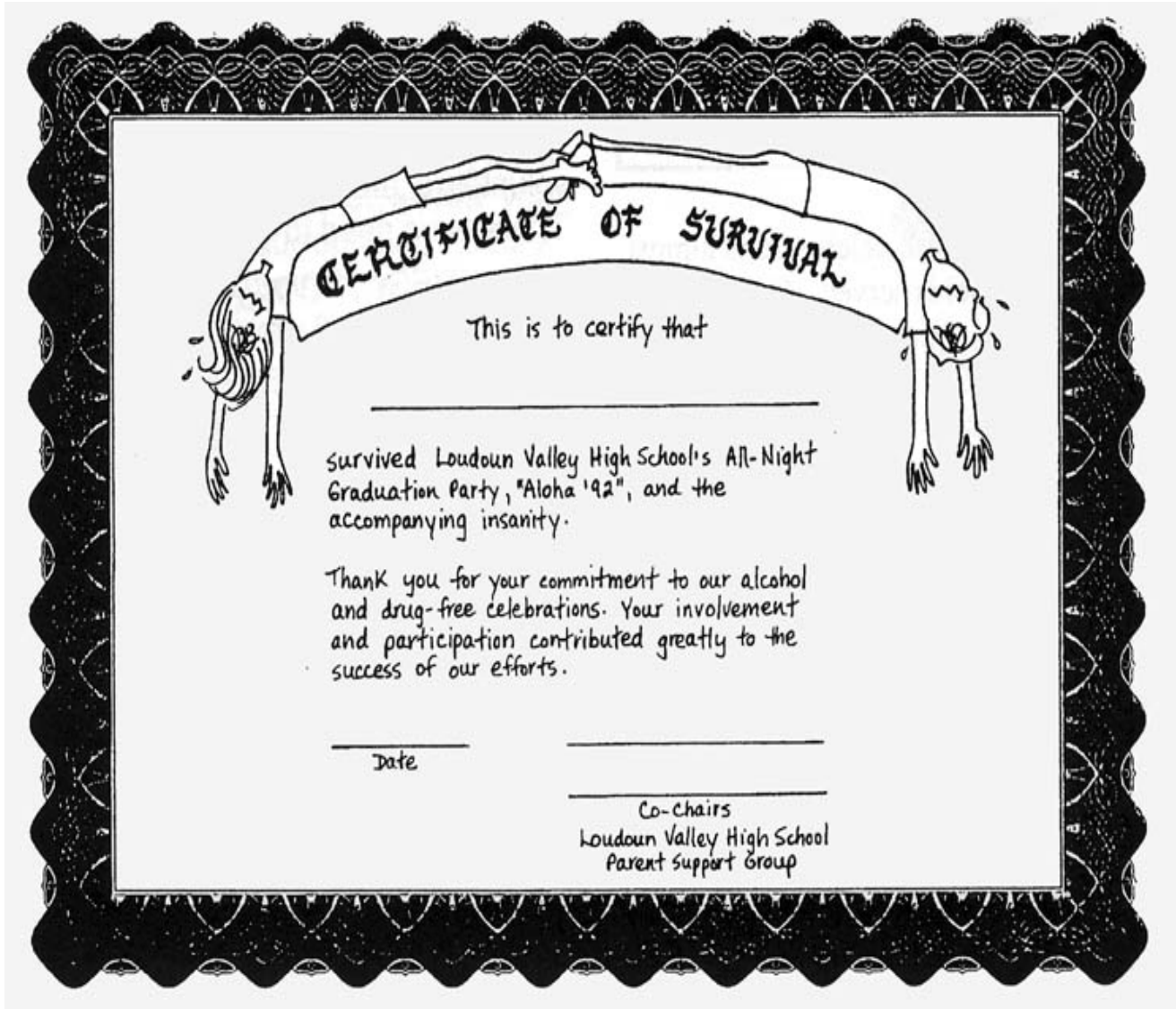
**PUBLICITY:** If you have a way with words and a knack for getting people's attention, you will be very happy working on this committee. The job is to create enthusiasm for the celebration among students, parents, school administrators, faculty and the community at large. This is done through announcements in the school paper, the parent newsletter, articles for the local newspapers, contact with the radio stations, and any other medium they can come up with.

**REFRESHMENTS:** If you love serving food to hungry people, this is the place for you. This committee provides simple food and beverages that appeal to the graduates. If this can be done while conforming to the general celebration theme, so much the better. They will work closely with the fundraising committee to solicit donations from local fast food parlors, restaurants, hotels, churches, and other community organizations.

**SECURITY:** If you are not easily intimidated, and do not mind working a few hours between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., sign up for this committee. Help provide a safe, drug and alcohol free atmosphere during the celebration. This committee gives the "thumbs up" on who can and who can not enter the celebration. Celebration security also includes parents who will serve as chaperons throughout the night.

**TICKETS:** If you are an ingenious person, the ticket committee wants you. Their job is to provide a method of identifying those who should be admitted to the celebration. Tickets can be a very clever publicity stunt used as the final lure to get students to the celebration. For example, if a travel theme is selected, tickets may be airline wallets containing 'boarding passes' that are presented at the 'ticket counter' where a 'boarding pass' is issued. You get the idea.

VOLUNTEER CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION. Loudoun Valley High School, Loudoun County.



## THEME BUILDING

FOLLOW ALL COPYRIGHT LAWS! LICENSED CHARACTERS ARE **NOT** ALLOWED TO BE REPRODUCED IN **ANY** FORM WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE OWNER OF THE COPYRIGHT. **GIVING CREDIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PROGRAM DOES NOT COUNT.**

See chapter on Legal Matters.

Choose a theme early so that all decorations, activities, food, and publicity can be planned around it. A theme will make some of those choices easier and will definitely lend an air of festivity to the celebration. The tickets, publicity, entry-way, and check-in procedure should all be incorporated into the theme in some way. Match as many of your activities to your theme as possible.

A theme need not be original to be exciting. Many schools use the same theme year after year for their graduation celebration. It has become a tradition to do so and they build on their existing activities and decorations. The theme should not become a contest between committees, schools, or classes. Your committee may be able to borrow ideas, equipment, or supplies from other sources. Some committees like to use themes or incorporate activities that are currently popular such as a sports theme during an Olympic year, “Survivor” “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” or other popular TV shows.

Many celebrations use almost the same activities yearly but change the way it is presented based on the theme. Tickets may be airline, theater, stagecoach, moon rocket, chariot ride, theater, disco, made on, or to look like, a CD, etc. Games of chance might be Monte Carlo, Las Vegas, Atlantic City, a speakeasy, wild west gambling saloon, Land of Opportunity, New York Stock Exchange, Missouri river boat, etc. Food may be from different countries, Star-vation Station, “Mystic Pizza,” “Yellow Submarine”, etc. The sky is the limit!

### Some Theme Ideas:

#### TRAVEL/INTERNATIONAL

Airport ‘\_\_’ (insert year)  
All Night Flight or All Knight Flight  
Around the World in ‘(yr)’ Days  
Going Places  
Up, Up and Away (yr)

#### TRAIN

All Aboard, America!  
Orient Express  
Rock & Roll Express  
(yr) Express

#### CRUISE

Breakfast on the Potomac (nearby ocean, river, lake)  
Caribbean Cruise  
Cavalier (school mascot) Cruise  
Cruise to the Islands  
Potomac Fever (nearby river, lake)  
Sea Cruise (yr.)  
Survivor

Tropical Cruise

#### BEACH/SEA

Beaches of the World  
Island Vacation  
Neptune’s Underwater World  
Neptune’s Court  
Sunset Beach Celebration  
(yr) Leagues Under the Sea

#### HOLLYWOOD/MOVIES/TV

At the Movies  
Hollywood Under the Stars  
Reel Midnight Madness

(school name) Goes Hollywood  
Star Search, American Idol  
Starry Starry Night  
Survivor or Journey to Survivor Island

#### PLACES/OTHER

Aloha (yr.)  
City Lights  
Coast to Coast  
Go for the Gold (Olympic theme)  
It’s a Jungle Out There!  
Las Vegas Night  
Luau  
Mardi Gras  
New York, New York  
Night on the Nile  
(name of school)opoly  
Oh! The Places You’ll Go!  
Safari  
South of the Border  
Space  
Wild, Wild West

#### TIME RELATED

Back to the Future  
Blast to the Past  
If I Could Turn Back Time  
1, 2, 3 O’Clock, 4 O’Clock, Rock  
Remember When  
Rock Around the Clock

#### CIRCUS

Circus of the Stars  
Clownin’ Around

**THEME IDEA: SAFARI**

As shown through rules (Policies & Protection Plan) and itinerary issued to students.

**SENIOR SAFARI Policies & Protection Plan**

1. **PROTECTION PLAN:** All Safari participants are required to pre-register by Wednesday, May 15. The Parent/Student & Guest Agreements must be completed and returned in order to be considered pre-registered.
2. **DEPARTURE:** All participants must meet their guides at THE LAST OUTPOST (main entrance) between 12:00-1:30 a.m. Participants who have not arrived by this time will be left at the Outpost and parents will be notified.
3. **BAGGAGE ASSISTANCE:** All baggage (jackets, purses etc.) must be left in the care of local natives (adult volunteers) at the village. All items will be safe and accessible to their owners.
4. **NATIVE CUSTOMS:** This is a substance-free society, thus—any participant arriving visibly impaired by any form of illegal substance will be sent before the tribal chiefs (security & administration). Parents will be called and participants escorted home.
5. **SAFARI ATTIRE:** Come comfortable. Sneakers, shorts, and your SAFARI SHIRTS (you'll get them when you pre-register) are your best bets.

ALL SENIORS AND THEIR GUESTS ARE REQUIRED TO ENJOY THE WILDLIFE, SCENERY, AND NATIVE FOODS.

**SAFARI ITINERARY**

12:00 - 1:30 a.m. Gathering at Outpost

1:30 a.m. Native Welcoming Ritual

2:00 - 5:00 a.m. Safari Adventures:

- THE EMERALD FOREST (cafeteria)  
Music by Boomer Tunes, Native Dance Contest, Tarzan Yell Contest, and prize drawings every hour on the hour.
- THE PLAINS (gym) Half-court basketball, Volleyball & Ping-pong.
- THE RAINFOREST (main hall)  
Banana Tree Basketball, Pineapple/Coconut Bowling, Ring the Giraffe, Tempt the Piranha, Arcade Games, Jungle Mini-Putt, Wildlife Shoot

5:00 - 6:00 a.m. Farewell Breakfast & Grand Prize Drawings

**THEME IDEA: SURVIVOR**

The obvious popularity of the television series made this a very recognizable theme. Their inventory of decorations also lent itself to either an “island” or “outback” version. The not so obvious relationship to the word “survivor” and the reason for the celebration made the theme even more pertinent. All entertainment activities were advertised as “challenges” similar to the individual challenges on the TV show. In addition, four separate team challenges were conducted. They were Mental, Food, Climbing, and Raft Challenges. A Trivia Game was also added based on a challenge theme. One challenge had team members riding inflated crocodiles in the pool and retrieving balloons with letters to spell out the school name.

All decor was based on the theme.

- \* Entrance: accented by burning Tiki torches with Survivor theme music playing in the background.
- \* General decor incorporated throughout: balloon palm trees, plants, life-sized figure of Richard Hatch (the first Survivor winner).
- \* Information desk: called “Head Quarters,” decorated with a skeleton head. Here students were given quarters for use in the gym lockers (obvious play on words).
- \* Relaxation room decor: real log stumps, pillow fish, and plants.
- \* “Boomerang Bay” (the pool area): Full of balloon “bubbles” and crocodiles (pool floats).
- \* “Outback” (gym area): inflatable activities, casino, and Trivia Game.
- \* “Feasting Pit” (food area): Covered with a dark background and many twinkling lights simulating a clear night on a deserted island. Tiki huts used to serve tropical frozen drinks.
- \* “Kookaburra Lounge” (the spa area).
- \* Parent volunteers were “guides” wearing khaki or tropical clothes.
- \* “Tribal Council” (closing ceremony): every student belonged to a “tribe” with one student from each tribe asked to stand and hold the tribal stick (bamboo pole with the tribe’s name on it). A council jar contained the tribe names. As one tribe name was pulled from the council jar, all those tribe members were asked to leave the “Outback” and go to the check-out area which allowed for a very orderly dismissal of the students. To maintain interest, prizes were displayed during the tribal council with only the last remaining tribe receiving a prize.
- \* Souvenirs: every student received a wooden boomerang engraved with “\_\_HS All Night Graduation Celebration” and a T-shirt with a “Survivor” theme logo on it.

## THEME IDEA: JOURNEY TO SURVIVOR ISLAND

Games were named to support the theme that included 23 activities such as:

Adrenalin Rush (gladiator joust)	The Warrior Challenge (power ball battle)
Watusi's Waterfall (dunking booth)	Tiki Toss (football toss)
Boulder Boost (basketball shoot)	The Lost Loot (money machine)
Gator Hole Golf (putt-putt)	Lagoon Laser Tag (laser tag)
Palm Tree Pool (pool tables)	The Pineapple Pitch (ring toss)
The Lion's Den (bean bag toss)	
Lei the Flamingo (carnival game)	The Grub Hut (food court)

Students who wanted to participate in the Survivor contest signed up at the beginning of the night. Preliminary challenges (games) were held throughout the evening to eliminate all but four male and four female participants who participated in their two final survivor challenges as part of the closing activities. Anyone failing a challenge was eliminated; those "surviving" the first challenge went on to the last challenge:

Balance beam.

Food: eat oysters, pig feet, snails, and other exotic or unusual foods (2 girls and 2 boys survived this).

At this point, the audience picked the winners (one male, one female) who were given \$125 cash; runner-up male and female were each given \$75 cash; other two male and two female participants were given \$25 each.

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## MATCHING ACTIVITIES TO YOUR THEME.

The easiest way to begin this process is to brainstorm ideas about your theme. To do this, gather your group around a chalkboard or large piece of paper. Appoint one member as the recorder to keep track of everyone's ideas on that board or paper. Try to record as many "things"—both negative and positive as possible. Then start finding ways to use some of these ideas in your activities.

With a **CRUISE** theme you might come up with the following things you think of when you think of the word "cruise:"

aerobics	Caribbean	dancing	deck chairs	dolphins	Mississippi River	fishing
fancy food	ports of call	gang plank	golf balls	life boats	Queen Mary	romance
reading books	life jackets	ships	Mark Twain	ships' officers	twinkling stars	sunsets
shuffleboard	sinking	gaslights	Titanic	gambling	sharks	
Robinson Crusoe	swimming pools		portholes	sailors	ship's wheel	

**MARDI GRAS** might bring these ideas:

alligators	beads	floats	gambling	glitter	jazz	gold coins
Jack-in-the-box	French Quarter	jesters	Lafayette	masks	Mississippi River	parades
partying	pirates	plantations	poker	river boats	steamboats	swamps
cemeteries above ground	purple/gold/green	dice	crowds	crowns	dragons	The King
Farmer's Market	Fat Tuesday	cotton	Bayou	gaslights	late night bistros	

Now try to fit as many of the ideas as possible into your activities, food, entryway, tickets, ID's, etc.

On the following pages are some theme-related game and party-area ideas that may help you put together a total theme celebration.

## SAMPLE GAME IDEAS FOR THEMES

<b>Familiar Game</b>	<b>Western</b>	<b>Mardi Gras</b>	<b>Beach</b>	<b>Tropical</b>
Toss pennies onto a saucer	Toss gold nuggrts into cowboy boots or hat brim	Toss gold coins in a trasure chest	Toss goldfish into a fish bowl	Toss fish into a coral reef
Throw a football thru tire	Throw toilet paper thru toilet seat in outhouse	Bean bags into court jester's mouth	Toilet Paper thru a toilet seat swing-ing in the breeze	Toilet Paper thru a toilet seat swing-ing in the breeze
Treasure Hunt	Pan for gold; gold nuggets in sand	Jewels in the crown	Hidden treasure in the sand	Diving for Dollars
Whack-a-_____	Whack-a-rattler	Whack-a-crayfish	Whack-a-whale	Whack-a-frog
Throw hoops over bottles	Throw hoops over antlers	Necklaces	Throw a life preserver	Lei a flamingo
Relay Races	Stick Horse races	Dragon races	Canoe/boat races	Dolphin or tor-toise races
Throw darts at balloons	Throw darts at long skinny balloons in Indian headdress	Throw darts at alligators	Spear a shark or jellyfish	Spear a fish
Sail paper airplanes	Dead chicken fling into stew pot	Land seaplane on the bayou	Crab fling	Crocidile Fling
Throw clothes into a chute/basket	Long johns, panta-loons, cowboy hats	Period costumes	swim suits, beach towels	grass skirtss, coconut shell tops
Throw bean bags thru holes or at an object	Throw cow pies (moon pies)	Throw beignets into coffee cups	Toss sea shells in beach pails	Toss coconuts into a canoe
Candid Photos	Jail scene	Jester outfitd	Lifeguard chair	Grass skirts, leis, hawaiian shirts
Graffiti wall	Abandoned mine shaft	Gaslight/street sign	'The sands of Time''	Waterfall
Large rented activity	Mechanical Bull	Velcro Wall "stuck in quick-sand"	Robo surfing	Robo surfing

## SAMPLE GAME IDEAS FOR THEMES

<b>Familiar Game</b>	<b>Jungle</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Cruise</b>	<b>Patriotic</b>
Toss pennies onto a saucer	Tosskibble into a dog bowl	Toss gold coins into subway box	Toss goldfish into a fish bowl	Toss coin over the Delaware
Throw a football thru tire	Toilet Paper thru vines n a tree	Bean bags down the tubes on Wall Street	Toilet Paper thru a life preserver	Toilet Paper thru a toilet seat
Treasure Hunt	Indiana Jones tresure hunt	Stock certificates in garbage	Hidden treasure in a lifeboat	California Gold Rush
Whack-a-_____	Whack-a-monkey	Whack-a-bagel	Whack-a-Gilligan	Whack-a-turkey
Throw hoops over bottles	Throw hoops over elephant tusks	Throw hoops over rockette's leg	Throw a life preserver	Throw hopps over Statue of Liberty's torch
Relay Races	Stick Horse/Zebra races	Stick Horse races /Coney Island	Water propelled boat races	Tricycle races or Indy 500
Throw darts at balloons	Throw "poison" darts	Throw darts at Empire State Building	Spear a shark or jellyfish	Darts at Donkeys & Elephants
Sail paper airplanes	Sail planes onyo psl tree lined strip	Land planes at JFK	Land planes on deck of ship	Jet fighter cockpit simulator
Throw clothes into a chute/basket	Safari outfits	Chinese Laundry	Tuxes and fancy dresses	Red, white and blue clothing
Throw bean bags thru holes or at an object	Throw banana shaped bean bags at monkey	Throw popcorn into cups	Toss sea shells in beach pails	Toss litter into garbage cans
Candid Photos	Gorilla in a cage	Central Park Bench	Love Boat	Cutouts of current politicians
Graffiti wall	Abandoned cave	The Subway	Hull of ship	American Flag
Large rented activity	Giant Slide	Velcro Wall or Obstacle Course	Dance Dance Revolution or Rock Wall	Obstacle course or Toilet racers

## SAMPLE GAME IDEAS FOR THEMES

<b>Familiar Game</b>	<b>Medieval</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Under the Sea</b>	<b>International</b>
Toss pennies onto a saucer	Toss coins in a knight's helmet	Toss moon rocks into space module	Toss goldfish into a fish bowl	Toss water balloons into volcano
Throw a football thru tire	Catapult toilet paper at the draw-bridge	Toss ball through planet's rings	Throw a pearl into a clam	Toilet Paper thru the outback outhouse
Treasure Hunt	Jewels in the castle	Find the Lost planet, spaceship	Sunken Treasure	Diving for Dollars
Whack-a-_____	Whack-a-dragon	Whack-an-alien	Whack-a-shark	Whack-a-frog
Throw hoops over bottles	Throw hoops over Merlin's hat	Money Machine - Anti-gravity grab	Throw hoops over a sunken ship's mast	Throw hoops over Eiffel Tower
Relay Races	Stick Horse races	Moon walk races	Seahorse races/ Walk the plank	Rickshaw races
Throw darts at balloons	Throw darts at paper apples	Throw darts at stars (different points)	Thros darts at sea bubbles (clear balloons)	World map and name the country
Sail paper airplanes	Javelin throw (cardboard tubes)	Land Shuttle in the desert	Land a seaplane on ocean	Fly Chinese Kites
Throw clothes into a chute/basket	"Suit of armor"	Heavy gloves, bulky clothing	Swim suits, scuba gear, pirate's patch	Include safari hat, bandanas
Throw bean bags thru holes or at an object	Throw bean bags at fire breathing draagon	Throw planets & stars (balls) into black hole	Toss sea shells in beach pails	Toss bean bags african safari animals' mouths
Candid Photos	Lord & Lady	Moonscape	Mermaids/ Snorkeling	Travel Poster, Suitcases
Graffiti wall	Castle Wall	Solar System	Pirate Ship or Coral reef	Ancient Wonders of the World
Large rented activity	Gladiator Joust	Velcro Wall or laser tag apceship	Robo surfing	Rock Climbing

## SAMPLE CELEBRATION ZONES FOR THEMES

<b>Celebration Zone</b>	<b>Western</b>	<b>Mardi Gras</b>	<b>Beach</b>	<b>Cruise</b>
<b>Entryway</b>	Stagecoach Ticket Window	River Boat or Gaslighted street	Boardwalk, Water, sand	Gang Plank
<b>Check Room</b>	Railway Depot	Rue de Bagages	Locker Room	Port Authority
<b>Carnival</b>	County Fair	Carnival!	Coney Island	Rio
<b>Games of Chance</b>	Last Chance Ranch	Jeu de Chance	Atlantic City	Monte Carlo
<b>Food</b>	Wagon Train Cafe	Cajun Cafe	Under the Boardwalk	Riviera
<b>Graffiti Wall</b>	Wooden Fence	Bayou	Sunset over water	Life Boat
<b>Prizes</b>	Gold Mine	Le Grand Prix	Souvenir Shop	“ On the High Seas
<b>Candid Photos</b>	Western Scene with cows, horses, etc.	Fancy Dress “head thru hole” scene	Waterfall, beach umbrellas, etc.	Port Holes/Deck Chairs
<b>Major Theme Decor</b>	Cowbiy hats, boots, branding irons, fencing, cactus	Purple.Green/ Gold, street lamps, necklaces, masks, gold coins	Sand, sea, beach pails, shovels, palm trees, surfboards	At sea, life boats/ life preservers/sea shells, sails, etc.
<b>I.D.’s</b>	Sheriff’s Badges	Masks	Beach Ballst	Beach postcards
<b>Tickets</b>	Stage Coach tickets	Masks	Life Preserver	Passport
<b>Pre-Paid Tickets</b>	Wanted posters	Jester	Bridge Ticket	Cruise Tickets
<b>Volunteer Dress</b>	Cowboy Hats	White tops, black bottoms, bow ties, cumberbunds	Khaki Shorts and T-Shirts	Shorts and T-Shirts
<b>Pool</b>	Swimmin’ hole	Swamp/Bayou	Beach/Surf	Palmtrees, light house, buoys

## SAMPLE CELEBRATION ZONES FOR THEMES

<b>International</b>	<b>Life is a Highway</b>	<b>South of the Border</b>	<b>Movies</b>	<b>New York</b>
Customs	Toll Booth	Border Patrol	Movie Ticket Booth	New York skyline
Airport Security	The Pit Stop	Siesta Lounge	“Untouchables”	Grand Central Station
Venice	State Fair	El Carnival	“Big”	Coney Island
Vegas	Las Vegas	La Big Chance	“The Color of Money”	Wall Street
Celebrity Restaurants	Road Kill Cafe, Route 66 Cafe	Rosie’s Cantina	Hard Rock Cafe “Mydttic Pizza”	New York Deli
Great Wall of China	Construction zone fence	“Adobe” or stone wall	“American Grafitti”	Subway walls
Duty Free Shop	Souvenir Shop	El Surprizo	“Treasure Island”	Fifth Avenue
Seven Wonders of the World	Antique Car, Sports car, motorcycle	Sombreros, serapes	“Butch Cassidy”	Central Park
Eiffel Tower, Pyramids, Statue of Liberty, etc.	Highway on the floor, directional signs, traffic lights	Pinatas, catus, chili peppers, donkeys, etc.	Movie Posters, spools of film, Hollywood stars	Buildings, glitz, lights, etc.
Travel Posters	Driver’s License	Passport	Mini Take Boards	Key to the City
Passport	Road Maps	Passport	Movie Ticket	Subway token
Travel Vouchers	Cars/Trucks	Travel Vouchers	Movie Pass	Apples
Colored Shirts with black pants	Hard Hats, orange vests	Sombreros/ T-Shirts	White shirt, dark pants	White shirt/black pants
South Pacific	Motel Pool	Mexican Riviera	“Putting on the Ritz”	Skyline

## WORKING WITH VENDORS

1. Know who is eligible to sign contracts.
2. If you have been happy with the vendors your celebration has used in the past, consider using the same ones again. They already know your facility and the rules. They will be happy to have a repeat customer. If you want to change vendors, comparison shop BEFORE you sign the contract. Once you sign, it is a legal binding contract. Don't try to get out of it because you found a better deal.
3. **Have only your Activities chairperson call each vendor.** It is very confusing, time-consuming, and frustrating for the vendors to receive calls from several different people all claiming to represent your celebration and asking the same questions.
4. Read through all notes and contracts from the previous year BEFORE you begin calling vendors. Take advantage of the vendors' knowledge, experience and expertise. This may be *your* first all-night after-prom or grad celebration, but your vendor has probably done many of them in the past. They work with their equipment all the time and know what this age group likes and doesn't like. Remember, most committee members are not professional special event planners.
5. Do not give vendor more than 1/3 down payment. Give another 1/3 very close to your celebration when you are finalizing all activities. Pay vendor the final 1/3 AFTER your celebration is over and you are satisfied with the vendor's performance.
6. Find out how much electrical power your activities will require. Check with the facility's electrical engineer to determine if everything you want to rent can run at the same time in the areas where you wish to place them. The vendor should be prepared to bring a generator as needed.
7. Be aware of liability issues. Protect wooden gym floors and be careful with all water-based activities (dunk tank, water-powered races, etc.) to avoid slipping accidents.
8. Ask how vendor's employees will be dressed. Don't permit clothing with obscene or substance-related logos or slogans.
9. Confirm that the vendor will provide a minimum of one employee per piece of equipment and will run the activity during the rental period.
10. You may want to add to the vendor's standard contract a statement such as: "Vendor's employees under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will immediately be removed from the celebration and a financial adjustment will be made to the final bill."
11. If a DJ is broadcasting, find out who the sponsor will be. Please do NOT allow alcohol or tobacco companies to sponsor broadcasts as it sends a double message to the students and community.
12. Obey **ALL** fire marshal rules and insist upon vendors doing the same **regardless of whether a fire marshal actually checks your celebration**. If something does go wrong, this will lessen your chances of litigation as you will have taken steps to make the celebration safe. **ALL items should meet fire marshal standards**. Do NOT take the word of a vendor that props will meet fire regulations.

## WORKING WITH THE FIRE MARSHAL

It is important to remember that the Fire Marshal, like your committee, is looking out for the safety of all who are attending the celebration. Working with the fire marshal is like taking out an insurance policy. If something should go wrong and someone is hurt at the celebration, it will be difficult to prove negligence on the part of the celebration planners if all items have been checked and approved by the fire marshal. Be sure that no one makes changes after the fire marshal gives approval or the approval will be invalid.

The following information should be considered a guide. All guidelines are directly from the new *national* fire regulations. Check with your local fire department or fire marshal for further guidance.

**It is *STRONGLY* recommended that you follow these guidelines regardless of whether your area or facility requires an inspection by a fire marshal.**

### GUIDELINES FROM FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Requirements for All-Night Teen Celebrations

1. Plans must be submitted to the Fire Prevention Division at least 45 days in advance of the date of the celebration including:
  - \* Floor plan with emergency exit routes and all fire extinguishers and alarm pulls marked
  - \* Detailed decoration plans & refreshment areas
  - \* Complete contact information including that of chairperson and alternates
  - \* Date and time of event as well as the name and address of the event facility
  - \* Approximate number of attendees
  - \* Evacuation procedures
  - \* Procedure for accounting for all occupants in the event of an emergency
  - \* Procedure for reporting an emergency
  - \* Means of communication to summon help
  - \* Documentation certifying manufacturer treatment of decorative materials
2. NO Smoking indoors.
3. There shall be no open flame devices indoors. They are permitted outside if kept clear of combustible materials and located 25 feet from the building.
4. All decorations shall have a manufacturers label showing fire- or flame-retardancy. Save wrappings or containers of commercially purchased decorations for inspection to show they were manufactured with fire-retardant chemicals.
5. Christmas tree lights and other lighting decorations may be used in other decorative applications providing contact is not made with any flammable or combustible materials or any component of the exit-way system is obstructed.
6. Christmas tree lights and other lights shall be tagged with a recognized testing laboratory, (Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Factory Mutual (FM)). Lights must be in good repair; check for worn insulation, loose bulb sockets and broken plugs. Use only lighting sets that are listed by Underwriters Laboratory (UL). No more than 3 strands plugged together.
7. Extension cords shall only be approved on a location-to-location basis. Extension cords must be heavy duty, no longer than 25 feet, and may NOT be plugged together to make longer cords. Do not tape cords on walls. Do not run cords over or under doors or across floors.
8. Any type of fire suppression or detection system shall not be blocked or covered by decorations.
9. All exit doors must be unlocked & unobstructed at all times. Exit corridors shall be free of any obstructions. All exit signs must be lighted and visible.
10. A minimum 44" aisle width is required (i.e., Maintain 44" between tables with chairs pushed into tables).
11. A minimum of one adult per location shall be responsible for the life safety of all occupants while the celebration is in session. This adult(s) will be given assistance by the Fire Prevention Division on DO's and DON'Ts prior to the event.
12. IN ADDITION:
  - No smoke or fog machines allowed.
  - No dry ice allowed.
  - Adults in each location are REQUIRED to have a working flashlight.
  - Any luminaries must be at least 25' from building.
  - No black plastic may be used
  - Wall treatments cannot exceed 10% of the wall space and should be 3 feet from ceiling and floor.
  - Stairwells MUST remain open and undecorated.
  - No free-standing decorations within 3' of a door.
13. Cooking on site can only be done in a commercial kitchen, which by definition requires a commercially rated vent hood. Bar-b-ques may be used outdoors at least 15 feet away from the building.

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**THIS IS *NOT* A COMPLETE LIST OF ALL OF THE FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS. THEY ARE THE MOST COMMON VIOLATIONS ENCOUNTERED WITH PROM/GRAD CELEBRATIONS. IF THERE IS AN ISSUE THAT IS NOT ADDRESSED IN THESE REGULATIONS, *DO NOT ASSUME* THAT IT IS PERMISSIBLE; CONTACT THE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE.**

### **SOME ITEMS THAT SHOULD NEVER BE USED**

1. Tissue/crepe paper ANYTHING. It's highly flammable.
2. Gossamer, foam board/foamcore.
3. Oil-based paints on ANYTHING.
4. Non UL tested lights (be sure to leave tags on!)
5. Weapons of ANY kind—including fake ones and water pistols.
6. Any item that obstructs an EXIT sign.

### **FIRE RETARDANT PRODUCTS**

1. Many local ordinances **require** decorations to be flameproof. Check with the fire marshal to be sure all products meet county or city fire code requirements.
2. Buy items that are commercially manufactured with the fire retardant already in them. Save ALL labels for fire marshal to check.
3. **Do it yourself FIREPROOFING PRODUCTS** are no longer acceptable.

### **ROLLS OF PLASTIC**

Previous editions of this Planning Guide have recommended the use of black plastic for covering walls and lockers and for making railroad track, etc. **Plastic is no longer recommended for this purpose as it will not pass fire code tests.**

