

# Great American Smokeout Sample Activities

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## Sample Proclamation

The U.S. Surgeon General has said that smoking remains the single most preventable cause of premature death in our society.

Whereas, for years, millions of smokers have participated in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout, a day on which they give up cigarettes for 24 hours; in the hope they may stay quit for good; and whereas a significant number of those who gave up cigarettes for the day were able to give up the habit entirely; and whereas, this demonstration of success suggests that the Great American Smokeout has potential for improving health

I (**name of governor, mayor or other official**), (**governor, mayor or other official**) of (**name of state or locality**), do hereby proclaim the third Thursday in November (**list the actual date of the third Thursday in November**) as the day of the Great American Smokeout, and in so doing, encourage all tobacco users to demonstrate that they can quit for the day, and perhaps longer.

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Signature

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Date

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## School Promotions

Following are some other ideas for programs that can be conducted in schools in conjunction with GASO.

- Incorporate anti-tobacco messages in curriculum, such as smoking experiments in science, essays on smoking in English, smoking equations in math, and effects of smoking in health. For social studies, review cigarette ads to determine who tobacco companies target.
- Have students research and write stories for the school newspaper about the social and health consequences of smoking.
- Invite a local "Lost Chords" club, a club for people who have had their larynx removed because of cancer often caused by smoking. As the club members tell your students about the harmful effects of smoking, their raspy and mechanical voices show the effects.
- Hold a contest for the best stop-smoking creation (e.g., a poster, essay, song, debate, radio or TV commercial, home video, editorial, poetry, slogan, banner, cartoon, joke, comedy routine, or no-smoking pledge).
- Organize high school or junior high students to put on a show for elementary school students in your district. The older kids learn from writing and producing a show while the younger kids learn from people they look up to. It's a fun idea that gets everyone involved.
- Work with local radio or TV stations to sponsor a public service announcement (PSA) contest. Students write the script for the PSA and a local radio or TV station produces it. The winning entry could be broadcast on the news as part of GASO celebrations in your community.
- Encourage students to "adopt" their parents or other loved ones who smoke. Students can promise to provide moral support and keep a watchful eye on their charges who are trying to quit as part of GASO.
- Sponsor a GASO poster, slogan, essay, or other contest for children of military personnel. Ask them to devise the best way to help a parent stop smoking. Coordinate this effort through schools.

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## Business Promotions

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The workplace is a wonderful location for highly successful Great American Smokeout (GASO) promotions. Because adults spend the majority of their day at work, the office is an appropriate place to help smokers, chewers, and dippers quit. With new legislation and public support of no-smoking policies, GASO is also an appropriate day to initiate new no-smoking policies in the workplace.

To begin, the GASO coordinator should schedule a meeting with top management, department heads, and in-house medical personnel to develop ideas that are best suited to the work environment. Collaborating with a representative from the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, or other reputable organizations can add support and provide easy access to their materials, literature, posters, videos, and educational programs.

When planning these activities, consider all employees, including hourly, shift, and part-time workers. Remember to include union or labor relations staff in any GASO planning committees you organize.

### **Promotional ideas that have worked in the past include the following:**

- Send flyers asking for employees to participate in GASO and letting them know about the planned activities before GASO.
- Hold an informal sign-up breakfast for smokers and nonsmokers who have "adopted" a fellow employee. Hand out GASO materials and treat the participating employees to juice and muffins.
- Create a competition between departments or regional offices to collect the most "kept" pledges to quit smoking.
- Feature a "Cold Turkey" special on the company cafeteria menu and give cold turkey sandwiches to GASO quitters.
- Raffle a "cold turkey" for Thanksgiving to Smokeout participants or hold a company drawing.
- Remove cigarette vending machines from the property as part of a new smoke-free policy. Or at the least, display a GASO poster prominently on any cigarette vending machine.
- Ask nonsmokers to give up something to empathize with smokers. Design pledge cards for the nonsmokers so they can indicate what they will give up, such as coffee, chocolate, or soft drinks.
- Set up GASO stations where smokers can trade cigarettes or smokeless tobacco products for chewing gum, carrot sticks, or lollipops to help them "lick" the habit.
- Make GASO part of an employee health promotion or wellness program. Arrange for blood pressure screenings, fitness activities, and healthy diet counseling for smokers trying to quit and for nonsmokers as well.

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## College Promotions

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Many college-age students have smoked for years and want to quit. Others may be starting for the first time. For the college administrator who is interested in having a positive impact on the students' future, participation in GASO can do that by helping to save lives.

GASO is a great way for smokers to prove to themselves that they can quit for a day and therefore, probably for life. It is also the optimal time to reinforce prevention messages for students who may be contemplating to start smoking.

The campus coordinator can be a member of the college administration, teaching staff, or student body. The coordinator should work with the local American Cancer Society for training and materials for the best GASO possible. The coordinator should have time to plan events, recruit volunteers, and distribute promotional materials for GASO.

The key to success is to hold GASO in a highly visible, popular place where students cannot miss the activities. The college "quad," student union, or cafeteria entrance are ideal locations for GASO activities.

### **Following are some ideas that have proven effective in the past:**

- Ask the cafeteria to serve "cold turkey" lunches for those smokers who are trying to quit.
- Distribute GASO survival kits at the central location of GASO activities.

- Announce smoke-free campus policies with ceremonies and local media coverage to coincide with other GASO events.
- Suggest a competition among campus fraternities and sororities to help smokers quit.
- Recruit the college radio station to include continuous coverage of campus events for GASO.
- Ask the student government to proclaim GASO and to pass a resolution for a smoke-free learning environment.
- Work with college newspaper staff to cover GASO activities on campus.
- Ask a photographer from the college yearbook staff to attend GASO activities to ensure that GASO memories are saved for the students.
- Work with the education department to coordinate students who are majoring in education to visit local schools to student-teach children about the hazards of smoking.

## Military Promotions

It is important that all employees of the U.S. Department of Defense maintain healthy lifestyles, so GASO is a natural promotion that works well as an on-base activity.

### **Following are some guidelines and ideas for the base coordinator to follow:**

- Schedule a planning session with command supervisors, on-site medical personnel, and appropriate representatives who can help implement a base-wide campaign. If possible, include a local representative of the American Cancer Society to help coordinate activities.
- Set up GASO stations in recreation areas, clubs, dining facilities, and other central locations so quitters can trade their cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products for chewing gum, carrot sticks, popcorn, mineral water, sunflower seeds, lollipops, and other snacks.
- Work with the dining hall to have "cold turkey" sandwiches available for quitters during GASO.
- Promote physical fitness activities such as fun runs ("Cold Turkey Trots"), walks ("Walk Your Butts Off"), or dances to kick off GASO.
- Distribute posters and flyers about base GASO activities. Arrange for distribution of GASO payroll stuffers/flyers.
- Sponsor a competition among units. The unit with the highest percentage of smokers quitting could win a day off for all members.
- Include base newspapers, newsletters, and other media in your promotion plans. Use bulletin boards, marquees, public address systems, and regularly scheduled meetings to remind smokers of the approaching GASO activities.
- Display GASO posters wherever cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are sold.
- Place a large bin at the main entrance or in key buildings for personnel to dispose of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products. Arrange a funeral for the discarded tobacco.
- Turn your former smokers into film stars by making a video featuring quitters explaining why and how they quit. Ask them to make their stories humorous with tips that others can use, such as getting through their worst "nic fit." Show the video on the base's TV channel, at the dining hall, or at recreational activities the week of GASO.
- Sponsor a "Cold Turkey" raffle in which participants would be eligible to win frozen turkeys.
- Involve nonsmokers in a supportive Adopt-A-Smoker program. Ask nonsmokers to give up a favorite treat or activity for the day to empathize with smokers and "adopt" a friend to provide.
- Sponsor a GASO poster, slogan, essay, or other contest for children of military personnel. Ask them to devise the best way to help a parent stop smoking. Coordinate this effort through schools.