

Community Building: Classrooms



Not One More:
A Mission to Eliminate
Youth Suicide

Overview

Knowing that one has a constant support group and is accepted by others are incredibly important in increasing mental health and decreasing teen suicide. The activities in *Community Building: Classrooms* are designed to show each student that they are appreciated and cared for by both their classmates and their teacher. These activities are designed to build a community-based mindset of empathy, praise, and friendship in the classroom. This pamphlet includes several activities centered around self-reflection, while others focus on relationship building and strengthening. Through artistic expression, creative thinking, and positive reinforcement, students will learn how they and their classmates contribute to the classroom community.

Objectives

- Increase students' self-worth through teaching them that they have an important role in the classroom
- Increase students' abilities to recognize and acknowledge good traits about each other
- Foster a feeling of kinship among members of the class

Venue:

- Classroom Activities
- Around the School
- In the Community

Estimated Cost:

- Art supplies

Activities:

- Classroom Cities and Student Storefronts
- Talent Shows
- Campaigning for Classmates
- Love Bags

"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men."

- Herman Melville



Talent Shows

What Is It?

Talent Shows are a classic event in which students can express themselves and build each other up. Prior to having a class talent show, each student will think about and make a presentation showing off one of their talents. This activity is meant to build students' confidence and increase encouragement among peers.

Why It Is Effective!

Talent Shows provide students with an opportunity to express themselves and share what they enjoy with their class. Also, learning about what others like to do may spark curiosity within students, leading them to ask each other more about what they like to do in their free time. This has a high likelihood of leading to new friendships and strengthening existing ones. Furthermore, this activity forces each student to think of themselves as talented, which may change their perception of themselves if they have poor self-image. Finally, praise received from students and the teacher after someone's presentation of their talent helps nurture confidence and self-love.

Take Action

Teachers! If you decide to do a classroom talent show, make sure you inform your class of the following:

- When the talent show will be
- They need to prepare their presentation by the date of the talent show

You are also in charge of assuring that proper safety measures are taken during the talent show.





Classroom Cities and Student Storefronts

What Is It?

Classroom Cities and Student Storefronts is an activity in which students receive a piece of paper and art supplies with which to draw storefronts representing themselves. For example, if they like to dance, they'd draw a dance studio as one of their storefronts. Students can include as many or as few storefronts as they want - it just has to accurately represent them! Then, once the activity is completed, the storefronts are hung next to each other to create a "classroom city". When looking at the classroom city, each student can see how their storefronts contribute and are important to the operation of the city. This is the same way each student's personality is vital to the atmosphere of the classroom.

Why it's Effective!

Once Classroom Cities are completed, each student can visualize how their storefronts serve the cities. This directly correlates to how each student contributes to the classroom. This activity helps students see their worth and acknowledge positive traits that they may not have been able to recognize in themselves. Furthermore, this activity helps students notice that others are important to their lives. Ideally, this realization that someone has a trait that positively affects others increases compassion and encouragement among students.

Take Action

Acquire the paper and art supplies. Administer the activity, and explain the process of making storefronts to the students. Assure safety during this activity. Hang the storefronts on a wall to make the city.

Want Something Different?

"Student Storefronts" don't have to be made up completely of stores. Don't discourage students from drawing this such as houses, features of nature, or apartments. All of those things contribute to a high-functioning society, and if a student views something other than a store as an essential part of their personality, encourage them to draw it.

If there are enough funds and available space, each student can make their storefront using clay that can be placed together on a table to make a 3-d city.




Richard



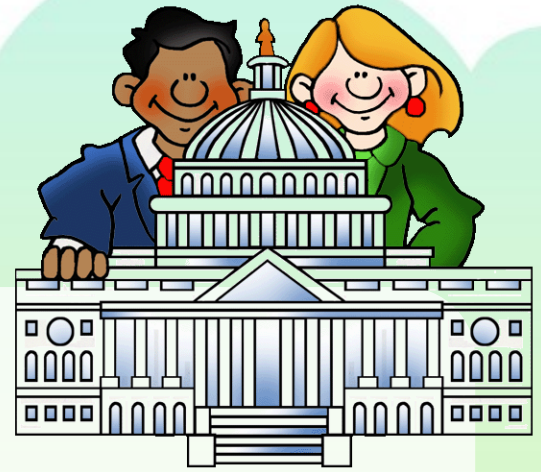
James



Elsie



Campaigning for Classmates



What Is It?

Campaigning for Classmates is an activity designed to help students acknowledge each other's strengths. During this activity, students are assigned a "Candidate" for whom they will be the "Campaign Manager". Every student is someone's "Candidate" and every student is a "Campaign Manager". Every "Campaign Manager" is in charge of making a campaign for their "Candidate" as if their "Candidate" were going to run for office. Some fun parts of making a campaign are to make a pin, a slogan, and a poster for your "Candidate". Every campaign manager should focus their campaign around their candidate's strongest attributes and interests. In order to find out more about their candidate, each campaign manager should interview their candidate and find out more about them. After the campaigns have been formed, each campaign manager presents their candidate's campaign to the class.

Why It Is Effective!

Since every campaign relies on the Campaign Manager getting to know their Candidate, conversation is started between classmates. This conversation could possibly take place between students that are unfamiliar with each other so as to encourage beginning new friendships. Furthermore, since each campaign is focused on the personalities of candidates, every member of the class is exposed to a part of their classmate that they may have overlooked. This activity shows that there is more to someone than may be perceived and encourage students to get to know each other better. This act of getting to know one another contributes to the overall theme of this pamphlet – community building. By recognizing that we are all complex, interesting people, students may want to know more about each other and begin asking their classmates about their interests and personalities. Finally, every student hears nice things said about them during their

Take Action

Acquire any materials (art supplies, posters, safety pins, paper) that may be needed for making campaign crafts. Decide upon a week to do the activity, and on that week, instruct and guide your class through the activity. Make sure each student has a campaign manager and a candidate. Assure safety during the activity.

Ideas for Campaigns!

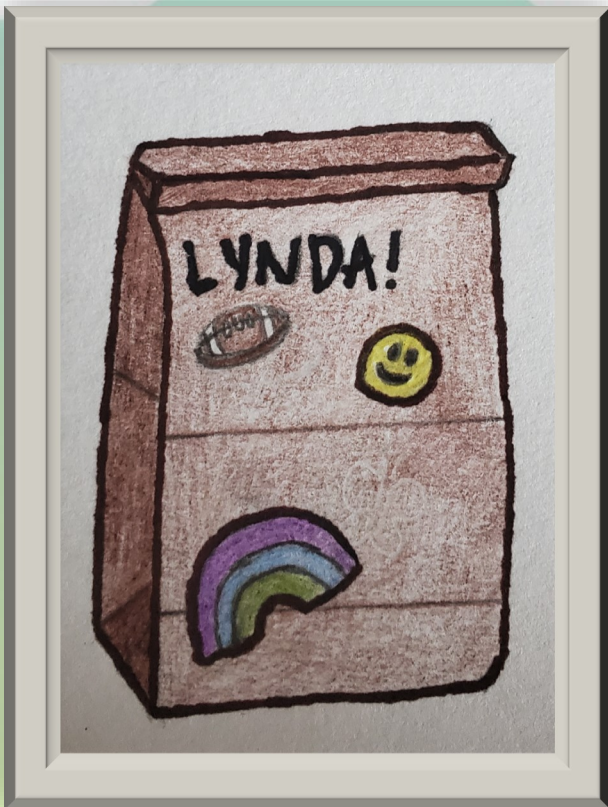
- Make a slogan
- Make a pin
- Make a poster
- Write a speech

Alternative Activities

If you have a small group, they can all make a campaign for one student, and continue that until the group has made a campaign for all students.

Note: There are multiple different ways to pair Candidates and Campaign Managers. The teacher could make it random, or they could pair students before they get to class.

Extra Steps: If your class wants to, they could hang their posters in the hallway or on the classroom walls to remind them of their campaigns.



Love Bags

What Is It?

Love Bags is an activity that can be set up on an that can be continued throughout the school year. During this activity, each student receives a paper bag that they can decorate however they'd like – they do need to write their name on the bag. The bags are then placed in an easily-accessible location and pieces of paper are placed near them. Throughout the following weeks (or for however long the teacher chooses), students write uplifting message to one another and place them in the recipient's bag.

Messages can be anything from thanking someone for their help to letting them know you're thinking about them. At the end of the few weeks, students can look in their bags and read all of their messages!

Why It Is Effective!

Love Bags provide students with positive messages from their peers. These bags provide an avenue for students to express their gratitude when, otherwise, it may have not been shown. Love Bags show students that their peers care about them and appreciate them. Knowing that one has a support group and is cared for is a large part in preventing suicidal ideation. Furthermore, messages included in Love Bags can help build relationships, as some students may be able to express their appreciation for their peers better in writing than they can through speaking.

Take Action

Are in charge of acquiring the materials for this activity (paper bags, art supplies, strips of paper).
Are in charge of explaining and directing the making of the bags. Should encourage student to write notes to one another if someone does something nice to them, or for other reasons (say, a teacher could encourage a student to write something to their peer just because they enjoy hanging out with them).

Alternate Activities

Modification: The teacher could write a note to every student so that none are disappointed when opening their Love Bags.

Modification: To ensure everyone receives a note, the students be assigned a peer that they have to write a note to. The other parts of this activity would stay the same (i.e. students can write however many notes to however many peers they want to over the course of the activity)

Extra Steps: More elaborate decorating supplies could be used when decorating the Love Bags. For example, the teacher could provide stickers or each student's picture could be on their bag.



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Illustrators:

- Emma H.
- Bailey P.

IMPORTANT

- THIS IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR THERAPY OR PROFESSIONAL HELP. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE LISTED TO PROVIDE EASY-TO-ACCESS RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED TO LESSON FEELINGS OF ANXIETY. TRAUMA SHOULD NOT BE PROCESSED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING. PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU ARE SUSPECTED OF HAVING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, PTSD, OR OTHER MENTAL ILLNESSES.
- To get a list of overall guidelines to follow when doing the activities in the pamphlets please reference the “Safety” page in the Implementation Packet.





Resources

First-Hand Experience with how Talent Shows Build Community!

<https://www.humorthatworks.com/how-to/how-to-host-a-work-talent-show/>

Reference for “Classroom Cities and Student Storefronts”: *104 Activities that Build Self-esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-discovery, and Coping Skills* by Alanna Jones

Activity Plan and Results for “Campaigning for Classmates”

[Campaigning for Classmates Results.docx](#)

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- Herman Melville