

# BEST QUOTES ON ACTIVITIES

It seems to be a routine function of the generations to disparage the young. I don't share this inclination, or at least I try to resist it.

One reason? Show choir.

Not just show choir. Soccer, too. And speech contest and cross-country. These are the agents of my personal observations of youth, the particular gifts of my three sons, extending to the passions of their acquaintances and friends—gymnastics, diving, football, marching band, robotics, science olympiad, water polo, volleyball and more. You cannot watch the determination, drive, sacrifice and joy inherent in such activities and not feel awe for the young men and women who embrace them.

—Jim Slusher

A simple cure to the heartbreak faced by many teenagers left off the cheerleading squad has been discovered by officials at Plainfield Middle School, Plainfield, Indiana. They let everyone be a cheerleader.

'The cheerleading uniform companies love us,' said principal Jerry Goldsberry, whose school has 73 cheerleaders this year. 'I don't know any other schools that do this. There may be some in the nation, but I don't know of any in Indiana.'

The squad is made up of seventh and eighth grade girls, but Goldsberry said boys would be welcome to try out, too.

The school, with 800 students in grades six through eight, also applies its wide-open membership policy to the band, the choir and most teams sports. Last year Goldsberry said every meet was 'like the start of the Boston Marathon.'

He said the rule allowing everyone who tries to make the squad was adopted after an educational consultant stressed the importance of extracurricular activities. 'Our philosophy is kids need to be involved in as many activities at school as they possibly can,' Goldsberry said. 'It's generating school spirit. If they're not here at school with their friends, they'd be at home in front of the TV or, in some cases, worse.'

—*Northern Illinois Gas  
Educators  
Newsletter*

The public is screaming at us to produce people who know how to learn and study, who have the characteristics that business and industry require. Consider any list of what industry wants besides attendance records and report card averages: people skills, ability to accept responsibility and follow directions, good presentation of self and personal ideas. These are marketable skills, skills that are cultivated through student activities participation.

— Earl Reum

Any program that attracts 10 million participants, nearly 50 percent of the student body, and only requires a school board subsidy of less than one percent of the total school budget, is truly one of the last, great educational bargains.

—Terrell H. Bell

The other side of academics, if properly balanced, are school activities. Given the great diversity of the human personality, the random distribution of talent, and the wide range of individual intelligence, it is simply common sense to create an environment that is tailored and fine-tuned so that all God-given talent and intelligence is nourished in schools.

Many schools use activities to stimulate, nurture and strengthen pursuits. In addition to the values of the activities themselves, their potential to motivate and reward academic achievement must not be overlooked.

—Terrell H. Bell

‘Student activities’ have been called by many names over the years, and while the definition of ‘curriculum’ historically has caused much debate, the appropriate title recognizing student activities lacks universal acceptance. The term, ‘extra-curricular activities,’ an old term, gives the impression that they are outside the curriculum, but...student activities are recognized as a major part of the total school program.

The ‘Third Curriculum’— first termed by Robert W. Frederick — seems to be the best title, as it infers two additional curricula. The first is the coursework required to earn a high school diploma. The second curriculum allows for school choice, exploration, and specialization that include the electives that our students study to prepare for post-secondary study or work. Student activities represent a wide variety of school sponsored teams, clubs, and organizations. Research reveals that it is in these activities that students learn most of the carryover skills for adult life. While participating in student activities, our young adults learn critical lessons in leadership, followership, character, communications, teamwork, decision-making, self-worth, and individual potential. It is this level of learning that is called the Third Curriculum.

—Dale D. Hawley

Goal-directed activities develop skills in young people, and they may foster positive character traits. Both individual and group activities can teach students the importance of vigilance, hard work, attention to detail, practice, patience, and persistence in the face of setbacks. Group activities encourage cooperation and teamwork, personal sacrifice for group goals, and empathy— qualities that benefit young people in their studies, their jobs, and their personal lives, as well as help them become responsible and successful adults.

—Nicholas Zill, Christine  
Winqvist Nord,  
and Laura Spencer  
Loomis

One middle level principal assured parents that all students, both girls and boys, would have an opportunity to participate on the cheerleading team. ‘We have 10 cheerleading teams,’ she said. ‘If more students want to join, then we will organize additional teams.’ The school offered a similar commitment to students who wanted to participate in athletic teams.

In another middle school, the administration wanted to give all students an opportunity to participate in a play. Everyone who wanted to be in the play had a respectable role to fill. No one was ‘cut’ or made to feel they were not good enough to participate. Some had speaking roles while others sang with a group. A stutterer who did not feel comfortable speaking’ a solo part was given the chance to sing with the group. In fact, the students showed so much interest that the teachers decided to produce 5 one-act plays rather than one longer play so all students could be involved.

—M. Lee Manning

Educational decision-makers must look at the consequences of denying students the right to participate in order to get them to ‘work harder in the classroom.’ These kinds of exclusionary policies may well damage overall achievement and work against those students who could benefit most directly from involvement. Instead of cutting these programs when faced with budget squeezes, school districts might find that these activity programs are worth their weight in gold because they help students stay in, and succeeded at, school.

—John H. Holloway

Whoever calls student activities extra-curricular did us a grave disservice. They should instead be considered 'essential curriculum.' It's community recognition and identity, it's school pride, it's the life lessons learned, it's the thrill of success and the agony of defeat—it's school activities. Try in a thoughtful moment to picture a contemporary junior or senior high school with no game Friday night, no after school practices, no cheerleaders, no band, no choir, no orchestra, no newspaper, no play, no pep assemblies and you've described an organization that will be a disappointment to everyone and a failure for our children.

--David R. Landsverk

My heart says that activities should be available to every student all the time. My experience is to require specific grade point averages for athletics in those programs that require a considerable amount of student time and focus.

We are working with a very special kind of human being who may see activities as the only relevant part of education. It would be terrible to deny that person the opportunity to participate. Every school has specific expectations for the co-curricular program. When our behavior reflects that philosophy, students see this as integrity in education. We look good when we do what is appropriate for our students in our setting. I still love the idea that every student has the opportunity to belong, to participate in an activity that has meaning for that individual — without restrictions of grade point averages.

— Earl Reum

A seventh grade girl auditioned for a play, remaining after school and faithfully participating in the tryouts. Nearly 100 students auditioned for 11 parts, but there were only 4 parts for girls. The odds were not in the girl's favor because the school limited gender equity participation in the play.

Being denied the opportunity to participate in an academic or co-curricular activity can result in students feeling unwanted or rejected. They feel overlooked, left out, or different. These students can become alienated and avoid being around students who are involved in educational programs and co-curricular activities. Feeling different or unwanted, students might choose to become loners. They might experience feelings of denial and rejection and begin to think equal opportunities apply only to selected students. It is simpler to withdraw socially than to face the daily reminders that they are unwanted or denied an opportunity to participate in or out of class. Other consequences can include lower self-esteem, fewer chances to make new friends, and fewer opportunities for students to learn individual strengths and interests.

—M. Lee Manning

I've never heard anyone look back years later at the time they spent in high school and wish they had been less involved (in activities). One of the biggest regrets I have heard from many people is that they didn't get more involved.

I think for most people, you look back 20 or 30 years later at high school, it's the activities they were involved in that are the memories. Many people have a lot of specific fond memories of their involvement, but I don't think too many people have those same type of memories from just going to school.

—Kathy Robbins,  
Superintendent

A visitor to Bellwood Elementary School might wonder why so many students are still in attendance long after the K–8 building dismissed for the day. On one end of the playground, two teams play soccer while another group practices hitting golf balls— both under the watchful eye of adults. In a grassy area adjacent to the playground, several students sit together and talk while a few others read paperback novels. Inside the school building, groups of students and teachers congregate in different classrooms, some focusing on homework, some on computer lessons, and some on the drama production.

None of the students has to stay after school at Bellwood. They choose to attend both because the community has provided an appealing alternative to the unsupervised time between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. 'It's a place for them to socialize with their peers outside of the home,' said Jason Harper, who directs Bellwood's after-school program. 'Probably the most important thing we do is allow them time to socialize and learn. Hopefully, we develop some character so they can accept people for who they are and not ridicule them.'

—Dana Pride

Student activity involvement contributes to leadership skills and the ability to plan, manage, organize, implement, and evaluate. Students also learn the importance of accountability, commitment, dependability, reliability and trustworthiness— all of which are elements of the fourth R: responsibility.

—Kay Baker, June  
Jacoby, and Phil  
Gugliuzza

Students who participate in co-curricular activities not only do better academically than students who do not but also develop other facets of their personalities in the process. Self-esteem, self-confidence, social cooperation, and leadership skills are just a few of the cognitive factors that are affected. Co-curricular activities allow students to blend aspects of their academic learning into personal actions.

—Bradford Allison

Co-curricular activities may be one of the reasons many students stay in school or find personal meaning for their middle level or high school years. Students who are involved in co-curricular activities are able to extend and enrich previously learned academic skills through competitions and real-world simulations. In the co-curricular setting, they may also develop and practice artistic, musical, and psychomotor talents; leadership skills; and future career and occupational skills.

—Patricia A. Haensly,  
Ann E. Lupkowski  
and Elaine P.  
Edlind

Three important studies support the idea that being in high school activities is helpful after high school.

- The American College Testing Service compared the value of four factors in predicting ‘success’ after high school. Based upon happiness and self-satisfaction of those interviewed, it was discovered that grades in high school, grades in college, and high ACT scores were not useful as predictors of success. The one item that proved to be a significant predictor of success and life was achievement in school activities.
- The College Entrance Examination Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Test was examined in much the same way. It was found the best predictor of later successes was a persons independence, self sustained ventures.

Teens who are active in school activities, had hobbies, or held jobs were found to be most likely to succeed at their chosen professions and to make creative contributions to their community.

- A four-year study was conducted by Educational Testing Service and the College Board. Beginning...with 4,184 college freshman and following up on 3,676 who graduated..., it was again concluded that participation in activities is a much better indicator of overall college performance than any other yardstick.

Pre-admission interviews and the educational level of students’ parents were also looked at, but discovered to be less accurate predictors than involvement in activities.

—*National Association of  
Secondary School  
Principals*

You must offer a variety of activities that appeal to different segments of the school population.

Creative activities include simple events like dress-up days, color days, or mismatch days, which allow a majority of students to participate.

Social activities at the middle level must include more than mixers, dances or roller skating parties. Not every adolescent feels comfortable in that kind of pressured social activity—especially middle level students who have not found their place within a particular group.

Less pressured ways to encourage social participation is to promote attendance at musical or athletic events that their classmates and friends are involved in.

Athletic activities are no longer limited to organized football, basketball, baseball, and soccer teams. Many parents and educators are acutely aware that the desire to participate is greater than the number of slots on the teams. As a result, schools and parent groups have organized intramurals to develop students' skills and allow a greater number of students to participate. Many communities have teams whose only requirement is that the students sign up and attend practices.

The number of academic activities available at the middle school level has exploded during the past two decades. Young people now participate in science fairs, English festivals, geography bees, math competitions, etc. In fact, there is probably a co-curricular activity or contest that corresponds to every academic subject offered in the school.

While competitive activities aren't for everyone, they can foster personal growth. And, competition exists outside the athletic arena. Students also compete in the world of music, art, and dance.

Individual activities include a number of clubs or organizations that tend to be popular with middle level students. Clubs are an important part of the co-curricular program and can be a source of interest and involvement for all students.

Cooperative activities include athletic teams or academic teams in which students must work together as a team to achieve a goal.

—Itala Landers

Just as student activities can help a young person reach his or her potential, they can also improve a school's image. There's a wealth of public relations potential here, and much of the work can be accomplished by the students themselves. Student leaders are the most effective people to speak to the school board, city council, or women's club about their activities

They not only can build a better feeling about the school, they also can learn from the experience. Everyone benefits when we consider student activities an integral part of our public relations program.

—Lou Armistead

I perceive extra curricular activities as a vital component of that which we label the 'total educational experience.' They teach teamwork, cooperation, and dedication — qualities highly sought by industry.

They also provide opportunities for positive experiences for those students who may not excel in the classroom. For others, who might not now be interested in education, they are a vehicle for holding in school until that interest develops. Coaches and sponsors make excellent counselors and take the time to gently help our youth mature.

Extracurriculars are useful as 'springboards' to college acceptance, scholarships, and promising careers. They have a vital place in our schools.

My experience has shown that eliminating or reducing extracurricular activities results in increased absenteeism, higher dropout rates, and more discipline problems. Extracurricular programs are vital to our students.

Care must be taken to promote extracurricular activities as a means to an end. They are not an end in and of themselves. It becomes a question of priorities.

—James H. VanSciver

It is imperative that we not forget our history in secondary schools, that one of the marks is that every student can be involved. The place to be involved is in the student activities program, athletics, music, speech, vocational education, publications, student council, Honor Society. It is something to do, something to hope for, and something to love.

Where activities are ignored or not offered, we see incredible problems within the school. Far too many schools have decided that the reading-writing-arithmetic is our mission and forget what is truly important about our schools, our students, and our future.

Many budget-minded saviors of schools believe that the co-curricular program is 'extra,' unneeded. But when co-curricular programs are cut, students suffer, they drop out, and schools become less effective.

— Earl Reum

Published surveys support the belief that school activities are beneficial after school as well. Young people who are active in school activities were found to be most likely to succeed in a chosen career and make more meaningful contributions to their respective communities.

In athletics and other school activities, students are subjected to the discipline, competition, and cooperation that strengthen the values and ideals of our society. The pride and sense of belonging and of spirit that come from active involvement in the school's activities also help youngsters feel good about themselves.

— Ronald D. Green



The concept of ‘extracurricular’ serves no useful purpose. Anything extra occupies the position peripheral to the school’s main mission. We propose to scrap this outmoded term and instead call these activities ‘co-curricular,’ emphasizing that they are integral to the educational program. The very act of re-examining school activities and designating those that are bona fide as co-curricular implies that such pursuits—whether or not they carry academic credit — have legitimate links to regular courses and to the purposes of the high school. A high school properly provides for social and personal needs, as well as for those that are strictly academic. Co-curricular pursuits, after all, can undergird the goal of teaching students to be responsible and fulfilled human beings, providing them with opportunities that develop character, critical thinking, sociability, and specific skills.

For these reasons, educators should evaluate co-curricular activities—including sports, the single largest area of participation—in terms of the support they provide for the school’s broader objectives. It is not unreasonable, in order to justify school sponsored activities, to hold professional educators responsible for making sure that connections to learning exist. An athletic coach who endorses a win-at-any-cost philosophy, for instance, has no business overseeing a co-curricular activity in a high school. Essentially, all activities carried out under the aegis of a high school should be viewed in terms of their potential contribution to the school’s over all goals for young people. This imperative applies to athletics and clubs as much as it does to student government and publications. A high school should seek to engage as many students as possible in co-curricular activities, following a philosophy that students will miss a valuable part of their education if they do not participate. The co-curricular program, therefore, should offer sufficient variety to appeal to a wide range of student interests.

Those connected with the activities, both students and their adult sponsors, must understand how each activity fulfills the larger purposes of the high school. Evidence from a U.S. Department of Education study shows that participants in co-curricular activities have more consistent attendance, better academic achievement, and higher aspirations than non-participants. In addition, another study shows that students who devote 5-19 hours a week to co-curricular pursuits are less likely to use drugs or drop out of school, though athletes were more apt than non-athletes to engage in binge drinking. Co-curricular programs should generally yield to academic courses, however, when conflicts of time arise. We hope that schools will reduce the potential for such conflicts by creating flexible schedules.

—*National Association of  
Secondary School  
Principals*

- Fact: Students who are involved in co-curricular activities while in the middle grades generally have higher achievement and improved attendance.
- Fact: Middle level students who are involved in co-curricular activities are less likely to experiment with drugs or participate in illicit behaviors.
- Fact: Student activities provide opportunities for students to apply the middle level curriculum to life situations.
- Fact: Student activities promote achievements, citizenship, and service to the community.
- Fact: Student activities open avenues for involvement to the disenfranchised student.
- Fact: Student activities develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and social cooperation.
- Fact: Student activities develop personal traits that enhance positive personal growth.
- Fact: Students who participate in school activities and the middle grades are likely to continue to be active in high school, college, and beyond.
- Fact: Student activities foster the development of skills such as problem-solving, that directly enhance student performance in academic settings.
- Fact: Student activities can give middle level students the opportunity to address important issues and seek solutions to subject matter not commonly found in traditional classroom studies that may include racial and ethnic tolerance, violence, and others.
- Fact: Student activities encourage all students to participate.
- Fact: Student activities introduce middle level students to and emphasize the values of academic honesty, courtesy, respect, and fair play.
- Fact: Student activities celebrate middle level students' achievements and efforts.
- Fact: Student activities provide opportunities for middle level students to experience the successes in the classroom that may have thus far eluded them.
- Fact: Students are actively involved in the planning and governing of student activities programs.

—*The National  
Association of  
Secondary School  
Principals*

Being involved in something at school makes the student feel like they belong. It builds confidence because they feel like they are making a contribution. It helps to teach students time management and better organizational skills. There's also never a better time to try something than in high school. It's a great time to figure out who you are and what you love.

—Kathy Robbins,  
Superintendent

School programs offer, first and foremost, safe and caring environments for children. But they also can be places where children learn positive social skills through group interaction, contribute to the community through service projects, receive homework and remedial assistance, sharpen technology skills, develop a lifelong interest in reading, learn to appreciate diversity, and find supportive adult role models. Well-designed, well-run programs can make a significant difference for children, but educators and child care professionals cannot create or sustain such programs without the commitment and support of their communities.

—*National Association of  
Elementary School  
Principals*

The accumulation of research findings... Makes an extremely compelling case that many young people derive great benefit from after-school programs.

Findings identified behaviors indicating: greater engagement and learning; improved behavior in school; increased competence and sense of oneself as a learner; better work habits; fewer absences from school; higher educational aspirations and improved attitudes toward school... [And] better use of time; higher academic performance; improved homework completion and quality; higher grades on achievement tests, and reductions in grade retention.

—Beth M. Miller

In my mind, co-curricular activities are a must for any school. Not only do they represent a vital part of our community and its culture, but they also help expand and enhance a school's otherwise somewhat narrow ways on achievement.

Obviously, not everyone is going to be an athlete or an academic star. However, the need to achieve and be recognized does affect everyone. Co-curricular activities therefore, provide another way for students to be active, excel and feel they are making a contribution to the school.

Personally, this is why I have become so involved in co-curricular activities, which in my case is music. Band and choir have oftentimes been my way of saying, 'Hey, I'm here, I am working; and I'm doing a good job of it.'

—Ken Reinhout, Student

Coaching and teaching young people has brought me a great deal of pleasure, but the real rewards of extracurriculars are the values they reinforce in young people. Cooperation to attain common goals, pride in their school and themselves as well as an increased sense of responsibility and self-discipline are the rewards for the participants. Thanks to extracurriculars, many students do better in school and are better prepared for the future.

— Pat Mullen

For students who hope to move productively in life, the courage to put one's efforts before the public and take one's lumps is an aspect of education that activity participation delivers in its purest form. Boys and girls today can seldom find experiences that put their talent and their egos on the line or which exhibit their strengths and weaknesses in the way the participants in activities are compelled to do. The fans cheer or boo; the relatives and friends support or turn away; the coach reinforces or criticizes; the news media either ignores, praises or carps.

Inevitably there will come moments in life, far from the arenas of activity competition, where the willingness to put oneself on the line and take the ego consequences will make a major personal and social difference. This is not a reference to the romantic notion of love and loyalty or of friendships born on the fields of competition that last a lifetime. Friendships are made in all forms of social endeavor. Nor is it learning to like your colleagues, rather it is just the opposite— learning to work to achieve a common objective with those whom you don't necessarily like very well. That is education for life. The classrooms can attempt to provide this experience, but activity participation delivers it in its purest form.

— Orval J. Bies

- Studies conclusively indicate that participation in activities is a primary indicator of success in later life.
- An important predictor of creativity in mature life was a person's performance during youth, especially hobbies, interests, jobs and extracurricular activities.
- Participants in high school activities usually attain superior grades than nonparticipants and better grades than when they did not participate.
- Participants have better retention records in that a full 94 percent of high school dropouts do not participate in activities programs.
- Activities participants have far better daily attendance records and are involved in far less disciplinary problems than their nonparticipating counterparts.

—Terrell H. Bell

Student activities do more than serve as a social outlet for students. Improved self-esteem is one of the major benefits reaped from involvement.

Activities help students to feel better about themselves because they use personal skills (organization, leadership, communication) to make a project work. If the project is a success, the student is a success as well. With enough personal successes, a student is less likely to fall prey to failure and depression.

Even if a student is a participant and not a planner of an activity, benefits are still realized. By being involved, students feel they belong—their presence makes a difference. For many students who come from broken, displaced homes, school may be the only place they can get a feeling of belonging and permanence.

—Phyllis Redus

The intellect must not be kept at consistent tension, but diverted by pastimes.... The mind must have relaxation, and will rise stronger and keener after recreation.

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Activities: The Other Best Medicine

—Kimberly Grandal

Develop interest in life as you see it; in people, things, literature, music—the world is so rich, simply throbbing with rich treasures, beautiful souls and interesting people. Forget yourself.

--Henry Miller

My kids wouldn't dare say they were bored to me. I would kill them! How dare you! You have the gift of life. You've got to get out there and eat it!

--Meryl Streep

A person with a hundred interests is twice as alive as one with only fifty and four times as alive as a person with twenty-five.

--Norman Vincent Peale

Leisure time may be as deadly as the most virulent disease unless the time is profitably employed. Anyone who is content to sit around hour after hour and twiddle his thumbs is not only losing life but is losing every chance for becoming successful and happy.

--Unknown

Joining a club is like the home run hitter taking his stance; after that, there has to be a swing and a follow-through.

--Unknown

Life itself can't give you joy,  
Unless you really will it;  
Life just gives you time and space—  
It's up to you to fill it.

--*Optimist*

To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization.

--Arnold J. Toynbee

Enjoyment is not a goal, it is a feeling that accompanies important ongoing activity.

--Paul Goodman

No, you never get any fun  
Out of the things you haven't done.

--Ogden Nash

Interest and proficiency in almost any one activity...breed interest in many more.  
Once someone discovers the delight of mastering one skill, however slightly, he is  
likely to try out not just one more, but a whole ensemble.

--Margaret Mead

Dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is  
no mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself.

--Havelock Ellis

Dance is the only art of which we ourselves are the stuff of which it is made.

--Ted Shawn

The quality of a life is determined by its activities.

--Aristotle

The majority prove their worth by keeping busy. A busy life is the nearest thing to a  
purposeful life.

--Eric Hoffer

Our nature consists in motion; complete rest is death.

--Pascal

Is not activity good for both body and soul, and inactivity bad for them?

--Plato

Play so that you may be serious.

--Anacharsis

It is a happy talent to know how to play.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our minds need relaxation, and give way  
Unless we mix with work a little play.

--Moliere

To the art of working well a civilized race would add the art of playing well.

--George Santayana

If a man insisted always on being serious, and never allowed himself a bit of fun  
and relaxation, he would go mad or become unstable without knowing it.

--Herodotus

It's what you do when you have nothing to do that reveals what you are.

--Unknown

I wouldn't want to belong to any club that would accept me as a member.

--Groucho Marx

If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.

--Edward Bellamy

When I rest I rust.

--German Proverb

People who cannot find time for recreation are obliged sooner or later to find time  
for illness.

--John Wanamaker

Those who decide to use leisure as a means of mental development, who love good  
music, good books, good pictures, good plays, good company, good conversation—  
what are they? They are the happiest people in the world.

--William Lyon Phelps

I am never bored anywhere; being bored is an insult to oneself.

--Jules Renard

Recreation is intended to the mind as whetting is to the scythe, to sharpen the edge of it, which otherwise would grow dull and blunt. He, therefore, that spends his whole time in recreation is ever whetting, never mowing; his grass may grow and his steed starve. As, contrarily, he that always toils and never recreates, is ever mowing, never whetting; laboring much to little purpose; as good no scythe as no edge.

--Bishop Hall

Diversions are the most properly applied to ease and relieve those who are too much employed. Those that are idle have no need of them, and yet they, above all others, give themselves up to them. To unbend our thoughts, when they are too much stretched by our cares, is not more natural than it is necessary; but to turn our whole life into a holiday, is not only ridiculous, but destroyeth pleasure instead of promoting it.

--Saville

Recreation is not being idle; it is easing the wearied part by change of occupation.

--Unknown

He that will make a good use of any part of his life must allow a large part of it to recreation.

—John Locke

The more you do, the more you are.

--Angie Papadakis

The best intelligence test is what we do with our leisure.

--Laurence J. Peter

Science may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all—the apathy of human beings.

--Helen Keller

You will soon break the bow if you keep it always stretched.

--Phaedrus

Always leave enough time in your life to do something that makes you happy, satisfied, even joyous. That has more effect on economic well-being than any other single factor.

--Paul Hawken



The curious thing about fishing is you never want to go home. If you catch something, you can't stop. If you don't catch anything, you hate to leave in case something, might bite.

--Gladys Taber

There is a very fine line between 'hobby' and 'mental illness.'

--Dave Barry

I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.

--Jack London

Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright.

-- Benjamin Franklin

Enjoyment is not a goal; it is a feeling that accompanies important ongoing activity.

--Paul Goodman

The time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time.

--Bertrand Russell

The quality of life is determined by its activities.

--Aristotle

I wanna make a jigsaw puzzle that's 40,000 pieces. And when you finish it, it says 'go outside.'

--Demetri Martin

Only the boring are bored.

--Tommy Lee Jones

If a man insisted always on being serious, and never allowed himself a bit of fun and relaxation, he would go mad or become unstable without knowing it.

--Herodotus

The soul is dyed with the color of its leisure thoughts.

--Dean Inge

If you are losing your leisure, look out. You are losing your soul.

—Logan Pearsall Smith

The amount of stress on a student is ridiculous. Students feel the constant need at our school of having to keep up with all the achievements. We'll do just fine, even though we got a B-minus on that chem test. And no, I won't join the debate team for you. We love our moms and we love our dads, but calm down.

—Martha Cabot, High  
School Sophomore

But once you become active in something, something happens to you. You get excited and suddenly you realize you count.

—Studs Terkel

The opposite of play isn't work. The opposite of play is depression.

—Stuart Brown

It is in his pleasure that a man really lives; it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self.

—Agnes Repplier

In all our efforts to provide 'advantages' we have actually produced the busiest, most competitive, highly pressured, and over-organized generation of youngsters in our history—and possibly the unhappiest.

--Eda J. LeShan

A kid needs time to lie on his back, opportunity to find out whether he breathes differently when he's thinking about it than when he's just breathing and to wonder who she'd be if her parents hadn't gotten together. A kid needs enough downtime to be bored, yes—bored enough to stare at the sky and study the imperfections in his own eyeball. That's what makes for a childhood worth remembering for the whole of one's life.

--Robert Paul Smith

We seem to have returned to the 18th century notion that play for its own sake is a waste of time, that children can be allowed to pursue their natural inclinations only if those can be channeled into activities that will prepare them to be orderly and productive...adults.

--Christina Schwarz

Whether it's for a fraternity, sports team, club, or some other selective group, guys put up with ceremonial degradation in order to be accepted, liked, and aligned with the in crowd.

--Scott Smith

Personally, I rather look forward to a computer program winning the world chess championship. Humanity needs a lesson in humility.

—Richard Dawkins

Nine-tenths of the miseries and vices of mankind proceed from idleness.

--Thomas Carlyle

The real source of almost all our crimes, if the trouble is taken to trace them to a common origin, will be found to be in idleness.

--Walter Gaston  
Shotwell

Idleness and lack of occupation tend - nay are dragged - towards evil.

—Hippocrates

You will never 'find time' for anything..if you want time, you must make it.

--Charles Buxton

Restfulness is a quality for cattle; the virtues are all active, life is alert.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

Iron rusts from disuse; water loses its purity from stagnation and in cold weather becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigors of the mind.

-- Leonardo da Vinci

Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.

--Thomas Jefferson

Be sure in your daily planner to write down the word 'play.' Do something for you that will make you smile and laugh because that day will never come again.

--Juli Hutson

Never be entirely idle; but either be reading, or writing, or praying or meditating or endeavoring something for the public good.

--Thomas a Kempis

What we enjoy most is activity that is pleasant in itself and also hopeful for the future, as building a garage for one's car, preparing a garden, assorting notes for a book. There is a glamour on such things. What ends in the moment, like savory food, or games, or even beauty or passion, seems, when the mind rests upon it, to baulk our human nature a little. We need to live for something to discipline and enhance the present by a larger aim.

--Charles Horton Cooley

In our play we reveal what kind of people we are.

--Ovid

Idleness is the parent of psychology.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

I think that the word *bored* does not get the attention it deserves. We speak of all sorts of terrible things that happen to people, but we rarely speak about one of the most terrible things of all: that is, being bored, being bored alone and, worse than that, being bored together.

—Erich Fromm

Activities sometimes get shortchanged in favor of academic achievement. But schools are supposed to offer learning beyond academics.

—Steve Holmes

Fun and engaging electives and clubs can help boost attendance.

—David Baker

With good curriculum alignment, teachers have more time to focus a lesson, make the content more engaging, and tie it to assessments, so that students are more likely to pass the tests. If alignment is working, then students are more successful academically and less likely to be discouraged and drop out. Efforts to keep students engaged are not limited to the classroom. Motivating students through extracurricular activities can help them see school as a positive social experience. Encourage all students, especially beginning in middle school, to get involved in at least one extracurricular activity.

—Rick Allen

It would appear that students who participated in extracurricular activities were absent less than those who did not.

—Richard A. Dempsey  
and Joseph F.  
Levanto

By doing nothing, men learn to do evil.

—Columella

Play is the highest form of research.

—Albert Einstein

I am a great friend of public amusements, they keep people from vice.

—Samuel Johnson

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

--James Howell

Pesky parents are often effective, especially in public schools, at securing better textbooks, new playgrounds, and all the ‘extras’ that make an educational community come to life, like art, music, theater, and after-school clubs. This kind of parental engagement may not directly affect test scores, but it can make school a more positive place for all kids, regardless of what their parents do or don’t do at home. Getting involved in your children’s schools is not just a way to give them a leg up—it could also be good citizenship.

--Dana Goldstein

A K-12 student organization with 222,000 members, the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) enhances family and consumer sciences education through its co-curricular units of study and extracurricular activities, providing opportunities for service learning at its best....Students who examine the needs of senior citizens in class, for example, can participate in an FCCLA activity at a senior citizen center—reading aloud, leading exercises, or teaching a workshop on avoiding financial scams. Students of child development can apply their knowledge in FCCLA activities at a preschool or kindergarten—teaching about safety or healthy snacks, for example. At FCCLA conferences, organized by student leaders, participants think on their feet in creative competitions that include cooking in teams and presenting strategies to solve community problems.

—Sally Lindfors

When a boy is eleven years old you had better find something to engage his interest. I offer it as a theorem that a boy that age is either doing something or breaking something.

--Jerrold R. Zacharias

No one drops out of something that is rational, enjoyable and through which they grow, progress, and gain respect.

--Ralph E. Robinson

Every child should have time for arts, music, sports, drama, robotics, school newspapers and the like, not to mention recess and play.

—Chris Gabrieli

I think it's a real shame so many schools have taken out the hands-on classes. Art, music, auto mechanics, cooking, sewing, these are all things that can turn into jobs. You know, wood shop, steel shop, welding. These are all things that can turn into great careers, get kids interested. How can you get interested in these careers if you don't try them on a little bit?

Things they can do with other students. Other things for our word thinkers: journalism clubs, drama clubs.

—Temple Grandin

People who use time wisely spend it on activities that advance their overall purpose in life.

—John C. Maxwell

Many activities and team play participation will give you a training that will prove invaluable later on in life.

—Walter Annenberg

I was in the Boy Scouts for about four years until my troop disbanded. It is really one of the best activities youths can get involved in and nearly every scout I have known has been a class act due to the discipline the Scouts have instilled in them.

—Ted Stevens

When not deeply engaged in creative activities, or numbed out by the TV, I felt empty. My heart hurt. I often felt hollow or as if I were some sort of wispy ghost, barely existing.

—Judith Wright

You know, back in acting school they always teach you, ‘Make bold choices and look for activities that are interesting.’

—Mickey Rourke

When I was a teenager, I began to settle into school because I’d discovered the extracurricular activities that interested me: music and theater.

—Morgan Freeman

Girls are more academically powerful. They make the grades, they run the student activities, they are the valedictorians.

—Christina Hoff  
Sommers

Parents, first and foremost, it is important to... understand and recognise the activities your child is naturally gravitating towards. It’s important also to ensure that your child likes what he or she is doing. I believe in exposing children to as many hobbies and extracurricular activities as possible.

—Viswanathan Anand

People are often quite surprised by the sport and leisure activities practised by the blind. For example, tandem cycling is very popular.

—Andrea Bocelli

I do all these various activities like painting and writing, comedy and films probably because not that I’m good at everything but because I’m not good at any of these things.

—Takeshi Kitano

Strengths are not activities you’re good at, they’re activities that strengthen you. A strength is an activity that before you’re doing it you look forward to doing it; while you’re doing it, time goes by quickly and you can concentrate; after you’ve done it, it seems to fulfill a need of yours.

—Marcus Buckingham

My parents believed in exposing each of their children to an abundance of varied activities in the hope they would find something they loved. They each had found a passion - Dad with his music and Mom with her horses - so it was natural for them to encourage experimentation.

—Dorothy Hamill

I make most of my friends through my extracurricular activities.

—Kiernan Shipka

Do activities you're passionate about - which make your heart and soul feel perky - including things like working out, cooking, painting, writing, yoga, hiking, walking, swimming, being in nature, being around art, or reading inspiring books.

—Karen Salmansohn

Many kids, particularly in lower-income families, would actually benefit from more structured activities. Plenty of children, especially teenagers, thrive on a busy schedule. But just as other trappings of modern childhood, from homework to technology, are subject to the law of diminishing returns, there is a danger of overscheduling the young.

—Carl Honore

If I played tennis, I had to be in a dance class. I always had multiple activities, so I never had to count on any one of them to feel successful.

—Kaley Cuoco

I had no idea when I went to college what I'd be doing. I took organic chemistry and did terribly, but I was good in English and art. I took many courses and participated in as many activities as I could. I learned a lot about every single thing.

—Martha Stewart

When it comes to extracurricular activities, many children are getting too much of a good thing.

—Carl Honore

When moms stayed home, it was easier just to let the kids play around the house. But as women entered the workplace and the extended family dissolved, someone else had to pick up the slack on the child-care front. Extracurricular activities fit the bill perfectly, promising not only supervision but also enrichment.

—Carl Honore

I wish all high schools could offer students the outside activities that were available at the old Harrison High on Chicago's West Side in the late '20s. They enabled me to become part of a school newspaper, drama group, football team and student government.

—Irv Kupcinet



Kids need activities and role models to stay out of trouble.

—Ricardo Salinas Pliego

One of the best protections against disappointment is to have a lot going on.

—Alain de Botton

Happiness is a state of activity.

—Aristotle

If you want to be happy, be a person who likes to ‘do’ things.

—Marty Rubin

How could anything one loves doing, even for an instant, be pointless or a waste of time?

—Marty Rubin

The secret to happiness is to be absorbed in something other than yourself.

—Marty Rubin

Now to exert oneself and work for the sake of amusement seems silly and utterly childish. But to amuse oneself in order that one may exert oneself, as Anacharsis puts it, seems right; for amusement is a sort of relaxation, and we need relaxation because we cannot work continuously. Relaxation, then, is not an end; for it is taken for the sake of activity.

—Aristotle

We need movement, activity, as much as air and water.

—Marty Rubin

Sometimes customizing is necessary because of an injury or the inability to do, for a short or long period, the kind of exercise you formerly did. When you’re used to customizing for fun, doing it under duress won’t seem like such an imposition. Either way, experiment until you find activities that make you happy as well as healthy. Choose your exercise using the same criteria you’d apply to choosing a date—that is, attractive to you and able to hold your interest for an hour.

—Victoria Moran

Be busy with your free life.

—Amit Abraham

School plays were invented partly to give parents an easy opportunity to demonstrate their priorities.

—Calvin Trillin

I have lived to know that the great secret of happiness is this: never suffer your energies to stagnate. The old adage of too many irons in the fire, conveys an abominable lie. You cannot have too many – poker, tongs and all – keep them all going.

—Adam Clarke

No thoroughly occupied man was ever yet very miserable.

—Letitia Landon

Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading. I will rather say more necessary because health is worth more than learning.

—Thomas Jefferson

The bow cannot always stand bent, nor can human frailty subsist without some lawful recreation.

—Miguel de Cervantes

Eight hours work, eight hours sleep, and eight hours recreation.

—Susanna Young Gates

Even our recreation was scheduled. There was no time to look for birds or wander into the nearby woods. We were put into teams and sent into violent pursuit of a helpless ball.

—Gloria Whelan

Our age has become so mechanical that this has also affected our recreation. People have gotten used to sitting down and watching a movie, a ball game, a television set. It may be good once in a while, but it certainly is not good all the time. Our own faculties, our imagination, our memory, the ability to do things with our mind and our hands—they need to be exercised. If we become too passive, we get dissatisfied.

—Maria Augusta von  
Trapp

The word ‘recreation’ is really a very beautiful word. It is defined in the dictionary as ‘the process of giving new life to something, of refreshing something, of restoring something.’ This something, of course, is the whole person.

—Bruno Hans Geba

We must be wise taskmasters and not require of ourselves what we cannot possibly perform. Recreation we must have. Otherwise, the strings of our soul, wound up to an unnatural tension, will break.

—Elizabeth Prints

‘Quality of Life,’ without wholesome recreation....how is this possible?

—Nancy M. Morrow

We do better together, not alone. We need to play together to feel alive. We need to share together to feel whole. At any age, we need to feel, recreate, breathe!

—Patricia Miller

Recreation: improving lives one activity at a time.

—Danielle Busansky

Recreation’s purpose is not to kill time, but to make life, not to keep a person occupied, but to keep them refreshed; not to offer an escape from life, but to provide a discovery of life.

—Unknown

Recreation is not a secondary concern for a democracy. It is a primary concern, for the kind of recreation a people make for themselves determines the kind of people they become and the kind of society they build.

—Harry Allen Overstreet

Being able to provide for the family is important, but living without recreation is like a car without gas. It’s stopped and parked waiting to be taken away. So why not give it some gas and take it to a wonderful place.

—Lian Chin

What we do during our working hours determines what we have; what we do in our leisure hours determines what we are.

—George Eastman

The masters in the art of living make little distinction between their work and their play, their labor and their leisure, their mind and their body, their information and their recreation, their love and their religion. They hardly know which is which. They simply pursue their vision of excellence at whatever they do, leaving others to decide whether they are working or playing. To them, they’re always doing both.

—James A. Michener

A war fitness conference some time ago declared that the highest form of recreation is to go to church. The word recreation should be written re-creation. More real rest can be gained from an hour and a quarter of worship under these circumstances than by eighteen holes of golf.

—Norman Vincent Peale

Walking is the natural recreation for a person who desires not absolutely to suppress his or her intellect but to turn it out to play for a season. All great people of letters have therefore been enthusiastic walkers.

—Leslie Stephen

Life is best enjoyed when time periods are evenly divided between labor, sleep, and recreation. . . all people should spend one-third of their time in recreation which is rebuilding, voluntary activity, never idleness.

—Brigham Young

I still need more healthy rest in order to work at my best. My health is the main capital I have and I want to administer it intelligently.

—Ernest Hemingway

Practice, which some regard as a chore, should be approached as just about the most pleasant recreation ever devised.

—Babe Didrikson

Have you known how to take rest? You have done more than he who hath taken empires and cities.

—Michel de Montaigne

Weekends don't count unless you spend them doing something completely pointless.

—Bill Watterson

I have nothing to say against recreation in its proper place. Certain forms of recreation are needful and useful; but it is a wretched thing when amusement becomes a vocation. Amusement should be used to do us good 'like a medicine': it must never be used as the food of the person. From early morning till late at night some spend their time in a round of frivolities, or else their very work is simply carried on to furnish them funds for their pleasures. This is vicious. Many have had all holy thoughts and gracious resolutions stamped out by perpetual trifling. Pleasure so called is the murderer of thought. This is the age of excessive amusement: everybody craves for it, like a babe for its rattle.

—Charles Spurgeon

Activities are my therapy.

—Lynne Wilksman

You can learn more about a man in one hour of play than in a lifetime of conversation.

—Plato

If variety is the spice of life, then recreation is the sugar. Get sweet and recreate!

—Kimberly Grandal

It is in his pleasure that a man really lives; it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self.

—Agnes Repplier

The real problem of leisure time is how to keep others from using yours.

—Arthur Lacey

They talk of the dignity of work. The dignity is in leisure.

—Herman Melville

In our leisure we reveal what kind of people we are.

—Ovid

The end of labor is to gain leisure.

—Aristotle

Life lived amidst tension and busyness needs leisure. Leisure that recreates and renews. Leisure should be a time to think new thoughts, not ponder old ills.

—Neil Strait

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—Unknown

The word recreation is really a very beautiful word. It is defined in the dictionary as 'the process of giving new life to something, of refreshing something, of restoring something.' This something, of course, is the whole person.

—Bruno Hans  
Geba

These small things: nutrition, place, climate, recreation, the whole casuistry of selfishness are inconceivably more important than everything one has taken to be important so far.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

A man can never be idle with safety and advantage until he has been so trained by work that he makes his freedom from times and tasks more fruitful than his toil has been.

—Hamilton Wright  
Mabie

We give up leisure in order that we may have leisure, just as we go to war in order that we may have peace.

—Aristotle

It is in his pleasure that a man really lives; it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self.

—Agnes Repplier

All of us, from time to time, need a plunge into freedom and novelty, after which routine and discipline will seem delightful by contrast.

—André Maurois

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father.

—Roger von Oech

Fun is about as good a habit as there is.

—Jimmy Buffet

I would not exchange my leisure hours for all the wealth in the world.

—Comte de Mirabeau

People tend to forget that play is serious.

—David Hockney

Any time women come together with a collective intention, it's a powerful thing. Whether it's sitting down making a quilt, in a kitchen preparing a meal, in a club reading the same book, or around the table playing cards, or planning a birthday party, when women come together with a collective intention, magic happens.

—Phylicia Rashad

I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member.

—Groucho Marx

Anyone could be in the orchestra, or sports team, or arts club at my school. It was precisely the kind of inclusivity that now meets with a sort of scorn and derision as a prizes-for-all culture that generates only mediocrity. There's something so insulting about the idea that including lots of people means mediocrity.

—Elizabeth Price

I've never been much of a computer guy at least in terms of playing with computers. Actually until I was about 11 I didn't use a computer for preparing for games at all. I was playing a bit online, was using the chess club mainly. Now, obviously, the computer is an important tool for me preparing for my games.

—Magnus Carlsen

The Boys and Girls Club taught me a lot about sportsmanship, humility, self-respect.

—Junior Seau

Books are something social—a writer speaking to a reader—so I think making the reading of a book the center of a social event, the meeting of a book club, is a brilliant idea.

—Yann Martel

In any group of people, a small fraction will be leaders, a larger fraction will be followers, and a substantial proportion just won't want to get involved.

—Unknown

Art clubs and centers are so important. They have the power to stay on top of what's current and do what's best for the cultural stimulation of a thriving, art-conscious community.

—Ric Benda

The productivity of a work group seems to depend on how the group members see their own goals in relation to the goals of the organization.

—Kenneth Blanchard

A club is a place where mediocrity is made to feel comfortable.

—Joseph P. Blodgett

Any time people come together in a meeting, we're not necessarily getting the best ideas; we're just getting the ideas of the best talkers.

—Susan Cain

To be sure, the life of an artist can be enhanced with the sociality of a club. Who wouldn't want cookies and see a member giving a demo? I prefer a club with a different twist, one in which we all paint together on location.

—Michael Chesley  
Johnson

For me, this is a familiar image - people in the organization ready and willing to do good work, wanting to contribute their ideas, ready to take responsibility, and leaders holding them back, insisting that they wait for decisions or instructions.

—Margaret J. Wheatley

I think that when people join clubs as simple as a sorority or a fraternity, a football team, a baseball team, it's just - you want to be in a group. You want to be around people, you want to be with people.

—Theo Rossi

Being part of a fraternity has given me the foundation for everything I do in my career from the loyalty to the determination; it laid the foundation for everything I've been able to enjoy.

—Terrence J

Clubs, fraternities, nations—these are the beloved barriers in the way of a workable world, these will have to surrender some of their rights and some of their ribs. A 'fraternity' is the antithesis of fraternity. The first (that is, the order or organization) is predicated on the idea of exclusion; the second (that is, the abstract thing) is based on a feeling of total equality. Anyone who remembers back to his fraternity days at college recalls the enthusiasts in his group, the rabid members, both young and old, who were obsessed with the mystical charm of membership in their particular order. They were usually men who were incapable of genuine brotherhood, or at least unaware of its implications. Fraternity begins when the exclusion formula is found to be distasteful. The effect of any organization of a social and brotherly nature is to strengthen rather than diminish the lines which divide people into classes; the effects of states and nations is the same, and eventually these lines will have to be softened, these powers will have to be generalized.

—E. B. White



Let's be clear: no one is forced into hazing. If you don't want to be hazed, don't join a fraternity.

—Milo Yiannopoulos

One of the things that the Phi Kappa Psi has to offer a young man is not to feel like you're ever going to be a cookie-cut stamped out sort of figure...To have that wonderful kind of anchor of a fraternal group is a great help to a undergraduate student trying to find his way in this tough and rather impersonal world today.

—Peter Graves

I shall never be able to compensate my fraternity for all that it has done for me, no matter what service I may be allowed to give. In it I have found my most intimate friends. As undergraduate chapter president, I gained broad administrative experience, and from my fraternity I have derived my most cherished ideals of conduct.

—Dr. Herman B. Wells

My chapter house was a place where deep friendships were formed. The bond of brotherhood within the chapters was always a sustaining force and an urge to do a better job scholastically and otherwise in campus life. The traits of character which were nurtured there ripened and increased my sense of being useful in later life.

—D. William Bronson

I took a great deal more from my fraternity than I gave — but what I took was a very great deal — companionship of the highest order, self-confidence born of belonging to a group of which I was proud, enrichment of my personal life, which gave all my college career added dimension, and even an extra bond to several life-long friendships that already existed.

—Walter Cronkite

I found in my chapter companionship and guidance from older men, discipline and true fellowship. The fraternity is more than just a boarding house. It is a temple of good will, of mutual assistance and enlightenment. The benefits derived are constant companions with alert fellow students in all activities of university life, and it tends to create more mature, responsible and intelligent citizens.

—Lloyd Wright

Sororities symbolize all that we wish to accomplish in our lives. They represent the struggles we all face as we grow. Why we cling to them no one can explain, but in the end, we are all stronger for it.

—Unknown

[On sorority life] If I paid for my friends, I surely didn't pay enough.  
—Unknown

## **SORORITY SOLILOQUY**

I've heard it said a sorority  
Is a waste of time; but I know better...  
For I have seen the love and walked  
In the splendor of sisterhood...  
I've heard it said that a sorority  
Is sad; I can't agree...  
I've heard it said that a sorority  
Is a dull, selfish place; It can't be true...  
I've seen the affection, watched it  
Fill my heart, the very air...  
And I have learned the Creed  
Polished and spotless from end to end  
And I've watched the sorority's  
Devotion drape each and every active  
And pledge to look like nature's  
Freshly-granted love nourished for growth...  
I've heard it said that a sorority is  
Harmful, but they are wrong...  
For I know my sisters...watched them  
Strive to save a cause, spend of themselves...  
And I've watched them hope, dream,  
And aspire, side by side...  
I've heard them say these things,  
But I would disagree...  
Because for every shadow I have  
Seen a hundred rays of light...  
For every plaintive note I've  
Heard the symphony of joy...  
For every penny-weight of bad,  
I've found a ton of good...  
Good in nature, in people, in my sorority...  
I'm thankful I belong.

Sorority sisters are the siblings God forgot to give us.

—Unknown

Sisterhood is the essence of all the wisdom of the ages, distilled into a single word. You cannot see sisterhood, neither can you hear it nor taste it. But you can feel it a hundred times a day. It is a pat on the back, a smile of encouragement. It's someone to share with, to celebrate your achievements.

—Unknown

## **WANTED**

Wanted:

More to improve and fewer to disapprove.

More doers fewer talkers.

More to say it can be done and fewer to say it's impossible.

More to inspire and fewer to throw cold water on them.

More to get in the thick of things and fewer to sit on the sidelines.

More to point out what's right and fewer to show what's wrong.

More to light a candle and fewer to curse the darkness.

—Unknown

## **DO YOU JUST BELONG?**

Do You Just Belong?

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?

Or are you contented that your name is on the list?

Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?

Or do you stay at home and criticize and knock?

Do you ever go and visit a member that is sick?

Or leave the work to just a few and talk about the clique?

There's quite a program scheduled that I'm sure you've heard about.

And we will appreciate it if you'll come and help with hand and heart

Don't be just a member, dig in and do your part.

Think this over member - you know right from wrong.

Are you an active member, or do you just belong?

—Unknown

## **I KNOW A GIRL...**

I know a girl...

Who is amazing.

She runs a few miles a day, aces her classes,  
organizes social events, and participates in all sorts of campus organizations.  
At night she may go out and have fun, but she always manages to get everything  
done.

I know a girl...

Who will let you cry on her shoulder and will be there for you in times of need.  
She has lots of friends and makes sure she leaves enough time to hang with them  
all.

She will give good advice and listen to your every word and thought with an unbi-  
ased ear.

She will love you for who you are and accept you no matter what.

I know a girl...

Who will smile even though she didn't have the greatest day.

She always brings her positive attitude and it's contagious.

Those who are around her want to smile too!

I know a girl...

Who will bring out the best in everyone she meets.

She has friends in many different houses on this campus as well as friends who are  
not Greek, because she does not care what house you're in.

Who parties it up at fraternity parties, but goes many other places at night.

You might know this girl too...

Whether you're in her house or not, everyone knows one of these girls.

She is my sister.

She might be your sister, or she might be someone else's.

Those that know this girl know what sororities are all about because she represents  
them in almost everything she does.

—Unknown

They are the family we choose to surround us, the sisters bound by love instead of  
blood. They know when we are lonely, and appear without being called. When we  
feel lost, they provide a living map to what comes next; when we doubt everything  
about ourselves, they remind us who we are.

—Barbara Alpert

Sororities aren't about drinking and boys and Kate Spade and Prada.  
Sororities are about laughter, tears, friendship, sisterhood, honor, loyalty, and love.  
The people in my sorority want me to succeed.  
They help me to rise up and allow others to follow.  
At retreats we share in times that we will remember forever.  
But it's not really just my sorority.  
Homecoming, Socials, Parents Weekend, and other Greek activities have given me  
the opportunity to find out what is unique about each sorority, and I really find  
wonderful friends among them all.  
We need to let other people know who we are.  
Greeks are not exclusive - they are merely one group of many.

I have heard the jokes, we all have...  
about what non-Greek students may think about us.  
But I challenge you - prove them wrong.  
Don't just try to make your house look good, try to make Greeks look good.  
Let people know that we are athletes, we are scholars, we come from diverse back-  
grounds, and we have diverse goals.  
But let them know we have similarities.  
We are all in the constant pursuit of success. We are all working to achieve our  
goals,  
and we are all making friendships that last a life time.  
So be proud, prove people wrong...  
Remember that although my sorority may have different history and ideals than  
yours,  
that we are all here for common reasons.

—Unknown

Sometimes we stand outside life  
Waiting for a door to open to us  
Hoping the person behind that door  
Will let us in and be our friend  
I was once on the outside  
Until a door opened to me and  
Behind it I found not only a  
Friend, but a new world- a sisterhood-  
Now I stand behind that door- on the inside  
Helping to open it for someone else  
Who stands where I once stood.

—Linda Parks

There are two types of women in this world: sorority women and those who wish they were.

—Unknown

Sisterhood

is so many things...

It's a warm smile on a cold and rainy day  
a friendly hug, a cheerful hello.

It's baking cookies together.

It's get better cards when you are sick.

It's 'Just because I love you' presents.

It's a phone call just to make you smile!

It's all that a good and lasting friendship is,  
only better!

It's treasured. It's sacred.

It's knowing that there will always  
be someone there for you, no matter what.

It's dreams shared, and goals achieved.

It's counting on others, and being counted on!

It's... Delta Zeta!

—Unknown

She is your mirror, shining back at you with a world of possibilities. She is your witness, who sees you at your worst and best, and loves you anyway. She is your partner in crime, your midnight companion, someone who knows when you are smiling, even in the dark. She is your teacher, your defense attorney, your personal press agent, even your shrink. She is your sister.

—Barbara Alpert

Regarding the Boy Scouts, I'm very suspicious of any organization that has a handbook

—George Carlin

The true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden.

—G. K. Chesterton

It is the child in man that is the source of his uniqueness and creativeness, and the playground is the optimal milieu for the unfolding of his capacities and talents.

—Eric Hoffer

Life must be filled up, and the man who is not capable of intellectual pleasures must content himself with such as his senses can afford.

—Samuel Johnson

Leisure: A fancy word for people who don't want to admit they're bored.

—Gene Perret

Recreational development is a job not of building roads into the lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind.

—Aldo Leopold

Nothing diminishes anxiety faster than action.

—Walter Anderson

The knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet.

—Lord Philip Dormer  
Stanhope  
Chesterfield

Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fear makes strangers of people who would be friends.

—Shirley Maclaine

The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid.

—Lady Bird Johnson

Research has repeatedly shown that participation in extracurricular activities is consistently the best indicator of later success in life (including academic grades). You will also find many of our very best students involved in these activities, and it is the only thing in our curriculum that was initiated by the students.

It is ironic that the characteristics that most Americans wish developed in our youth (competitiveness, discipline, hard work, leadership, ability to listen and concentrate, to play and work within a set of rules, etc.) are currently developed to a greater degree in extracurricular activities than anyplace else.

—Byron D. Secest

One of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon — instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today.

—Dale Carnegie

Courage is the power to let go of the familiar.

—Raymond Lindquist

It is imperative that extra curricular activities be kept in a perspective that the basic curriculum be emphasized first and foremost, and the extracurriculars be used to support and enhance basic learning.

Speech, math, science, journalism, drama, spelling and the other contests attempt to reinforce classroom instruction. These contests provide a structure into which students can make practical application of knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.

The same is true for the music contest. Like theater, music instruction is enhanced when performed, whether for competitive or purely aesthetic reasons. Performance provides immediate feedback, which the students may use to improve and grow.

—Bailey Marshall

It is important that all activities provide education in specific physical and intellectual skills.

The emphasis might be strength in one activity, agility in another, endurance in another, rhythm in another, breath control in another, articulation in another. But there should be physical and/ or mental development in all.

The interscholastic activities program also provides for emotional and social development. The arena of participation is a laboratory where students learn practical applications of their skills. Specifically, the students learn poise, self control, teamwork and grace in both victory and defeat. Of course, these lessons are learned only if the students receive proper supervision and leadership.

—Bailey Marshall

Students are not the sole beneficiaries of the interscholastic program. The program performs certain functions for the school, community, and society as a whole.

The program provides a rallying point for students, educators and lay people of varying backgrounds and interests. It is a place for them to come together and work toward a common goal. The obvious cliché is Friday night football, which brings together faculty, students, parents, booster groups and others in a complex web of support for the programs associated with the evening's contest. It has been said that successful athletic programs have passed more bond elections than all other campaigns combined.

— Bailey Marshall



A carefully designed and implemented academically oriented program can also provide experiences that help students:

- ❑ build meaningful relationships with adults outside their family and gain positive role models. Structured activities can provide adult role models. From resiliency research, we know that a stable relationship with a caring adult provides the most effective ‘protection’ from the effects of stress for young people.
- ❑ engage in activities that enable them to learn new things and practice knowledge gained in school. Engagement in constructivist activities can have a direct effect on academic achievement by increasing skills in areas important to school performance.
- ❑ engage in reflection, planning, decision-making, and problem-solving. Studies of the characteristics of youth programs have noted the impact of reflective practices on young people’s development.
- ❑ become attached to a group of peers who have positive aspirations. Creation of a peer group of similarly interested peers can have a powerful influence on the achievement and school orientation of young people.
- ❑ find a ‘border zone’ between the cultures of the home and school that provides them with pathways to mainstream society while at the same time respecting their identity. Effective after-school programs help youth learn skills they will need in mainstream society— from working with technology and communication skills— in a context that makes the importance and usefulness of such knowledge apparent.
- ❑ transfer positive experiences in the school-based program to more positive feelings about school itself. Positive learning experiences in after-school activities and programs, particularly if they are school-based, can bring about a more positive identification with school.
- ❑ increase the sense of themselves as learners. When students build proficiency in one area, their self confidence increases, which can transfer to other aspects of their lives including school.

—Beth M. Miller

Each day, some 8 million students in urban, suburban, in rural areas across this country leave school and return to a home where no parent or other responsible adult is present. Many of these youngsters spend their afternoon hours sitting in front of a television set.

Others — including many youngsters in the impressionable middle school years — use this unsupervised time to engage in risky or even dangerous behaviors. In fact, according to one study, eighth graders who are unsupervised for 11 or more hours per week are twice as likely to abuse alcohol or drugs as youngsters who are under adult supervision. After-school programs can help to keep students safe and out of trouble. They can provide homework assistance and academic and cultural enrichment as well as organized recreational opportunities.

—Carol A Bruce

The activities provided during the quality after-school programs have a strong link to the activities offered during the regular school day. The types of activities found in a quality program generally include:

- Tutoring and supplementary instruction in the basic skills;
- Youth leadership activities (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, academic clubs, etc.);
- Homework help centers;
- Enrichment activities (arts programs, cultural events, etc.);
- Drug and violence prevention programs and curricula; and
- Supervised recreation and athletic programs and events.

— Carol A. Bruce

While memories of high school are likely to be better for those who are part of a sports team, band member, actor or stagehand in the school play, chess club member or any other school activity, the benefits of being involved, most educators seem to believe, also offer a big plus while students are in high school.

— Chuck Feldman

Being involved while you're in high school completes the education experience for a kid. Going to school (for classes) is only part of the experience.

—Pete Binder, Assistant  
Principal

It's really great to be involved in something at school. It gives you a chance to meet people and make new friends. It really doesn't matter if it's sports or something else, but it is a good idea to get involved in something.

—George Lasko, Student

Fred Rose of Walther Lutheran High School in Melrose Park, Illinois was a key member of Walther's football, basketball and baseball teams; played in the band and jazz band; sang in the choir; senior class president; and had a lead role in six of the eight school plays in which he took part. He also was a member of the National Honor Society, and, aside from one B on his academic record, received straight A's. 'I'm not normal,' Rose said with a laugh, regarding his 'extremely involved' high school career. 'For me, getting involved in a lot of things was good and worked. But the big thing is that it's important to get involved in something.

'I would recommend to all high school students that they get involved in something, even if they're not sure what to do. There's nothing wrong with trying something that you think you might be interested in. It seems like people are nervous about doing that, but you don't lose anything by trying, and you might find something that you really like.

'For the whole educational experience, I'd say less than half is what you do in the classroom or reading in a book. I learned so much about a lot of things by being involved a lot of different things with a lot of different people.

'When you're not involved in anything it's too easy to just put things off because you feel like there's always still time to get your (school) work done. You do have to be aware of making better use of your time when you're involved in things at school. The time demands for activities in college are more. That means I can't really do as much as I did in high school, but I still want to be involved as much as I can.

'Years from now, when I look back at my years of high school, I'm not going to remember what we did in class. But I will remember finishing third in state in baseball, and I'll remember some of my football and basketball games, and some of the plays we did.'

—Chuck Feldman

I've learned more about life. I have grown as a person, both as an individual and a leader. The memories and experiences will always be with me, and I will benefit others through my participation in student activities.

—Hunter Burroughs,  
Student

If you ask adults years after they graduate from high school, many of their fondest memories are of their participation in student activities. The support of school administrators and faculty members for the co-curricular student activities program can help make dreams happen.

—Rocco Marano

A majority of these FFA members do not live on a farm. Students have found the subjects interesting because of the hands-on learning and the ability to participate in an extracurricular area where they can meet students from other schools and also attend conferences where they learn about leadership and current technology used to produce their food.

—Beau Buchs

FFA no longer is only about production agriculture. In fact, most of the students live in town and have never set foot on a farm. It's not so much about teaching people how to farm; it's about teaching awareness of the world around them. It's learning how to choose a cut of meat at the grocery store or applying lawn chemical to your front yard, growing flowers, not to mention life skills. FFA students might talk about agriculture to local elementary students, keep records, and identify safety hazards in their jobs at McDonald's or on the family farm, or participate in contests on parliamentary procedure, public speaking, job interviewing, or dairy and live-stock judging.

—Jenn Scott

What questions must the principal answer when assessing the co-curricular activities program?

1. Is the activity program based upon a clearly stated philosophy with sound learning theory and needs?
2. Are there sound policies for the student activities program and are they communicated effectively to the students, parents, faculty, and community?
3. Is the overall program in each specific activity meeting its objectives and goals? What is the evidence that objectives/goals are being met?
4. What is the extent of student participation in the total program and in each activity? Are a majority of students participating in the program? What is the evidence in regard to degree of student participation?
5. What kinds of students are participating in the program?
6. Do some students participate too much in the student co-curricular program?
7. Is the co-curricular program well balanced and comprehensive, or do some activities dominate the program? Are any student interests and needs inadequately met by the program?
8. Is the total program and each of the activities well organized and efficiently run?
9. Are all aspects of the program supported sufficiently in terms of availability of facilities, funds, school time, advisors/personnel, and recognition? Or are some activities disproportionately supported?
10. Are there suitable facilities to safely conduct the activities provided?

11. Is there a qualified adviser(s) for the activity who is willing to assume leadership and responsibility to provide a meaningful experience for students?
12. Is there a reward structure to compensate advisers for their time and effort?
13. Are costs to students that are associated with the activity reasonable or prohibitive to the point where they exclude some students from participating?

— Ron Joel

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM**

The activity program serves as an integral part of an holistic, total educational experience, representing a wide variety of clubs and organizations. The program complements and supplements the goals of the core curriculum, assisting students to reach their full potential as citizens in a global society. It provides students with the vehicle to contribute experiences to their lifelong learning.

Research studies have demonstrated consistently that there is a strong correlation between success in college achievement and an established patterns of participation in student activities. Similarly, those students who leave school prior to graduation are students who have limited or no involvement in student activities.

Faculty and staff encourage Highland Park students to select and to participate in a diverse extracurricular program. This involvement will require a commitment to responsibility, attendance and behavioral standards. Programs are structured to teach students the need to create, prioritize and to manage a balanced schedule of academic, extracurricular and social obligations that allows the sufficient time and the energy for self, family and friends.

— *Highland Park High  
School, Highland  
Park, Illinois*

## **GOALS OF THE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM**

To provide:

- a broad and varied program of clubs and organizations that will meet the needs and the interests of our highly-skilled students.
- a vehicle for caring for others through service projects, volunteerism and teamwork.
- a venue for role modeling of successful students and an opportunity to learn how to be positively influenced by a group.
- nurturing within a larger circle of significant others — peers and a network of caring adults.
- a sense of belonging.

- the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, assisting students to feel competent and to have a sense of control in their environment.
- the opportunity to work cooperatively with fellow students to set and achieve group and personal objectives.
- carryover skills— learn critical lessons of leadership, character, communications, team play, decision-making, and self-worth.
- the experiences to build character, to extend skills in interpersonal relationships and to meet personal challenges.
- a forum for presentation and performance of skills and talents.

— *Highland Park High  
School, Highland  
Park, Illinois*

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM**

To assist students in acquiring the educational values inherent in an extensive Activity Program, the following guidelines will apply:

1. Participation in the Activity Program is a privilege which carries with it responsibilities to the school, to the student body, the the members of the club/organization, to the community, and to the individuals themselves. The school community encourages and motivates participants to reflect the school mission statement, philosophy and goals outlined in the Student and Parent Handbook.
2. The Activity Program is administered under the guidelines and jurisdiction of the Illinois High School Association (when applicable), the District 113 Student Discipline Policy, the Highland Park High School Policies and Procedures and in cooperation with the Athletic Department.
3. Students who participate in the Activity Program are expected to uphold the highest standards for personal and academic behavior, consistent with that expected during the school day.
4. Participants in the Activity Program are also representatives of District 113 to other students and to the extended community; hence, it is important that they represent the best of behaviors in performance at all times.

5. Club/organization members are expected to assume the responsibilities of membership in that particular group as established by the sponsor of that group. It is with the cooperative efforts of students, faculty, parents and community members that an environment for optimum learning and enjoyment will be created.

— *Highland Park High School, Highland Park, Illinois*

## **A HIGHLAND PARK HIGH SCHOOL CLUB/ORGANIZATION**

In our clubs/organizations it is apparent that:

- rights of every individual are respected
- students are heard
- club officers and membership take responsibility
- the environment is safe, conducive to risk-taking and stimulates learning
- club/organization objectives are promoted
- honest evaluation and constructive criticism occur
- ideas are supported
- collaboration, consultation and consensus are key
- respect is demonstrated for varying points of view
- some form of organization and structure is in place
- problem-solving skills are developed and honed
- maximum participation is encouraged
- patience, understanding, openness, are important interpersonal skills
- sensitivity & caring guide interaction
- humor is encouraged
- conversations are candid and tactful
- high levels of enthusiasm, energy and interest can be found
- positive attitudes are promoted
- goals are clearly delineated
- planning is evident
- communication skills are refined
- follow-through and closure are experienced

— *Highland Park High School, Highland Park, Illinois*

## SPONSOR RULE DESCRIPTION

1. To implement the Mission Statement.
2. To contribute to the growth of our school community through academic, informational, competitive, fitness, service and/or social activities.
3. To enhance self-esteem, self acceptance and self-concept of students.
4. To create an affirming atmosphere within the school.
5. To have the necessary interest, expertise, background experience in the content area of the club.
6. To be familiar with all school policies as outlined in the staff handbook.
7. To provide an environment that embraces and is invitational to our multicultural school community.
8. To work continuously throughout the year with the Director of Student Activities in all aspects of the activities program i.e., recruitment, membership data, officers, meeting schedule, club events/projects, budget, fundraising, calendar development, year end review.
9. To be familiar with a philosophy and the goals of the Activities Program.
10. To accept the ultimate responsibility for planned club/organization activities.
11. To supervise members of the club during all school sponsored meetings/projects/events.
12. To inform students of the expectations governing their participation in the Activities Program.
13. To provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and to accept responsibilities.
14. To establish responsibilities of membership within the club/organization.

— *Highland Park High  
School, Highland  
Park, Illinois*

Extra-curricular activities have long enjoyed an honored status in the American high school. Perhaps as a reflection of the activist orientation of the national character, a substantial percentage of the average school budget is set aside for the establishment and maintenance of a full program of social and hobby groups, vocational and academic enrichment organizations, and intramural and interscholastic athletic squads.

A variety of claims have been made for the beneficial outcomes of the extra-curriculum. It has been suggested, for example, that activities promote school spirit and also provide a healthy (and supervised) outlet for adolescent energy. Others have seen the school club as a small-scale democracy, inculcating in its members the fundamental norms and values of the larger society.

— Robert C. Serow



In comparing participation rates of ‘marginal’ students (those with lower levels of academic performance and socioeconomic status) with those of ‘regular’ students, in two schools, the authors found that regular students were more active than marginal students.

—Roger G. Barker and  
Paul V. Gump

According to the research, three patterns of extracurricular participation might be expected:

1. Students with higher socioeconomic status will participate more actively than lower-status students.
2. Students attending the small, low-density schools will participate more actively than students in the high-density schools.
3. In the small schools, usage of the extra-curriculum is more evenly divided among socioeconomic groups than it is in the larger schools.

—Robert C. Serow

The argument that extra-curricular activities are indeed a valuable educational tool is now supported by several recent studies. Some 95% of the high school principals surveyed in all 50 states stated that they believe that student involvement and activities such as speech, debate, music, drama, and athletics teaches valuable lessons to students that can’t be learned in a regular classroom.

Of the approximately 7,000 students included in this survey, the majority claim that school activities were a very important part of their education. The study indicated that students involved in activities tended to have better school attendance, as well as higher grades.

— Ronald D. Green

Students who participate in extra-curricular activities gain some significant advantages. Among those advantages:

- Opportunities for recognition, personal success, and broader experience to complement their academic achievement.
- The chance to develop intellectual, social, cultural, and physical talents to round out their academic education.
- The opportunity to extend the limits of the classroom by acquiring direct experience with the content and worth of a subject.

—William J. Bennett

Ironically, the greatest drug deterrent is a full, quality activities program. Gangs exist when activities programs fail to offer membership, belonging, participation, and pride; but where programs are successful, gangs simply don't exist. Throughout the nation, student activities offer peer counseling groups, nurturing clubs, relationship building, and enormous support for young people at a minimal cost.

— Earl Reum

The potential dropout is the one most threatened/frightened by student activities. Many of the normal programs simply do not appeal to the potential dropout, who is characteristically either not interested in the establishment, or who is in conflict with it and would rather leave activities alone.

Here is an opportunity for peer counselors, for student council leaders to reach out or provide both programs and opportunities for dropouts to get involved. One of the great problems of some activities is the fact that a grade point average is a prerequisite to belonging. Use of existing student groups, faculty attention to at-risk students, and availability of programs that appeal directly to the potential dropout are enormously successful. Car clubs, job opportunities, and television and computer use are areas that appeal to the potential dropout and could perhaps be the lifeline that keeps a young person in school.

— Earl Reum

To principals: Demand that every teacher be involved in that extension of classroom learning— that laboratory of success. They should attend events, be involved, participate in learning with young people that is only possible in an activities setting. To advisers: Remember Merlin, assigned to teach Arthur to be king of England by providing the experiential discoveries that would prepare Arthur to live a full and prosperous life. You, too, can provide those kinds of experiences.

— Earl Reum

One of the greatest needs of our nation is good, honest leadership. For years it was believed the good leaders were born, not made. We now know that leadership skills can be identified and taught.

The opportunities for students to organize and plan, assume leadership roles, to gain recognition and identity, to experience self-governance, to recreate physically and emotionally, and to mature socially come, to a significant degree, from the student activities program. Students learn to work together in a band or on a yearbook staff. They can develop leadership skills as a club officer or newspaper editor.

Our nation's youth face a complex future — one that will demand diverse skills from all our citizens. Such a complex society will require leadership and communication skills among its people along with the ability to work together. Our schools have a responsibility to develop those skills, and the student activity program addresses these needs.

Local, state, and national leadership training workshops for student leaders are teaching such skills as goal setting, communication, group dynamics, planning and organizing, problem-solving, decision-making, and self-awareness. Perhaps these are the real basics of education; the skills needed to succeed in life.

Student activities have become a part of the regular school program because of their close relationship to academics and also because of their value in supplementing academics with leadership skills training. In light of this status it seems that the once popular term 'extracurricular' should be put to rest.

Those of us who work closely with and value the type of learning that takes place in student activities look upon school-sponsored student activities as co-curricular, not extra-curricular. Extra can mean more, larger, better. It also means 'beyond the scope of.' To many people extracurricular means not necessary, frivolous, and ripe for the axe at budget time. Along with the academic program, co-curricular activities make up the total school curriculum which is designed to teach students skills and abilities they will need to function successfully in society.

— Rocco Marano

## **A HISTORY OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Writers generally agree that the modern period of development in student activities has experienced three eras. The first (approximately 1870-1900) was a period that has been labeled one of rejection. Educational leaders and researchers concluded few, if any, benefits could be derived by expanding human or material resources in that facet of the school program which they labeled 'extracurricular.'

Phase two (approximately 1900-1920) has been called an era of passive acceptance. Leaders concluded that student clubs and organizations were indeed capable of providing learning experiences for young people. Two significant developments fostered the growth and acceptance of student activity programs. First, the *Commission to Study the Reorganization of Secondary Schools* issued its report identifying the Seven Cardinal Principles. One of those principles suggested that schools should prepare students for wise use of leisure time. As a response, many school systems appointed a director of leisure studies. His position seems to be the forerunner to the director of student activities that exist in many schools today.

A second major development involve the work of the Elbert Fretwell of Columbia University. In 1918, Fretwell offered the first college level course in the student activity area. He also wrote numerous publications in the area of activities, and earned the title 'father of student activities' in the United States.

Phase three (approximately 1920-1956) has been described as a period of active acceptance and encouragement. The debate about the educational benefits of participation in student activities was settled in favor of student involvement. The term 'extracurricular' was gradually dropped in favor of 'student activities.'

Phase three saw the development of state and national ‘parent’ organizations, thus providing direction and assistance to the school club or chapter. Student participation was strongly encouraged. In fact, school systems often used point systems and other measures to encourage, if not require, students to participate in the activity program.

During the past 30 years, the once apparent distinction between what would be considered ‘school’ and ‘outside of school’ have to a large degree been fused. Today’s students often earn academic credit for involvement in activities which were once considered extracurricular. The subject area classroom has expanded into the community.

In the fourth phase, students may earn academic credit for serving as officers of clubs or for projects which may be carried out in non-school situations. Students, teachers, parents, and school community appear to be more fused. Fusion, descriptive of the fourth and current phase in the history of student activities, would seem to represent a period when the school and the non-school lives of the students blend.

—Ronald E. Gholson

Educational leaders at all levels must seriously reconsider the relationship between student participation in the co-curricular areas of the school and levels of achievement which result because of that involvement. There’s a positive correlation between student involvement and co-curricular activities and success in non-academic pursuits following high school and college.

Our nation’s youth are committed to those values and benefits associated with co-curricular activities. Adults believe activity programs are important in the education of young people. Finally, in an age of impermanence and technological complexity, the co-curricular activity program provides an arena in which personal and human qualities can be emphasized and further developed.

A high GPA may be earned without learning a great deal about other human beings. Co-curricular activities certainly can provide opportunities for students, teachers, administrators, and individuals not directly associated with the school to interact and learn from each other. In effect, the student activity program creates fusion among those schools and community components which, without their existence, would remain isolated and separate.

—Ronald E. Gholson

The struggle for legitimacy by proponents of student activities has continued for more than 60 years. Woodrow Wilson, during his presidency of Princeton, referred to co-curricular activities (albeit at the college level) as ‘sideshows.’ Since then, others have alternatively opposed, rejected, or ignored student activities.

—James A. Sandfort

While some student activities such as athletics may meet their budgetary needs through ticket sales and/or board of education subsidies, the majority of activities are financed through some form of fundraising. It is important that fundraising efforts for all clubs be coordinated, perhaps even cooperative, and that all activities within the school have equal access to revenue sources. Each activity sponsor should be required to submit a proposed budget for the year, containing estimates of both anticipated income and expenditures. Only in this way will the activities program in your school find footing firm enough to withstand the daily demand for dollars.

—James A. Sandfort

As principal you must decide how much of your personal time you are willing to devote to the student activities program. Parents, students, and staff assess the value of school programs by the amount of time the principal spends with them. The more you spend with student activities, the more valued they will become in your school. By making a place for them on your calendar you make a place for them in your school.

— James A. Sandfort

Educators don't invest enough time making the public aware of the positive activities taking place in their schools. Although there are many more positive student accomplishments than negative activities, the negative ones make the headlines. Obtaining positive coverage is possible, however, and one of the best ways is through the student activities program.

With the exception of a strong academic showing, there's probably no better way to promote your school and communicate the positive characteristics of youth than through student activities.

(We should consider a broad definition of student activities for public relations purposes. It's not just student government, athletics, and cheerleaders; but also includes band, debate, clubs, etc.)

—Lew Armistead

Two key qualities of student activities appeal to the news media: uniqueness and service.

Most student activities involve something different, and 'different' is a key word to a reporter. Routine, daily events simply aren't news. Even though your school has a highly successful math program, teaching math is not out of the ordinary.

But when the Spanish club promotes an upcoming event by staging a bullfight in the auditorium, that's different and perhaps newsworthy in the mind of your local newspaper editor.

Many student activity projects are also service-oriented. High school students may serve as 'big buddies' two elementary students, read stories to senior citizens, clean up blighted areas in the community, and much more. Any such project places students in a favorable light, and it translates into a positive image for the school.

—Lew Armistead

## **NEWSWORTHY ACTIVITIES**

Are you looking for some newsworthy student activity ideas? Here are some possibilities:

- The choir or band visits a local senior citizen center or convalescent home.
- The 'It's Academic' team finishes first in countywide competition.
- The woodworking club visits a local elementary school to help third-graders build a project.
- The school band finishes first in a band day, or seven members earn all region honors.
- The math club visits a local elementary school to discuss word problems with students.
- The choir tours a section of your community singing Christmas carols to residents.
- A member of the speech team wins the state forensics competition.
- The ecology club cleans up a dry creek bed in the community.
- The art club decorates local stores with appropriate designs for Easter.
- The Spanish club hosts a number of visiting students from Mexico.
- The student council sponsors spirit week.
- The student government organizes an anti-vandalism week with speakers and assemblies.
- A mock nominating convention is held in the gym prior to student body elections.
- Student leaders participate in government day and shadow officials and the city government.
- The science club plants a number of trees in the community in recognition of Arbor Day.

Many activities might interest reporters, and these may stimulate you to develop a list of appropriate items at your school. A good way to introduce yourself to a local reporter is to bring a list of 5 or 10 possible stories.

—Lou Armistead

A number of methods can carry the message about your student activities program effectively. These include:

- Arrange for some of your student leaders to speak to local civic groups. These organizations contain many of the opinion leaders in your community, and if they understand the importance of student activities they will communicate that message to others. Speeches could focus on specific projects, or why students think that student activities are valuable.
- Periodically report about student activities at school board meetings. It's important that governing boards understand what activities contribute to the all-around development of young people. If students make these presentations, the board members and others in attendance will see firsthand the quality of the students who are involved.
- Publicize student accomplishments on school bulletin boards, especially on boards near the cafeteria or gym where community meetings are held.
- Report student activity projects in your school newspaper and school newsletter; these publications have a large audience. Journalism students might adapt an article written for the school paper, and send it to a local newspaper.

Discuss student activities at open houses and meetings of the PTA, booster club, advisory committees, etc.

—Lou Armistead

One way of helping adolescents grow into responsible adulthood is by providing them with the opportunity to participate in a variety of co-curricular activities. Participation improves students' self-esteem and sense of self-worth, as well as their physical and intellectual growth.

Involvement in organized physical activity can inspire young people to become physically fit. They realize that even though they may not be the most valuable players on the team, they can strive to be the best they can be. Involvement in co-curricular activities also affects their intellectual development. During this time in their lives, their thinking processes are changing from concrete to abstract; they are questioning things like love, justice, truth, and hypocrisy. This questioning could steer them into leadership roles or could spark new interest in learning. Participation in co-curricular activities may give them a chance to lead, to look beyond what they learn in the classroom.

—Itala Landers

## STRATEGIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

A basic strategy for encouraging student involvement in co-curricular activities in the school setting involves effective communication. Students can't become involved if they are unaware of the opportunities. You can get the word out in many ways:

- Morning announcements are one of the first line of communication in making students and teachers aware of upcoming events and how they can participate in them.
- The lunchroom is a great place to remind students of upcoming events. Additional announcements on the public address system at the end of lunch or displayed on a programmable sign can be an effective reminder.
- The student/parent handbook gets information to those who need to know what activities are offered by the school, who is eligible to participate, and if there are any conditions of participation.
- The school newsletter reminds the appropriate audience of student involvement by announcing any upcoming activities. The timely distribution of flyers heralding any upcoming activities sponsored by the school or outside interests also encourages involvement.

— Itala Landers

The skills young people learn by participating in co-curricular activities are skills they can use throughout their lives: communicating effectively; establishing and improving community, family, and peer relationships; and setting and working toward goals. Participation in middle level co-curricular activities arms adolescents with the increased self-esteem and experience they need to move on to high school.

—Dottie Kraus

Activities programs also give students opportunities to play major roles in various organizations and groups. Unlike the regular classroom setting, in student activities, it is the students who create the agendas, develop and propose the projects and events. Through student activities, students place responsibilities on each other and work to achieve success for the group rather than seeking individual honors.

—Jeff Sherrill

For many students, co-curricular activities will be the most fondly remembered part of their high school experience. They may not realize that their involvement gave them more than good times in the sense of belonging....students involved in co-curricular activities also learned very important lessons about organizing projects, leading their peers, long-term planning, sportsmanship... the list goes on.

— Jan Umphrey



Strong applicants—numbering thousands more than we have room to admit—... usually present one or more co-curricular accomplishments that make them stand out as good matches for Harvard and Radcliffe. As do other colleges, we value excellence in playing the cello, and singing or acting, or throwing the hammer. We value these well-developed talents for many reasons. Those students can contribute to the co-curricular life of the college, musically, dramatically, athletically, and so on. The educational reasons we value those nonacademic talents go well beyond the fact that all our students (and faculty and staff members) are enriched by the high-quality co-curricular life at the college. We know that students with serious nonacademic commitments use all the college's resources particularly well.

—William R.

Fitzsimmons and  
Marilyn McGrath

There is a...basic reason for valuing co-curricular commitments. They help us answer that fundamental admission question: who are you? From noting participation in co-curricular activities, the Committee can learn a lot about a person's interests, energy level, drive, self-discipline and, generally how well a candidate uses available opportunities. Those qualities are strongly associated with success— academic and otherwise— in college and beyond. We know that these qualities distinguish our most successful graduates— no matter what they do later in life. We recognize also that many of our students transfer their energy and drive to co-curriculum activities they had not participated in before college, often with good success.

—William R.

Fitzsimmons and  
Marilyn McGrath

When students leave for college, they tend to get involved in leadership activities first learned in high school. When they return to visit, they thank you for giving them the chance to learn such wonderful skills. Learning skills is the root of student activities, and when that has been done and acknowledged, it gives you and the adviser an incredible feeling of accomplishment. You have done your job developing the total student.

Loyalty, pride, and spirit are strong emotions that put your school on the map. Students will always remember the events they participated in that were away from the classroom. The more of these you allow, the better spirit and cohesiveness you develop. Their 'remember whens' will be a significant part of class reunions and you will have had a role in allowing them these fond remembrances.

—Joyce Niestemski

Co-curricular pursuits are integral to the educational program and—whether or not they carry academic credit— have legitimate links to regular courses and to the purposes of middle level and high schools. They underpin the goal of teaching students to be responsible and fulfilled human beings with opportunities that develop character, critical thinking, social skills, and talents. Co-curricular activities also provide students with a network of peers and adults who have interest and talents similar to their own. Students who participate have the chance to excel individually, be part of a group, and gain real-life lessons about the importance of teamwork, responsibility, commitment, and hard work.

—Edward J. Klesse and  
Jan D’Onofrio

Participation in co-curricular activities improves an adolescent’s chances of avoiding such risky behaviors as dropping out, becoming a teenage parent, engaging in delinquency, smoking, or using drugs or alcohol.

—Edward J. Klesse and  
Jan D’Onofrio

Co-curricular activities are an extension of, not a diversion from, a good educational program and support the academic mission of the school. Students who participate in activity programs tend to have higher grade point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students who don’t participate.

—*National Federation of  
State High School  
Associations*

Students in small high schools participate in co-curricular activities at higher rates than do their counterparts in large high schools. Especially noteworthy is the higher percentage of students in larger high schools who, relative to those in smaller schools, show no participation in any school activities. The largest schools had about five times as many available co-curricular activities as the small schools, but evidence suggests that students in large schools do not take advantage of these opportunities. Although small schools may not provide a wealth of activities, the average student in a small school has a greater degree of involvement in the activities available.

—Phil Schoggen and  
Maxine Schoggen

Let's bury the term extracurricular activities. Extra implies something not necessary and suggests that student activities are just fun and games, which makes it easier for them to be dismissed or removed. Activities are school-sponsored programs and should be thought of and referred to as co-curricular.

There are numerous studies that show that students who participate in student activities usually have better grades, better attendance, and are more successful in later life than students don't participate. If school administrators feel that activities are valuable enough to sponsor and teachers are required to serve as advisors, activities should be regarded more than 'extra.'

Extras of the things kids do outside of school, such as Scouts, church activities, and the like. Principals and faculty members who serve as advisors have an obligation to ensure that students are learning something by participation in an activity. Of course, the student activity should be enjoyable, but there are also valuable skills and lessons that can be taught to those who participate, such as goal setting, communication, organization, decision-making, teamwork, conflict resolution, and tolerance. These are sometimes thought of as leadership skills, but they're really life skills that can be practiced as part of a club or organization and compliment what is taught in the classroom. For example, service projects contain lessons in family and consumer science, social studies, math, English, health, computer science, business, marketing, and journalism if participants implement a creative project plan with appropriate public relations activities.

In light of recent incidents of school violence, I believe that student activities can play an important role in creating a school climate in which students feel involved and favorable towards school, teachers, and administrators. Our goal should be to have all students involved. The only way that we will reach this goal is through a systematic approach in which we track all students' participation in activities just as we track all students' academic progress. Educators can use surveys to ascertain what various students may be interested in, and students who are not involved can be encouraged to participate in activities that correspond to their interests. Some students will not participate until someone reaches out to them. You might have to convince them, for example, that their artistic talents could be used for a drama production or for posters advertising the homecoming dance. I realize that involving all students and activities is a lot of work, but in the long run, everyone will be better off if we can help students achieve academically and socially balanced skills.

—Rocco Murano

A sound activities program generates feelings of self-worth. It creates a sense of belonging. It promotes understanding among diverse groups. It hones social and organizational skills. It builds responsibility. It energizes positive public relations, not only within the school but also within the community as well.

— Phil Gugliuzza

A community fortunate enough to have a school where administrators, teachers, and staff members support students with a range of co-curricular activities will reap many benefits. It is crucial to provide students with learning opportunities through significant and productive activities, as well as academics. Such schools are far more than collections of classrooms and series of hallways; they are places with the future tucked inside.

Principles are vital to developing and supporting a successful activity program, and many set the tone for the school year with an address to the faculty, parents, and students about the importance of getting and staying involved in activities. The principal's vision, goals, and objectives can and should serve as a guide and roadmap for an organization.

—Kay Baker, June  
Jacoby, and Phil  
Gugliuzza

Young people do not join a group for the sake of joining! The activity programs that succeed are those that students know have the backing and trust of the school administrators. With encouragement, activities energize the entire school climate with new and exciting project ideas.

Ownership is key to making students feel responsible for a safe, carrying school and community. The school must provide students with unique opportunities, not only through academics but also with meaningful and productive clubs, athletics, music and drama programs, and student councils to foster a sense of ownership within the school community.

— Phil Gugliuzza

Students learn by doing. Through a carefully designed and implemented organization, leadership skills that affect the entire school and community are taught, including planning, organizing, communicating, meeting deadlines, and teamwork.

— June Jacoby

The strong push to extend school learning into the after-school hours will run into problems unless school people understand that the after-school crowd comes from a different orientation. They recognize that the after-school hours are important extensions of learning.

—Anne C. Lewis

Schools and after-school programs need not be so far apart. The objectives of teachers for their students, high expectations, engagement in learning activities, and opportunities to contribute embody the philosophy of the supporters of after-school programs.

—Jean Thomases

We want to see good formal learning programs integrated with good informal education.

— Jane Quinn

Nationwide, an estimated five million to fifteen million children— one-third of all 12-year-olds— are unsupervised in the afternoon, putting them at significantly greater risk of truancy, low achievement, obesity, and behaviors that can lead to substance abuse, promiscuity, and delinquency. The rate of violent crime among juveniles triples between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. For children who do not attend after-school programs, the most common activity is watching television— an average of 23 hours a week.

—Dana Pride

According to the U.S. Department of Education, multiple studies show that students in after-school programs demonstrate better achievement. The government found that students who spend as little as one to four hours a week in such extracurricular activities were 60% less likely to drop out of school by the time they were seniors compared to nonparticipants.

—Dana Pride

Engagement in school extra-curricular activities is linked to decreasing rates of early school dropouts in both boys and girls. Such participation provides marginal students an opportunity to create a positive and voluntary connection to their school. Conversely, other strategies typically used to address the needs of at-risk students, such as school dropout prevention programs and remedial education, focus on the deficits of students and serve as a catalyst in the formation of deviant groups. Researchers strongly believe that involvement in extra-curricular activities may support the at-risk students by maintaining, enhancing, and strengthening the student-school connection.

—John Mahoney and  
Robert Cairns

Social and skill-based groups have been part of the co-curricular landscape for many years. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, book clubs, chorus, band, Olympics of the Mind, and athletics are examples of groups organizing around a common purpose that provide a place and time for middle level students to try out new ideas, bond with their peers, and build their self-esteem.

—Cynthia Mata Aguilar  
and Fred E. Gross

Extra-curricular participation is not detrimental to student performance and participation in these types of activities promotes greater academic achievement. In addition, participation in school-related activities is more strongly associated with achievement than is participation in activities outside of school.

—Susan Gerber

Cultural or racial affinity groups bring students of the same racial background together to discuss issues and topics that relate to their everyday school experiences. They can focus on reducing the isolation felt by minority students in predominately white schools, and help them develop their own cultural and racial identities. The group serves as a safe place for open discussion and empathy among its members. For example, at the Concord/Carlisle High School in Concord, Massachusetts, Cindy Aguilar and Yvonne Farino established a cultural affinity group called the Latino Caucus. It began informally with the need to prepare a presentation for the school's multicultural week. The topics of conversation arose from the issues facing the group, or from ideas presented by the advisers. The Latino/a students talk about their feelings of being left out of the February Black History Month events and celebrations. They felt that the ideas, values, and contributions of other cultures were often underrepresented and, at times, completely ignored. Now, every March, the student government sponsors speakers and events that celebrate the diversity of cultures represented in the high school. Students, along with a Latina teacher planned and choreographed the presentation. Some of the students choreographed a series of dances including salsa and merengue. Others shared their heritage and told about their experiences with the rest of the student body. Whether they were second-generation Americans or new immigrants, students from Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Mexico, Columbia, or the Dominican Republic talked about their family histories and shared their personal feelings about living in a predominately white society. The relevance of this cultural affinity group grew from the students' words and developing sense of self.

—Cynthia Mata Aguilar  
and Fred E. Gross

Regardless of the pros and cons, activities have become as much a part of middle school as computers and the Internet. There are five reasons for their popularity:

- Many schools are moving away from the term ‘extra’ curricular, replacing it with a ‘co-curricular’ model. This allows for thematic or interdisciplinary curricula, opportunities to apply and extend what is learned in class, multi-age groups, peer teaching, and student recognition.
- School’s stakeholders, i.e., parents and principals, can take active roles and make contributions to the activities program. There is a sense of ownership and involvement.
- Co-curricular activities provide students with a voice. Student-generated ideas and issues emerge as students learn to question, discover, and explore current events.
- Co-curricular activities can compete with the hype of video games, music, and media because they are fun, interactive, and multiple intelligences-based. Examples include the development of electronic portfolios and scale models, cooperative group investigations, working with computers and the Internet, and performing demonstrations.
- With the emergence of site-based instructional decision-making, educators are having more conversations around the unique characteristics of adolescents, emphasized by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in *Turning Points*. Because we believe in the developmental nature of young adolescents, no doubt we will encourage co-curricular opportunities that foster respect for diversity, self-discovery, and academic engagement—often all in small learning groups or committees.

Findings reveal that students who are involved in co-curricular activities also tend to be more determined to reach skills and content area goals. Many are better able to use support systems, involve family members, and expand technical analytic capabilities.

—Marian White-Hood

Chess is intellectual gymnastics.

—Wilhelm Steinitz

The important thing in life is not to triumph but to compete.

—Pierre de Coubertin

The more time teens spend looking at screens, the more likely they are to report symptoms of depression. Eighth-graders who are heavy users of social media increase the risk of depression by 27 percent, while those who play sports, go to religious services, or even do homework more than the average teen cut their risk significantly.

—Jean M. Twenge

Life is like a big red apple...only by taking a bite of it can I enjoy it's crisp, juicy sweetness. An apple can't be enjoyed to it's fullest by sitting and watching it.

—Unknown

The most potent recreational activity is when we sit back and exercise our minds with great and exciting books.

—Michael Bassey  
Johnson

Free time is a terrible thing to waste. Read a book.

—E. A. Bucchianeri

The school play allows students of varying abilities to be involved creatively in a major extracurricular activity whose success is dependent upon its enlisting the talents of actors, musicians, dancers, directors and (in some cases) writers, as well as those of students competent in electricity, carpentry, painting, printing, sewing and a host of other skills. Probably the school drama provides an outlet for a more diverse group of students than any other school activity. The student who is weak academically can work side-by-side—and on an equal footing—with the student who is academically talented. The non-reader can be as fully involved as the speed reader. The shy, retiring artist can contribute significantly without ever being exposed to that direct contact with an audience which he might find threatening; yet, by making his contribution well, he might be moving several steps toward building the kind of self-confidence which will eventually make him less shy and retiring.

—R. Baird Shuman

We need to embrace gaming in school to embrace a population of students we often leave out when it comes to after school activities. Some schools are starting to explore esports—professional video game playing—as a thing.

—Chris Aviles



## THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S ROLE IN PROMOTING READING

Strategies to promote reading within the building, attract students to the library, and help students appreciate the library through the initiative of the library staff:

- Book of the day—Each day school announcements will ‘advertise’ a book. The announcement reader can summarize the description on the book jacket to interest students in the book. The library staff will display the book in the library for a day and then check it out.
- Extended library hours —8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with students using the library before school with a pass.
- Racks of paperback books—Create high interest, attractive, and easy-access book displays for students.
- Spontaneous rewarding of students for carrying a leisure-reading book with them during the school day. The principal could ask to see students’ library books at any time and reward them with certificates or other incentives.
- Sponsor reading competitions such as Battle of the Books among homerooms or between schools.
- Conduct research scavenger hunts.
- Hold a luncheon for select students and give them the first opportunity to preview new books.
- Encourage teachers to hold events and activities in the library so that students come to view the library as an interesting and popular school destination.
- Sponsor a paperback book exchange.
- Create bibliographies for different interests and also for various problems students face.
- Promote the library and library activities in the school newspaper and parent newsletter.
- Award certificates or other incentives after a student reads and completes a librarian-created survey/questionnaire.
- Prepare a brochure or other handout for students and parents explaining library services and policies.
- Deliver book talks or talks on topics that students can later explore in specific books.
- Create a bulletin board or display case where students can post their reviews of favorite books they have read. Encourage them, also, to post their reviews on such websites as Amazon.

—Dan L. Miller

ACT research shows that college students who have studied high school journalism or who have worked on high school newspapers and yearbooks score significantly higher on various ACT tests than do those students who have not had such experiences, have a higher cumulative grade average as college freshmen, and score higher in their first collegiate English courses....publications activities provide a creative outlet for talented students within the school's curricular or cocurricular offerings.

—Dorothy McPhillips

Jack Kennedy always said to me, Hedy, get involved. That's the secret of life. Try everything. Join everything. Meet everybody.

—Hedy Lamarr

[College advice] Socialize....College isn't all classes, and it isn't all partying. Find a balance. Join a club for your favorite hobby —or, if your school doesn't have a club for something, start it! You're at college, statistically speaking there are at least five people who have some of the same interests as you.

—Shea Lazansky

Fraternities and the sororities: they're not all about partying and being the most attractive people on campus. Most schools have service fraternities or sororities, and even if they don't, fraternities and sororities most often have strict requirements when it comes to the grades of their members. Spending all of your time partying and letting your grades and service obligations slide is a super easy way to get kicked out fast.

—Shea Lazansky

I have long recognized a link between fitness and mental health and I think we need to encourage young people to take part in sports and team activities because we know it has such positive results.

—Tipper Gore

Chess teaches you to control the initial excitement you feel when you see something that looks good and it trains you to think objectively when you're in trouble.

—Stanley Kubrick

I wish somebody made guidelines  
On how to get up off the sidelines.

—J. Cole

Involvement in the arts engages kids in their community, improves self-esteem, reclaims at-risk youth, and builds the creative skills that are required of a 21st century workforce.

—Gavin Newsom

Before every elementary school classroom had a ‘Drop Everything and Read’ period, before parents and educators agonized more about children being glued to Call of Duty or getting sucked into the vortex of the Internet, reading as a childhood activity was not always revered. Maybe it was in some families, in some towns, in some magical places that seemed to exist only in stories, but not where I was. Nobody trotted out the kid who read all the time as someone to be admired like the ones who did tennis and ballet and other feats requiring basic coordination.

While those other kids pursued their after-school activities in earnest, I failed at art, gymnastics, ice skating, soccer, and ballet with a lethal mix of inability, fear and boredom. Coerced into any group endeavor, I wished I could just be home already. Rainy days were a godsend because you could curl up on a sofa without being banished into the outdoors with an ominous ‘Go play outside.’

Well into adulthood, I would chastise myself over not settling on a hobby—knitting or yoga or swing dancing or crosswords—and just reading instead. The default position. Everyone else had a passion; where was mine? How much happier I would have been to know that reading was itself a passion. Nobody treated it that way, and it didn’t occur to me to think otherwise.

—Pamela Paul

One recent study found that, holding all else equal, greater knowledge of civics among high-school seniors correlated with a 2 percent greater likelihood of voting in a presidential election eight years later. Active participation in extracurricular activities, however, correlated with a 141 percent increase.

—Yoni Appelbaum

Young Americans of all backgrounds deserve the chance to write charters, elect officers, and work through the messy and frustrating process of self-governance. They need the opportunity to make mistakes, and resolve them, without advisers intervening. Such activities shouldn’t be seen as extracurricular, but as the basic curriculum of democracy. In that respect, what students are doing—club sports, student council, the robotics team—matters less than how they’re doing it and what they’re gaining in the process: an appreciation for the role of rules and procedures in managing disputes.

—Yoni Appelbaum

In 2012, students from Birmingham City Schools who took part in music or choral programs earned \$2,336,200 in college scholarships.

—Dr. Debora Mayes

Joining company with those who can succeed where you can't do so alone is sometimes a solution to a difficult problem. For example, one person alone cannot change a law—so he joins an organization composed of people who feel the same way he does, and jointly they may succeed. When anyone joins in working with a group, whether large or small, he identifies himself with that group; he considers himself a part of it. This is normal and healthy. We all do it when we want to solve a big problem and can't do it by ourselves. If you sincerely want to be able to attend school regularly, for instance, one of the surest ways is to develop an interest in school. You can develop an interest by joining a club, organization, activity, or sport. You'll be making a new set of friends, you'll be having fun, and you'll begin to enjoy coming to school. School will become a more happy place than it may now be.

—Dan L. Miller

Students who actively engage in campus life in and out of the classroom are those who are happiest with their college experience, least likely to transfer and more likely to graduate. Whether through an intercollegiate or intramural sport, a club or a social group, creating connection early in college makes all the difference. It is easier to join activities from the start and ease off if it gets to be too much than not to do anything and try to join established networks once they have formed.

One college student advised incoming students to 'make an attempt to get further involved right away.' He wrote: 'I wish I had really explored the options for clubs on campus. The club fair usually happens early in the year, and I wish I had taken the time to truly explore what the offerings were instead of defaulting to clubs that were similar to what I did in high school. Although I joined some different clubs in my sophomore and junior year, I wish I had known about them earlier.'

—Valerie Strauss