

December 15, 2009



April 29, 2010
8th Annual "Rally for Awareness"
Shocco Springs, Talladega, AL



A call for presenters/exhibitors for the 2010 Rally for Awareness.

If your students are interested in exhibiting their prevention activities, or presenting in a breakout session, at the Rally, please e-mail sjones@thefocusprogram.com or skey@thefocusprogram.com.



World AIDS Day was December 1st!

World AIDS Day was first observed in December 1, 1988, after an international summit of health ministers called for a new spirit of social tolerance and a greater exchange of information on HIV/AIDS. Observed annually on December 1, World AIDS Day serves to strengthen global efforts to address the challenges of the AIDS pandemic, which continues to spread throughout every region of the world. In recognition of the growing

complexities of the HIV/AIDS global epidemic, UNAIDS was created in 1996 to unite six global agencies in their response to HIV/AIDS. Each year, the Focus Program, in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health and Alabama State Department of Education, coordinates efforts for World AIDS Day in schools and communities.



School Events & Activities for World AIDS Day

Selma High School & South Side High School

In order to increase awareness about World AIDS Day, students from Selma High School and South Side High School participated in a World's AIDS Day luncheon. They also conducted a candlelight vigil for AIDS victims.

Sylacauga High School

In order to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS, Sylacauga High School's FOCUS program provided every teacher and student with a red ribbon to wear throughout the day, as well as a flyer showing the latest HIV/AIDS statistics for each Alabama county. The school also designated an individual as a "Grim Reaper" to pull FOCUS students out of class every 10 minutes to represent 50 deaths caused by AIDS worldwide. The students, who were pulled out of class, put on a white T-shirt showing the date, the time of death, and a number that increased by 50 each ten minutes. The students then returned to class and could not talk the rest of the day. By the end of the day, the FOCUS program had shown that 2,100 people had died from AIDS that day. At 3:00 p.m. the student body was gathered into the school auditorium for a very serious assembly to explain to them what they had witnessed throughout the day. The 42 members of the FOCUS program who had been pulled from class walked into the auditorium from the balcony level in two single-file lines carrying candles. After they were lined up in front of the assembly, a narrator explained what the shirts meant; then the students turned around to show the following message: "Be Aware of Your Actions!! AIDS Awareness Day 2009."

Tarrant High School

The FOCUS club at Tarrant High School conducted many activities to promote World AIDS Day, including a PSA in the morning, a skit sharing AIDS related facts, as well as wearing red t-shirts and red ribbons. They also supplied red ribbons to all the staff and faculty and requested that they wear red for the day. The FOCUS club set up a table in the cafeteria and distributed balloons, handouts, pencils, posters and stickers. Overall, the FOCUS club and entire school enjoyed a very successful first World AIDS Day.



Links to more information about World AIDS Day:

World's AIDS Campaign (<http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/>)

HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

(<http://www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days/world/index.html>)

World AIDS Day (<http://www.worldaidsday.org/>)

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is on February 7, 2010! Almost 10 years old, National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was founded by five national organizations funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1999 to provide capacity building assistance to Black communities and organizations.

Since the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic 25 years ago, African Americans have been overrepresented among those living with and dying from AIDS. The disease continues to affect African Americans more than any other racial/ethnic group in the United States. Today, African Americans comprise only 13% of the U.S. population but account for over half of all new HIV/AIDS diagnoses. Over 200,000 African Americans have died of AIDS, half a million are now living with HIV.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization effort to get Black Americans all across the United States and Territorial Areas to “get educated” about the basics of HIV/AIDS; “get tested” to know their HIV status; “get involved” locally in their community and family to highlight the HIV/AIDS epidemic; and “get treated” if they are living with HIV/AIDS. For more information please visit the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day website (<http://www.blackaidsday.org/>).

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Resource Guide

(<http://www.thefocusprogram.com/uploadedFiles/National%20Black%20HIV-AIDS%20Awareness%20Day%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>)

Please send a brief description of your National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (February 7, 2010) planned activities to sjones@thefocusprogram.com.



Congratulations to **Austin High School** for being selected as December's FOCUSED & Featured School!

The Austin High School FOCUS Program, facilitated by Heather Tucker, currently enjoys a membership of 24 students.

On December 1, World AIDS Day, Austin High School brought in Ole Pete Key to speak to the student body. Ole Pete Key did a fantastic job and the event was reported as a success on many levels. The students loved it and stated that they learned a lot and many members of the faculty commented that it was the best AIDS presentation they had ever seen! Austin High School was able to bring in Ole Pete Key by using funds raised through donations from local businesses.

Austin High School has also been presenting a puppet show to third graders teaching about the dangers of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs. They purchased the puppet supplies using a grant from the Morgan County Substance Abuse Network. Austin High School also received a grant from the network to teach "TarWars" to the fifth grade classes next semester. Using funding from an Alabama Academy of Family Physicians' grant, the school's FOCUS program also purchased FOCUS t-shirts to wear while teaching the project

Once again, congratulations to Austin High School for being selected as December's FOCUSED & Featured School!



WIN \$500.00 for your school!

Schools are being asked to submit an innovative idea to address Childhood Obesity in Alabama. The winner will be announced at the 8th Annual "Rally for Awareness" in Talladega, on April 29, 2010. Details to follow in the January newsletter.



The FOCUS Programs wants to acknowledge your school's hard work through our new FOCUSED & Featured section!

The FOCUSED & Featured section of The FOCUS Program was created to acknowledge schools that have implemented the FOCUS Program within their school and, as a result, have created a successful prevention (of HIV/AIDS and other adolescent risk behaviors) activity or project that they would like to share with others.

Each month a school will be selected out of the entries and will be highlighted in the upcoming month's FOCUS eNewsletter. In order to submit your school's successful prevention activity or project simply fill out the FOCUSED & Featured Form ([http://www.thefocusprogram.com/uploadedFiles/Focused%20&%20Featured%20Form\(4\).pdf](http://www.thefocusprogram.com/uploadedFiles/Focused%20&%20Featured%20Form(4).pdf)) and email the completed form to April Smith (asmith@thefocusprogram.com). In order to be considered for the upcoming month's eNewsletter all FOCUSED & Featured Forms must be submitted by the **7th of each month.**

In early March the top three prevention activities or projects will be selected and those three schools will be awarded FREE registration for 20 students and 2 facilitators for the 2010 Rally for Awareness, which will be held on April 29th at the Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega, AL!

*Congratulations again to **Sylacauga High School** for being selected as the FOCUS Program's FOCUSED & Featured School for the month of November! For more information please see the press release.*

<http://www.thefocusprogram.com/uploadedFiles/Press%20Release%20-%20November's%20FOCUSED%20&%20Featured%20School.pdf>



December Health Observances

Health observances are days, weeks, or months devoted to promoting particular health concerns. Teachers, students, community groups, and others can use these special times to sponsor health promotion events, stimulate awareness of health risks, or focus on disease prevention. Materials available from sponsoring organizations range from a single flyer to packets of promotional materials. For more information on monthly health observances visit the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services website (www.healthfinder.gov/nho).

- 1: World AIDS Day
- 1-31: Safe Toys and Gifts Month
- 1-7: National Aplastic Anemia and MDS Awareness Week
- 6-12: National Handwashing Awareness Week



The FOCUS Program is now on Facebook!
(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=49776916454>) Become a member of our group and join us in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other adolescent risk behaviors!



Have you been to our website recently? Be sure to check it out at www.thefocusprogram.com!



"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" and thank you for all your hard work in 2009!

The FOCUS Program's eNewsletter provides links to articles and websites with information on current events, research, funding opportunities and other items related to the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other adolescent risk behaviors. The inclusion of this information does not imply endorsement by the FOCUS Program and the opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position, policies or views of the FOCUS Program.