



POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

Risk accumulates—after 3 p.m.
Opportunity improves—with Positive Alternatives

Historical Background: In order to provide young people positive alternatives to substance use and gang involvement, in 1991 San Francisco Unified School District developed a Positive Alternatives program for middle school and high school students. Components of grant proposals submitted and awarded to SHPD included developing access to positive alternative activities. Through a collaborative with the San Francisco Police Department, SFUSD's Urban Pioneer Program, and the Blue Water Sailing Foundation, SHPD has been able to offer sailing, ropes courses, and backpacking trips to select middle and high school students. Additional grant funding was secured to develop a before school/lunchtime physical activities program.

Site coordinators were identified and provided a stipend to implement this program and participate as a member of the site based Healthy School Team or the Health Promotion Committee.

What is the goal of the Positive Alternatives Program?

The goal is to provide positive alternative activities including sailing, backpacking and ropes courses to middle and high school students to increase their self-esteem.

What is the Positive Alternatives Program?

A selection criteria is established at each school site to identify student participants. Activities provided to students include:

- **SAILING:** includes spending the day aboard vessels skippered by an experienced captain. Fourteen students are given an introduction to sailing operations and basic on-board safety procedures. Students work cooperatively to accomplish a common goal—a smooth sailing trip.
- **ROPES COURSE:** includes warm-ups, games, group initiative problem solving, low ropes course elements and rigorous physically and emotionally challenging events.
- **BACKPACKING:** an outdoor three-day adventure consisting of mental and physical challenges which emphasize teamwork, trust, individual, and group effort. Includes organizing and packing equipment, hiking 1-10 miles away from roads and electricity, and preparing and cooking meals.
- **PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES:** includes opportunities to participate in before school/lunchtime activities. Hip-hop dance, basketball, volleyball, hiking, tennis, martial arts, badminton, soccer and ping pong are some of the activities offered at participating middle schools. Activities are based upon - students identified interest obtained via surveys.

Activities within SFUSD and School Health Programs Department that support Positive Alternatives:

- Healthy School Team
- Health Promotion Committee
- Student Assistance Program
- Tobacco Prevention Program
- Safe and Drug Free Schools

For further information contact:

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