Optional Activities

- **Coordinate an HIV/AIDS information fair.**

  Have students plan an HIV/AIDS information fair, for which they would create lessons, presentations, and exhibits about HIV/AIDS for families and other students. With approval from the school principal, and in accordance with New York City Department of Education policies, students may invite representatives of appropriate community-based organizations, such as youth-assisting hospitals or agencies that care for PLWHA, to participate. Alternatively, students can develop HIV/AIDS activities for their classes in the school.

- **Design an HIV/AIDS community resource map.**

  Have students draw a map of their own community identifying agencies or institutions that could be resources for people with HIV/AIDS concerns. They may also design a brochure that incorporates the map, listing and describing each resource.

- **Express feelings about HIV/AIDS through art.**

  Have students construct an AIDS quilt or collage, commemorating those who have died of AIDS. Students also can make posters about HIV/AIDS. Display the quilt, collage, or posters in the school or in the community, e.g., at a community center, post office, bank. Offer them as gifts to a community health facility.

- **Raise money to help people with HIV/AIDS.**

  Conduct a fund-raising talent show, dance marathon, bake sale, sports event, or auction of AIDS quilts, collages, and posters. (Check with the schoo1 principal about how to do so.) Donate money to a community HIV/AIDS project or clinic.

- **Assess society's response to HIV/AIDS.**

  Research and critique efforts to control the epidemic over the last decade. What successes and failures have occurred?

- **Invite a guest speaker who is HIV-positive or living with AIDS to class.**

  Obtain approval from your principal before inviting a guest to speak about HIV/AIDS or related topics. Meet or talk by phone with the guest speaker in advance to determine appropriateness for the grade level. Examine all materials with your principal at least 72 hours prior to the presentation.

- **Invite a scientist, doctor, or other health provider who can describe the advances in treatment for HIV.**

  Remember to obtain approval from your principal before inviting a guest to speak about HIV/AIDS or related topics. Meet or talk by phone with the guest speaker in advance to determine appropriateness for the grade level. Examine all materials with your principal at least 72 hours prior to the presentation.

- **Learn through interviewing.**

  Have students interview someone with expertise in HIV/AIDS-related issues. To prepare, review interviewing techniques and have students practice by interviewing each other. Discuss how to interview with respect, compassion, and empathy.

- **Stage a debate.**

  Have students conduct a debate on comprehensive sexual health education. For example: discuss a situation where sexual health education is a part of the health education curriculum for middle and high schools. Some parents believe that educating teens about sexuality sends young people a message that it's okay to have sex; others believe that sexuality is a natural part of every person's development and that students need to be informed about the risks and taught how to protect themselves if and/or when they decide to become sexually active.

- **Debate the issues.**

  Have students engage in a formal debate on another topic related to HIV/AIDS.

- **Lobby the legislators.**

  Define the term lobby. Have students identify their legislators' names and addresses, and write letters expressing their views on an HIV/AIDS issue. They may write to the President, a senator, a representative, a state assembly member, or a city council member. The letter-writing activity will be especially effective if students first explore legislators' views and voting records on HIV/AIDS- related issues. Their letters can then be tailored to individual legislators. Alternatively, students can write to support or oppose a specific bill that is coming up for vote.

- **Discuss how much of the federal budget should go to HIV/AIDS.**

  Have students enact a scenario in which they are members of the Senate Budget Committee. They must decide how to divide tax money to meet the nation's needs. Have students:

  – List ten budget categories (e.g., defense; education; housing; highway, bridge, and tunnel construction and repair; development of a national health insurance plan; Social Security; public assistance; HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and research; teen pregnancy prevention programs; drug prevention and rehabilitation programs; etc.).

  – Begin with a theoretical budget of $100 million for each category.

  – Consider a request by HIV/AIDS activists to increase the HIV/AIDS funding and the reasons for such a request.

  – Assign priorities to budget categories, and consider whether and how to increase HIV/AIDS programs' allocated amount.

- **Write about HIV/AIDS.**

  Give students opportunities to express thoughts and feelings about HIV/AIDS in writing. For example, students can:

  – Write an editorial on an HIV/AIDS social issue recently mentioned in the newspaper.

  – Write poems. (See other writing activities in this section.)

  – Write short stories or essays.

  – Write and produce public service announcements for radio and TV.

  – Write reviews of books, films, or TV shows about HIV/AIDS.

- **Create a peer theater program.**

  Have students develop theatrical scripts and productions about young people coping with HIV-related decisions and situations. Theatre programs can be performed in classrooms, in an assembly, and perhaps in other schools or community sites as well.

- **Organize volunteer projects.**

  With approval from your principal and in accordance with Department of Education policies, arrange for students to volunteer at HIV/AIDS service agencies.