

# A Grad to Remember



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*This manual is intended as a guide for Albertans who wish to organize an alcohol-free graduation party. The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission is not responsible for any harm resulting from any person or persons adopting suggestions contained in this manual, or for any costs that proceed from activities suggested or related to the material contained in this manual.*

# Introduction

For Grade 12 students across Alberta, high school graduation parties are an important rite of passage. The convocation, the banquet, and the dance are the social events that define where high school ends and “the rest of life” begins. It is a time to celebrate, a time to say goodbye to close friends, and a time to look to the future.

Immediately after the formal ceremonies and events, many graduates continue their celebrations by attending after-grad parties. At these parties, alcohol and drug use can be common; and all too often, the use of these substances, either directly or indirectly, results in tragedy.

In the 1980s, parents and teachers tried to address a particular hazard associated with after-grad parties – drinking and driving – by sponsoring and organizing “safe grads,” where the focus was on getting the graduates safely to the party and back. The safe grad concept assumed that most graduates would drink at after-grad parties “no matter what;” by providing a controlled environment, with pre-arranged transportation, organizers hoped that the graduates would have a better chance of arriving home safely.

Some families and communities are reassured by the idea of a “safe grad.” Others do not feel comfortable with condoning alcohol use even for one night: they would like to see their sons and daughters celebrate this rite of passage without drinking at all.

It is this philosophy that led to the “dry grad” concept, an idea that has become increasingly popular in Canada, particularly since the mid-1990s. Simply put, a dry grad is an all-night supervised after-grad party where no alcohol or drugs are allowed.

This guide is intended as a resource for parents, teachers, students, and anyone interested or involved in organizing a dry grad. It answers important questions about dry grads, describes how to get things done, and guides dry grad planning from start to finish. There are recommendations and suggestions for a successful dry grad

from actual dry grad organizers, information on specific Alberta legislation relevant to dry grad planning, samples of correspondence, and more.

With these tools, it is possible to plan a graduation party where students and their friends can be together, have a great time, share memories, and dance the night away – all without alcohol.



# Definitions

## **Wet grad**

A wet grad is an after-grad party, held either at a private home or out doors on private property, where alcohol use is permitted. This type of after-grad party may be hosted by parents or by students themselves, and tends to have few, if any, controls.

## **Safe grad**

Safe grad refers to a supervised and controlled after-grad event, held after the formal graduation ceremonies, whose intent is to reduce and prevent injuries and fatalities caused by excessive or unsupervised partying and subsequent intoxicated driving. Safe grads may or may not allow alcohol consumption, but do not condone the use of any other drug. To ensure that partygoers do not drink and drive, parents often arrange alternate transportation to get graduates to and from the site of the party.

## **Dry grad**

An all-night supervised party for graduating students and their guests, with absolutely no drugs or alcohol allowed. A dry grad party immediately follows the formal convocation, banquet, and/or dance, and typically ends at 5:00 or 6:00 AM the following morning. The party generally features enticing activities, prizes, and entertainment designed to persuade graduates to attend and keep them occupied until the opportunity of attending a “wet grad” that night has passed.

# Questions and Answers

## What is a dry grad party?

In its strictest and simplest sense, a dry grad party is an all-night after-grad party where a complete prohibition on drug and alcohol use is enforced. To compensate for what teens might perceive as a lack of fun in the absence of alcohol, dry grad parties typically offer an unusually exciting and absorbing variety of fun activities, compelling entertainment, and valuable prizes, in order to entice graduates and their guests to attend.

The aim of a dry grad party is primarily to reduce the risk of harm to the graduates, and the community at large, on a night when that risk is unusually high. It is a way to ensure that on this one particular night, kids aren't drinking, abusing drugs, or engaging in other high-risk behaviour. It is an event where graduates can have the time of their lives without risking their lives – and without breaking the law. In addition, the size and scope of dry grad parties is also intended to be a well-deserved celebration of the graduates' achievement, and an acknowledgement of the years of hard work they put into completing their high school education.

And, in a larger sense, dry grad is the first step in establishing a new “tradition” of drug- and alcohol-free celebrations at the school and in the community. Hopefully, with the success of a dry grad event, students and others in the community will begin to embrace the concept that a great party – at any time – doesn't necessarily need drugs and alcohol to be fun.

## Who organizes the dry grad?

Dry grads require the energy and devotion of a core group of volunteers who do the overall planning and presentation of the party. While students, teacher advisors, and school administrators are the primary organizers of the formal graduation ceremony, it is parents who normally take responsibility for organizing a dry grad party. For the event itself, as many as 100 volunteers can be required to supervise partygoers, run and organize activities, and serve food.

Students of the graduating class sometimes become involved in organizing dry grad in various ways. For instance, they might be representatives on the organizing committee, act as liaisons between the dry grad organizers and the graduates, or assist with fundraising events and other subcommittees. However, many dry grad parties are organized without any cooperation, interest, or assistance from students, but are successful nonetheless.

## How does a dry grad work?

The dry grad party should immediately follow the formal graduation ceremonies, which may include the convocation, banquet, and dance. If the formal part of the graduation concludes at 11:00 pm, the dry grad should start at that time or shortly thereafter, so that there is little unscheduled or unsupervised time for the graduates to fill between the parties. The dry grad then runs straight through until the next morning, typically until 5:00 or 6:00 AM, to ensure that graduates do not leave to go to another party where there could be drugs or alcohol. When graduates are kept occupied until the early hours of the morning, they are more inclined to “call it a night” by the time the party ends – and go home safe and sober.

No alcohol is served at dry grad parties. To make sure that no outside alcohol or drugs make their way into the party, celebrants are not allowed to leave and return once they have entered the venue where the party is being held. In addition, some dry grads have police or RCMP at the door as the party begins, to assist with screening and searching attendees if necessary.

Tickets are sold for the event to graduates, their escorts, and guests. Some dry grads require ticket buyers to register contact information in case a parent or guardian needs to be called. This information may be needed in various situations: for example, if ticket holders come to the grad already drunk or high, or if they want to leave the party and go home early, their contact person can be called to pick them up.

A dry grad is designed to be an overwhelmingly positive experience for the graduates; hopefully, a fun party will generate word-of-mouth interest and enthusiasm among future graduates (and will lead to future dry grad parties) for years to come. Accordingly, the party should feature the best, most cutting-edge entertainment that is available and affordable.

To ensure graduates remain at the party until the very end, special prizes are given away throughout the night, usually culminating with a “grand prize” draw as the festivities are coming to a close.

## **Where do dry grads take place?**

Since dry grad parties last all night, organizers should consider the impact of the event on the surrounding area, taking into account issues such as traffic, noise, and parking availability, when choosing a location for the party. The venue should have enough space to accommodate a number of different activities and entertainment. It should also feature controlled access; all entrances and exits have to be manned by security volunteers.

Locations that would be appropriate for a dry grad party include

- ◆ a local recreation or leisure centre
- ◆ a school or college facility
- ◆ an amusement park or water park
- ◆ a river boat
- ◆ a sports arena or convention centre

## **When should planning for the dry grad begin?**

As with any other big party, the sooner you start planning, the better. To ensure that you get the location of your choice, you will usually need to book one year before the event. Also, keep in mind that many donors and sponsors may need months of advance notice in order to prepare and deliver their donations or services. In addition, large companies and corporations will often require applications for funding to be submitted long before the actual event in order to fit donations within their fiscal year.

## What happens at a dry grad?

There is no single prescribed event or activity that must take place as part of a dry grad. The only imperative is that no alcohol or other drugs can be present. Aside from that, anything is possible. However, as one of the goals of a dry grad is to provide graduates with an evening of exhilarating entertainment, the activities chosen are usually highly original, unusual, and compelling.

Many organizers survey the senior class to find out what events and entertainment they would like to have at their party. However, some organizers like the idea of surprising the graduates; in that case, it can be helpful to look at what other dry grad events have done to excite and capture the imagination of their seniors.

Some popular dry grad entertainments include live music, inflatable games (such as Obstacle Course, Gladiator Joust and Sumo Wrestling), swimming and other sports, magicians, or hypnotist entertainers.

In addition to the entertainment, free food and drinks (non-alcoholic, of course) are usually served throughout the party. The menu generally consists of “finger foods,” thus reducing the need for cutlery and other more formal dining arrangements.

Holding prize giveaways at dry grads has proven to be an effective way to entice graduates to attend. Some dry grad organizers try to have one prize for each person attending the party.



# Seven Simple Steps to Dry Grad Planning

## Step 1 Groundwork

- ◆ Promote the idea of a dry grad with school administrators, parents, students, and the community.
- ◆ Confirm dates for formal convocation and set dry grad for the same night.
- ◆ Book a facility.
- ◆ Recruit volunteers – students, parents, teachers, and others in the community.

## Step 2 Planning

- ◆ Formalize the core group of volunteers who will organize the whole event.
- ◆ Set up committees as needed.
- ◆ Develop a plan for how to promote the event, what activities to book, fundraising ideas, what prizes to get, how many volunteers will be needed for the dry grad, and what security measures will be in place.
- ◆ Set up a proposed schedule for activities, and the volunteer assignments.

## Step 3 Action

- ◆ Solicit funds and donations of goods or services.
- ◆ Book equipment, events, and entertainers.
- ◆ Print tickets and promote the dry grad in the school and in the community.
- ◆ Arrange food and book vending machines.
- ◆ Recruit security personnel including parents and local police.

## Step 4 Final Days

- ◆ Wind up fundraising; make the last push to promote the event.
- ◆ Make final confirmations for all equipment, entertainment, and food.
- ◆ Prepare cheques as needed.
- ◆ Confirm the schedule of events and volunteer assignments.

## Step 5 The Main Event

- ◆ Do final set-up (Grade 11 parents to do so Grade 12 parents can attend formal graduation ceremonies).
- ◆ Confirm final assignments, set up volunteer check-in and direct volunteers to assigned duties.
- ◆ Complete admissions and close the gate.
- ◆ Enjoy the party; record the event.



## Step 6 Acknowledgements

- ◆ Recognize all sponsors and donors through the media or school assembly.
- ◆ Acknowledge the contributions of parents, students and teachers.
- ◆ Say “thank you” to all volunteers and faculty.

## Step 7 Evaluations

- ◆ Debrief the event with all committee members.
- ◆ Review student evaluations.
- ◆ Identify key points learned and record changes for next year.
- ◆ Assist next year’s organizing committee to get things started.



# The Eight Key Elements of a Dry Grad

Although planning a dry grad requires attention to an extraordinary number of details, the overall planning process can be reduced into eight basic areas of concern. If organizers attend to each of these eight key areas, they should have a much easier time planning a successful party.

## 1. Promotion

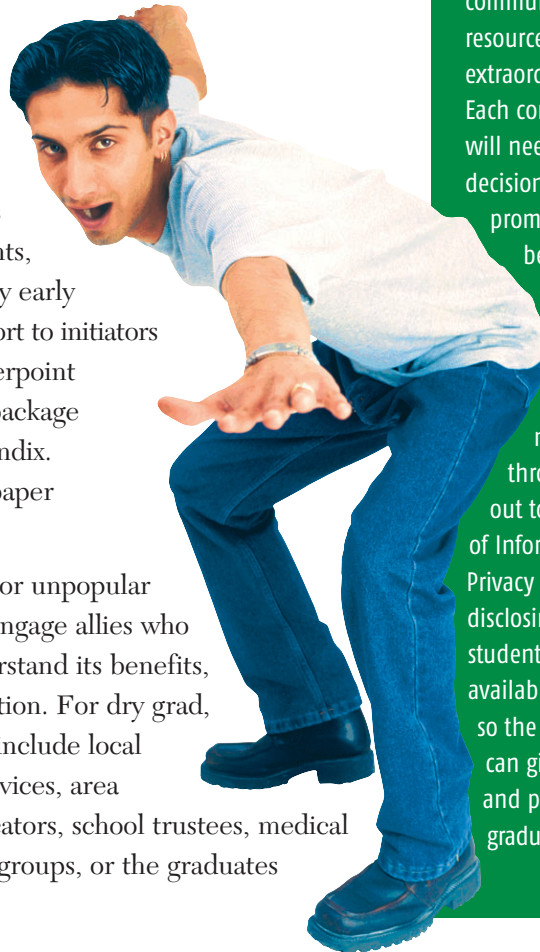
Planning a dry grad involves more than simply choosing a venue, booking entertainment, and arranging for food and drinks. An early hurdle often arises in “selling” the idea to graduates and garnering support and assistance from the community at large. While some adults and teens will embrace the concept of a “dry” after-grad event as a good idea, inevitably many others will believe that an alcohol-free event would be poorly received and attended, and therefore not worth any effort.

It is important for organizers to be able to reply to any questions or concerns with persuasive facts and information, such as the effects of alcohol and issues related to binge drinking. It may also be helpful to proactively distribute information about the dry grad concept by conducting presentations for teachers, parents, students, and others in the community early in the school year. As a support to initiators and organizers, a brief Powerpoint presentation is part of this package and is included in the Appendix. Sample newsletter or newspaper articles are also provided.

When promoting any novel or unpopular idea, it is good to find and engage allies who share the same vision, understand its benefits, and can help bring it to fruition. For dry grad, these potential allies might include local police or RCMP, Victim Services, area addictions counsellors, educators, school trustees, medical staff, other parents, church groups, or the graduates

Some organizers advertise and promote the dry grad event solely through the school, and don't seek out community support. It is felt in this case that graduation night is a special and emotional time for the graduates, and community involvement would be an unwelcome infringement on the graduates' privacy. On the other hand, organizers who actively promote an alcohol-free event can sometimes galvanize the community and uncover vast resources that contribute to an extraordinarily successful event. Each committee and community will need to make their own decision on how much

promotion there should be and how far afield it should go. At the very least, it is helpful for the event to be advertised in the school newsletter, and hopefully through some form of mail-out to parents. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act restricts schools from disclosing information about students. Have permission slips available at Grade 12 registration so the school administration can give names, addresses, and phone numbers of graduates to dry grad organizers.



themselves. Again, having clear facts and information on hand will be a powerful tool when trying to convince others to help create a dry grad.

Once there is enough community support to get the dry grad concept off the ground, organizers will need to advertise the event itself and convince graduates to attend. They will also likely need to solicit donations from a variety of sources and fundraise in the community. The best strategy at this stage is to promote dry grad plans to as large an audience as possible, using tools such as advertisements in the school newsletter, article submissions to the local newspaper, and interviews on a local radio station.

Despite organizers' best efforts, attracting people to support and attend the first dry grad party in the community may be very difficult. Graduates might not believe that an alcohol-free event can be fun; sponsorship and donations may be hard to come by; and some parents may never be convinced that a dry grad concept is a good idea. However, it is important to note that many dry grads have started small and, over time, have developed into major community events. When this happens, it is usually the result of the best promotion of all – word of mouth. A successful first party, no matter how small, will promote dry grads in subsequent years.

## 2. Fundraising and Sponsorship

The cost associated with throwing a dry grad currently ranges from approximately \$10,000 to \$30,000. Ticket sales generally cover one-third to one-half the costs, but the remainder will usually need to be obtained through fundraising. Organizers will need to plan, promote, and run fundraising events; keep an accurate accounting of all funds received and spent; and actively approach businesses and other potential sponsors for donations and support.

Fundraising ideas and sponsorship strategies vary, depending upon the presence of businesses and service clubs in each municipality. Some ideas for raising money or donations include

- ◆ asking parents to purchase products with their air miles and then donate these to the dry grad
- ◆ soliciting local businesses and professionals for contributions
- ◆ asking provincial automobile associations for their endorsement
- ◆ asking local liquor stores to contribute
- ◆ approaching locally-based labour unions for their support
- ◆ organizing product sales (firewood, cookie dough, hanging baskets) to generate revenue
- ◆ asking food clubs or local grocery stores to supply food for the dry grad

Many organizers have formal tickets printed for the event, reducing the likelihood of forgeries or duplicates being made, and ensuring only registered graduates and their guests attend the party. In 2002 and 2003, ticket prices for most dry grads were between \$25 and \$30. Ticket sales have been generally limited to graduates and their escorts, and made available to other guests only if numbers permit. However, there is at least one dry grad where tickets are distributed at no charge to students and their escorts, and are sold to other guests. It is helpful if there is room on the ticket stub for attendees to write their names for submission in the evening's prize draws. Liquor stores in B.C. donated \$125,313 to support dry graduations throughout the province in 2002–2003.

Additional fundraising ideas are included in the Appendices.

### 3. Entertainment

Many graduates may be skeptical about attending an alcohol-free after-grad party. One of the important ways to convince them to attend is to arrange compelling, varied, and unique entertainment for the party. The idea is to provide graduates and guests with a stream of exciting activities that define “fun” in a new way, allowing them to celebrate without using alcohol. There should also be enough entertainment to keep the celebrants occupied until the next morning, in keeping with the dry grad concept of an all-night party.

Here are some entertainment ideas.

#### Inflatable entertainment

A number of promotional companies rent equipment that is created by inflating it with air from a constant blower. The equipment requirements are usually a separate power source like a portable generator, or specially rigged electric connections. Also referred to as “air games,” the inflatable entertainment includes Obstacle Course, Gladiator Joust, Sumo Wrestling, Bungee Run and Velcro Olympics. This is competitive entertainment, encouraging participants to be physically active and involved. Rentals are available across Alberta from party suppliers.

#### Performers

These include live performers such as hypnotists, caricaturists, magicians, and temporary tattoo artists. Offered in conjunction with more active sports and competitions, this type of entertainment is a great way to keep the interest of the graduates as they take breaks.

#### Music

No great party is complete without music to dance to, listen to, sing to, or be part of. Live bands, pre-recorded music, and karaoke have all made a show at dry grads. Many organizers express a preference for music played by a disc jockey (DJ), allowing for a wider variety of music with fewer interruptions.

#### Sports and recreation

When dry grads are held in facilities that have amenities like swimming pools, hockey rinks, gymnasiums, racquetball courts, and volleyball, these are often operated for the graduates to enjoy. Some coordinated activities might include relay races, water hockey, snorkeling, kayaking, basketball, or hockey games.

#### Car bashing

A discarded vehicle is donated. Students can take turns hitting the car with a large sledgehammer: safety glasses required. The vehicle should be drained of any and all fluids by the wrecking yard or supplier.

To ensure that there are pictures to record the event, one dry grad employs the talents of two Grade 11 students from the yearbook or photography club of the school. The students are given free admission to the dry grad, and are provided with film to shoot pictures all night long.

Disposable cameras may be donated or bought for the party, and given to graduates so they can take pictures throughout the evening. The cameras can then either be taken home to be developed, or left for the organizers to develop and return to the graduates later.

## Movies

For those that need a break from the excitement of the evening, a movie theatre set up in a quieter part of the facility gives students and guests a chance to rest and enjoy a good movie.

## Climbing/Velcro walls

A number of portable walls are available to rent, and usually include safety equipment and safety instructors.

Few event planners include breakfast at the dry grad party, primarily because the youth eat all night long, and most don't have an appetite for a large, full breakfast at the end of the party. Some fun foods, such as cotton candy or fresh popcorn, can be made onsite with the appropriate machine. Some dry grad events have slush machines or pop dispensers set up for students to serve themselves.

## 4. Food

Arranging food for dry grads tends to be relatively easy. Any finger foods, including pizza, popcorn, nachos, donuts, chips, and candy, are popular because they don't require plates or cutlery. Fresh fruit and vegetables are also good choices. Any foods that require refrigeration or may spoil overnight are not recommended.

Most organizers of previous dry grads recommend that the food and drinks be made available throughout the night. While pop, sport drinks, and fruit drinks are popular, water should be provided as well.

Large grocery stores, chain restaurants, and pizza franchises are good sources for gift certificates, discounts, or food

donations. While these contributions might not cover the entire cost of the food, they will help defray much of the overall expense. It is important to “shop locally” when trying to gain support for a dry grad, as businesses will be more interested in building goodwill in their own community.

## 5. Prizes

Offering prizes has turned out to be an immensely popular way of convincing graduates to attend a dry grad party – so much so, in fact, that many organizers try to have one prize for every graduate attending the event. Prizes may include anything from light sticks, to music CDs, to personal electronic equipment, to DVD players and sound systems, to a grand prize of cash or a car. The only requirement is that prizes must all be desirable to, and popular with, students in the graduating class.

Prizes are typically awarded throughout the evening, and winners are usually selected through simple ticket draws. To be eligible to win a prize, the student must be present at the dry grad. This reduces the likelihood of attendees leaving before the end of the night. The largest and most expensive prizes (such as a car or a large amount of money) are given away at the end of the evening. These prizes are usually awarded only to graduates.

In the province of British Columbia, where the legal drinking age is 19, an extremely popular dry grad prize is a reconditioned, “like new” automobile, donated from a car dealership, and made possible with the support of the area's businesses, the school's trade programs, and related suppliers. Over the past several years, at least a dozen cars have been given away at dry grad

Some other prizes that have been awarded at dry grad parties include:

- ◆ TV-VCR combo
- ◆ DVD players
- ◆ stereo system
- ◆ cash prize
- ◆ microwaves
- ◆ Global Positioning System (GPS) devices
- ◆ televisions
- ◆ cameras
- ◆ walkie-talkie sets
- ◆ CD carrying cases

parties in B.C., and the concept has greatly increased the attendance and popularity of these events.

The program works by having a local car dealership donate a used vehicle to the dry grad program. The dealer then seeks out the services of body shops, mechanics, upholsterers, detailers, and tire shops, asking them to donate their services to restore the car to nearly new condition. After any needed work is done, the car is given final certification by the dealership's mechanics.

At the end of the dry grad party, one lucky graduate's name is drawn and announced as the winner. The make and model of the car itself is kept secret until the next day, when the presentation of the vehicle is made at a special ceremony in front of the entire student body, the school administration, the press, and local community leaders.

This is one of the most powerful draws for a dry grad,

and can help make the event the most anticipated and popular party of the year. For more information about the Car Program, see the Appendix.

One dry grad party distributes real door prizes. As the guests arrive, predetermined entry numbers are awarded prizes like walkmans, sunglasses, or cameras. For example, a door prize may be given away to the 50th arrival, the 75th, and the 100th person to pass through the front door.

As part of their prize giveaways, some dry grads create their own logo, and make T-shirt mementos for the graduates to take home at the end of the party. The T-shirt silk screening might be done by one of the classes in the high school, and could include the graduation year and major sponsors' logos.

## 6. Facilities

The choice of venue for a dry grad can go a long way in determining the success of a dry grad event. The facility needs to be contained so that entrances and exits can be monitored (for this reason, campgrounds or other open spaces do not generally make good sites to hold a dry grad).

In addition, the venue should be able to accommodate all the graduates and their guests, while providing enough space to have fun and make the best use of all the activities that will be offered at the dry grad.

Floor plans of the facility may be required if organizers need to map out the locations of various staffing stations and entertainment. In some instances, contracted electrical work may be required

In Cold Lake, organizers hold the dry grad at a recreation centre on the Cold Lake CFB base, and military personnel staff the party as volunteers.

Large recreation facilities may have lifeguards and other staff that might be willing to offer their services on a volunteer basis if the party is booked at their facility.

Organizers should ask an insurance broker about issuing an insurance policy to cover the liability of using specific facilities, equipment, and entertainment. This protects all the participants, the executive committee, volunteers, and businesses that are involved in the event.

to meet the minimum code standards for some larger entertainment pieces. This information should be provided at the time the equipment is booked, and coordinated with the facility's management.

## 7. Safety and security

The fundamental premise of a dry grad event is that alcohol and drugs will not be allowed. Dry grad parties feature security rules that are designed to accomplish this goal. The main security features of a dry grad are:

- ◆ no “in-and-out” privileges – once someone leaves, he or she can't come back in
- ◆ all entrances, exits, and events must be supervised by adult volunteers
- ◆ tickets are required for entry
- ◆ the party must be completely contained within a closed venue.

As far as security issues go, most organizers report that there are very few problems at the dry grad. There are often only a few actual rules – just enough to allow graduates to be safe and maintain a respectful environment. For the most part, the participants are encouraged to get active, have fun, and celebrate their graduation. Security personnel and supervisors remain in the background as much as possible so as not to intrude upon the event, and give the youth a great deal of room to enjoy themselves.

To ensure that no drugs or alcohol make it into the party, some organizers have instituted searches at the entry point when party participants arrive. If alcohol is found, it is immediately confiscated and disposed of. The students' parents are then called, and they are sent home. If any graduates or guests appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they arrive, their parents are likewise notified and admission refused.

To prevent students from leaving to use alcohol or drugs, and then coming back to the dry grad party, virtually every dry grad event prohibits guests leaving and re-entering the party. In most cases, this has proven to be no problem. However, if someone tries to break this rule, there are different ways to handle the situation – organizers should have a clear policy drawn up beforehand so their volunteer staff knows what to do.

## 8. Volunteer staff

A dry grad event is most manageable when there are two to four hour shifts for volunteers, if numbers allow. It is recommended that adults leave the facility as they finish their shifts and meet their replacements, so there are not too many adults around. The night is really for the graduates.

The number of events or activities, the number of guests, the length of the shifts, and the requirements for the facility determine the number of volunteers required. One large event

All adult volunteers should be given clear instructions to abstain from alcohol themselves on this important night.

First aid providers should be available all night long to ensure the safety and well being of the participants and volunteers and to respond if there are any accidents or illnesses.

In Abbotsford, B.C., students from W. J. Mouat Secondary School are dealt with severely if they bring alcohol to a dry grad event (which is held prior to the official graduation ceremony). Students who sneak in alcohol can be banned from attending the graduation ceremony.

with approximately 700 guests may require 12 organizers, 25 security personnel, 20 game supervisors, and at least six food servers.

Most of the adult volunteers for a dry grad tend to be the parents of the graduating class. This poses a slight problem for those parents who want to attend all of the early events including the ceremony, banquet, and dance, because they don't want to be setting up the facility for the dry grad and miss the formal part of the graduation ceremony.

A great solution is to have final set-up activities completed by a group of Grade 11 parents, who then go home immediately upon the arrival of the regular crew. This helps prepare the way for the next year's graduates, and contributes to the continuity of the event as well.

### **Volunteer staff requirements**

As volunteers are recruited at the beginning of the year, it is recommended that one organizer be the primary contact until a few weeks before the dry grad.

Confirmation calls for volunteers should occur four to six weeks prior to the dry grad. Within two weeks of the event, the coordinators in each staff area (food, security, etc.) should call each volunteer to provide detailed instructions. The night before the event, final confirmations should be made.

If T-shirts have been printed for the dry grad, volunteers can be given shirts with "executive," "security," or "games supervisor" boldly printed across the front or back.

Clean-up crews are usually made up of the last shift of volunteers, along with fresh volunteers who have had some sleep and can close the facility.

Recruit parents of Grade 11 students, or other members of the community, to set up for the evening so that parents of the graduates can attend the banquet and formal celebrations.





# Staffing and Volunteer Assignments

The following is the recommended staffing levels and volunteer assignments for a function of 700:

Area/Position	Number of People Required	Assignments
General reception area	2 positions	Give out information and site maps, oversee volunteer check-in, hold prizes (larger prizes that are "won" might be stored here).
The door or entrance gate	4 positions	Take tickets through turnstiles (two volunteers); prepare and hand out packets with coupons, program guides, and other giveaways; award door prizes.
Security at all entrances and exits	positions as required to staff all doors of the facility	Monitor traffic in and out, maintain and enforce the rules; search and seize alcohol or drugs at entry point. <i>Note: local police representatives could be useful during entry times to assist in screening and searches at admission.</i>
Food – main concession	4 positions	Prepare food, put out food, and pick up discards through out shifts. <i>Note: additional concessions such as cotton candy or popcorn will require more volunteers.</i>
Air games	4 positions for each	Ensure the safe use and smooth operation of the inflatable games.
Sports, games, challenges	2 positions per event, or as required by safety codes	To safely monitor and operate the specified sport, game, or challenge. <i>Note: If swimming is available, then facility safety guidelines must be followed.</i>
Prizes	4 positions	Keep all prizes on the site secure, and give away prizes as awarded.
Set-up crew	10 – 15 positions	Meet vendors and equipment rental providers at the facility to ensure set-up; organize prize stores and reception area; prepare fresh food and beverages; prepare other areas (e.g. movie theatre, dancing/music area, dining tables and chairs).
Clean-up crew	10–15 positions	To conduct clean-up; meet rental crews coming to retrieve equipment; gather all left-over materials, prizes, food, and decorations for storage or return; gather and sort recyclables.  If Boy Scouts or other youth groups can be engaged for clean-up, they can be "rewarded" by being allowed to take all the recyclable cans and bottles as payment.

# Dry Grad Planning from Start to Finish

The following master checklist and timeline is for a typical dry grad party, and is intended as a rough guideline for when tasks need to be completed. Organizers should adjust this checklist to fit their special needs and considerations.

## September

- ♦ Meet with school administration to promote dry grad and ask for their support.
- ♦ Confirm dates set for convocation, banquet, and dance.
- ♦ Set dry grad date for the same night.
- ♦ Meet with Parent Advisory Council and ask for their support.
- ♦ Confirm facility booking.
- ♦ Place reservations on large equipment, entertainment, and disc jockey.

## October

- ♦ Send out request for student volunteers.
- ♦ Prepare an article for the local newspaper and school newsletter to solicit parental and community support.
- ♦ Make booking for facility for next year's dry grad – check first with school to confirm date of banquet and dance.
- ♦ Start recruiting key volunteers and set up core organizing committee.

## November

- ♦ Contact the principal to present dry grad info at the first “Graduation and Convocation Information” meeting.
- ♦ Prepare sign-up sheets for parent volunteers at this first meeting.
- ♦ Meet with student representatives interested in assisting with dry grad.
- ♦ Make reservations for equipment, entertainment, and games.
- ♦ Begin booking performers, such as hypnotists and caricaturists.

## January

- ♦ Hold a dry grad general meeting and advertise to attract more volunteers.
- ♦ Form an executive committee from the core volunteers; set up monthly executive meetings with student reps, teacher advisors, and coordinators.
- ♦ Set up other subcommittees as needed to complete all the planning.
- ♦ Plan another general meeting for March to inform parents and students about the upcoming events, prizes, and attractions scheduled for the dry grad.
- ♦ Form a fundraising subcommittee and launch fundraising campaign soliciting donations, funds, and sponsorship.
- ♦ Make major choices and decisions such as the dry grad name and logo, activity choices, products for mementoes, colours or themes, and major goals of the party.

- ◆ Order products such as decals, receipt books, thank-you cards, letterhead stationery, and event coupons.
- ◆ Write letters to equipment providers confirming reservation of the specific equipment for the dry grad date
- ◆ Request the use of brooms and dustpans for clean-up.

## **February**

- ◆ Prepare an article for the local newspaper and school newsletter to solicit community support.
- ◆ Prepare fundraising letter (using dry grad letterhead stationery) and make copies for the fundraising subcommittee.
- ◆ Write letters to recruit volunteers from local youth groups.
- ◆ Establish and publish contest rules for events like a “lip-synch” contest or “battle of the bands.”
- ◆ The finalists (lip-synch and band contestants) will have an opportunity to perform at dry grad.
- ◆ Establish total prize money available to contest winners at the dry grad.
- ◆ Discuss rules and conditions for performances, such as: no swearing; participants must be students attending the school; participants must purchase dry grad tickets (no free passes).
- ◆ Schedule dry grad performances so as to prevent contestants from performing early in the night and then leaving to attend a “wet grad.”
- ◆ Conclude programming for the evening, and draft a schedule of events to give to the advertising subcommittee.
- ◆ Purchase liability insurance from a local broker.

## **March**

- ◆ Start developing volunteer assignments for the actual dry grad event, establishing the shifts for each function.
- ◆ Ask the school administration for assistance in contacting Grade 12 students and parents to help with recruitment of volunteers and ticket sales.
- ◆ Confirm donations and sponsors’ contributions; complete “thank-you” cards or certificates for each donor of prizes, money, or goods “in kind.”
- ◆ Order T-shirts with staff position titles such as “executive,” “security,” and “games supervisor.” Make sure sponsors’ names are on the shirts.

## **April**

- ◆ Confirm the schedule of events.
- ◆ Contact the school’s graphics arts teacher to ask his or her students to produce “coupons” for activities like temporary tattoos or caricature drawing; make sure enough coupons are printed for the number of dry grad attendees you expect.
- ◆ Prepare advertising information for school newsletters.
- ◆ Contact local police to ask for volunteer members to provide security at the event.

## May

- ♦ Identify prize assignments for the door, games, and activities.
- ♦ Obtain facility floor plans and confirm
  - locations for all events and equipment
  - lighting arrangements
  - sound requirements
  - volunteer staging area
  - kitchen and food arrangements
- ♦ Arrange and book generators for inflatable games.
- ♦ Organize a “sneak peek” presentation or event, booking one piece of equipment for use at the school over the lunch hour.
- ♦ At the commencement practice, try to arrange for a dry grad student representative to update graduates on the event and promote ticket sales.
- ♦ Contact artists and performers to confirm booking, and check on any requirements they have regarding equipment, lighting, etc.
- ♦ Contact other community volunteers (such as youth pastors) to ensure supervision coverage for the air games and other activities.
- ♦ Order custom printed tickets.
- ♦ Make arrangements for cleaning equipment (brooms, mops, etc.).
- ♦ Secure insurance certificate and provide a copy to the facility manager, City Hall, and others as required.
- ♦ Arrange for Grade 11 photography students to be dry grad photographers.
- ♦ Deliver tickets to school offices to be put on sale alongside the formal banquet and dance tickets.

## June

- ♦ Confirm the names of the students involved in contests, make contact to let them know the time they will be performing, and reiterate contest guidelines.
- ♦ If possible, provide a locker room for their costumes and props.
- ♦ Ensure that prize money is ready for the night.
- ♦ Provide the DJ with a list of all the participants’ names so he or she can introduce the groups along with the time they will be performing.
- ♦ Re-confirm concession machines and arrange pick-up and drop-off times; verify supply needs with rental company (popcorn, salt, sugar, syrup, etc.).
- ♦ Ensure that all volunteer coordinators have a list of the volunteers in their specific area (security, food, games, etc.) and have them call to confirm each volunteer’s assignment.
- ♦ Arrange pick-ups of T-shirts and other memorabilia or products.
- ♦ Provide students’ music request list to the DJ.
- ♦ Prepare a final schedule of events and make all final volunteer assignments.

- ◆ Prepare a list of needed cheques for dry grad night with the treasurer.
- ◆ Pick up unsold tickets from schools along with a cheque for sold tickets.
- ◆ Pick up coupons from school's graphic arts teacher.

### **The day and night of dry grad**

- ◆ Complete set-up as required (Grade 11 parents to assist with preparation).
- ◆ Confirm and meet all scheduled drop-offs for entertainment, vendors, equipment, and food: ensure payment for all required.
- ◆ Designate volunteer check-in area and post all volunteer assignments.
- ◆ Post the schedule of events.
- ◆ Meet with all organizers and volunteers prior to gate opening to confirm plans and attend to last minute adjustments.
- ◆ Prepare cash float for ticket sales at the door.
- ◆ Enjoy the night!



# Recommendations and Suggestions

## Recommendations and suggestions for a successful dry grad

- ◆ Ensure there is clear signage identifying where to go and where events are.
- ◆ Conduct an evaluation survey of attendees to identify what improvements are required for next year's dry grad; to get evaluations back, have some door prizes specially drawn from the returns.
- ◆ Put a site map on back of an evaluation form and hand out with coupons at the entrance.
- ◆ Make up a large banner saying "Welcome (or Congratulations) Graduates."
- ◆ Have various sizes of T-shirts.
- ◆ Clearly print the opening and closing times of admittance on the tickets, along with the "no re-entry" and "no drugs or alcohol" policies.
- ◆ Leave space on tickets for names to tear off for door prizes.
- ◆ Clearly state the delivery and pick up times for equipment suppliers.
- ◆ Ensure that everyone knows they are not required to pay for anything on site.
- ◆ Many volunteer roles can be doubled up; i.e., set-up and clean-up may not require separate volunteer groups.
- ◆ Make sure there are enough garbage cans and recycling bins at the site.
- ◆ Implement a volunteer check-in procedure: the volunteer coordinator should be on site early and the different area supervisors should be highly visible.
- ◆ Have name tags for the volunteers made in advance and get their full addresses so that thank-you cards can be sent afterwards.
- ◆ Have a special door prize for volunteers only.
- ◆ Send volunteers home after their shift so there aren't too many adults on site at any given time.
- ◆ Thank volunteers at each venue during the course of the night.
- ◆ To encourage circulation throughout the event, design a "passport booklet" for students, and have "passport stamps" at each event location; give away special prizes for completed passports.
- ◆ Start fundraising early in the year.

## Conclusion

A dry grad is much more than just a party. It is an endeavour that requires the commitment of parents, sponsors, and communities to work together to commemorate the success of the graduating students and to send them on their way in a safe and celebratory style.

In order to compete with the thrill of a drinking party, a dry grad must provide its own thrills, challenges, and rewards that far exceed the graduates' expectations. It has to reflect the true value placed on every young person's life, and in some way attempt to convey that value to the graduates.

In the end, there is no "right" way to plan a dry grad. Successful dry grad events have been both large and small. The common thread that runs through them all is that they are well thought-out, well organized by a committed and caring group of volunteers, and they don't permit the use of alcohol. It is important to know and to believe that an alcohol- and drug-free event can be well attended and enjoyed by students and parents alike.



## Powerpoint presentation

A Powerpoint presentation has been provided, which can be used to gain support from students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and potential volunteers and community sponsors.

The Powerpoint presentation includes the following information:

- ◆ What is a Dry Grad party?
- ◆ Who organizes the Dry Grad?
- ◆ How does a Dry Grad work?
- ◆ Where do Dry Grads take place?
- ◆ When should planning for the Dry Grad start?
- ◆ What happens at the Dry Grad?





# Appendices

## A. You should know

For many graduation party organizers in Alberta, stirring up enthusiasm for dry grads is often difficult. A significant reason for this is that approximately half of Grade 12 students in our province are already of legal drinking age by the time they graduate. As a result, there is more of an expectation on the part of graduating seniors that alcohol should be a part of any graduation party. There are some issues, however, that need to be clarified when considering the different graduation options, or when trying to make a public case for supporting a dry grad.

### Liquor licences in Alberta

Graduation event planners in Alberta can submit an application for a special event liquor licence to serve alcohol to persons 18 years of age and over at a graduation event. However, several rules and restrictions apply:

- ◆ An application can be made to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) for a licence to serve liquor but it can be issued only for the banquet and dance portion of the graduation festivities. The application must be made by the executive of the school's parent advisory committee, or by a service club like the Rotary Club, Kinsmen, or Lions Club. The person or organization applying for the licence is held legally responsible and liable for the event.
- ◆ Licences are not issued for any after-graduation parties or post-graduation activities.
- ◆ If a licence is approved and issued, minors can be on the premises, but they cannot be served, or even be allowed to handle alcohol.

There are a number of conditions that the applicant must meet to receive approval for a licence:

- ◆ First, there must be at least one adult supervisor for every 50 students, as well as one adult supervisor stationed at each entrance and exit to the facility where the graduation banquet and dance is held.
- ◆ Second, the AGLC requires prior written approval from the school's board or the school's principal, authorizing alcohol to be served at the event.
- ◆ Third, the AGLC must receive a letter from the local police authorities saying that they are not opposed to the function.

Other information required before a licence is approved includes

- ◆ date of the event
- ◆ hours of the event
- ◆ hours of planned consumption of alcohol
- ◆ location
- ◆ number of people attending
- ◆ food to be served
- ◆ security arrangements

After applicants receive approval of the application, they must complete the final stage of the licensing process. The applicant must take the AGLC approval, school/principal letter, and police

authorization to a local liquor store to purchase the licence. The liquor store will call AGLC for final authorization prior to issuing the licence. AGLC will ask the liquor store if the applicant has a copy of the AGLC letter of approval, school/principal letter and police letter. The liquor store will then be informed that they must fax a copy of the licence to the local police department.

The AGLC Web site ([http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/liquor/special\\_events.asp](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/liquor/special_events.asp)) has additional information including the responsibilities of the licence holder, advertising restrictions, suitable locations, and other restrictions.

Contact information for the AGLC is as follows:

**Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission**

50 Corriveau Avenue

St. Albert, AB T8N 3T5

Fax: 780.447.8911 or 447.8912

Phone: 780.447.8600

[www.aglc.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca)

**Raffle licences in Alberta**

To operate a raffle as a fundraiser in Alberta, groups must first obtain a raffle licence. Graduation event planners in Alberta can submit an application for a raffle licence as a non-profit group, as long as the raffle does not exceed a total ticket value of \$5,000, and the group has an elected executive.

The cost of the raffle tickets cannot exceed \$2.00 and the value of the prize won through the raffle cannot be worth more than \$500. The raffle organizers must also ensure that the sale of tickets and the awarding of the prize occur in a public place. All other requirements in the Terms and Conditions of the AGLC's Raffle Code must be followed.

Larger and more extensive raffles can be conducted only through a registered charity.

You can access the Raffle Terms and Conditions and Eligibility for Raffle Licence forms at the AGLC Web site, [www.aglc.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca): click on "Policies, Forms and Handbooks," then click on "Licensing forms" under the heading "Forms and Handbooks," then scroll down to click on "Raffle (under \$10,000)."

**Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)**

In the school setting, the privacy of students and parents is protected by provincial legislation. This legislation, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, governs the use, collection, and disclosure of personal information by public bodies, including schools. The FOIP Act defines personal information as recorded information about an identifiable individual and includes name, home address, and home telephone number.

Section 33 of the FOIP Act permits schools to collect personal information only if it is authorized by an enactment of Alberta or Canada, for law enforcement purposes, or for purposes that are necessary for operating a program or activity of the school.

In addition, the Act requires schools to protect the personal information of students and governs when a school can use or disclose personal information.

Section 40(1) of the Act does allow for the disclosure of personal information by a public body under certain circumstances: disclosure of personal information is permitted for the “purpose for which the information was collected or compiled or for a use consistent with that purpose.” If a school determined releasing personal information to a graduation committee was “related directly to and is necessary for an operating program or activity of the school,” then the disclosure would be permissible. A school would be required to inform individuals, at the time of collection of personal information, that the personal information could be disclosed in this way, and in this way allow individuals to decline this disclosure.

If a school determined that disclosing personal information to a grad committee was not a “consistent use,” then they could consider Section 40(1)(d) which authorizes disclosures if the individual the information is about has been informed and consented to this disclosure. Organizers would then need to ask schools to obtain written permission from parents, either during student registration at the beginning of the year or prior to the graduation, to allow their child’s personal information to be given to graduation organizers.

Another option for graduation organizers is, of course, to ask the school for their cooperation in disseminating information about the event to students and parents. For instance, schools might agree to announce information about dry grad events and fundraisers in the school’s official newsletter, or do a mail-out to the parents of graduating students on behalf of the event organizers.

The complete Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is available on the Government of Alberta Web site at [www3.gov.ab.ca/foip/legislation/foip\\_act/index.cfm](http://www3.gov.ab.ca/foip/legislation/foip_act/index.cfm).

### **New Smoking Legislation**

The Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act, which came into effect April 1, 2003, prohibits the possession and use of tobacco by minors. This legislation is consistent with the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy goal of reducing tobacco use in Alberta and preventing youth from starting to smoke. (Retrieved from [tobacco.aadac.com/prevention/schools/creating\\_policy\\_for\\_tobacco-free\\_schools.pdf](http://tobacco.aadac.com/prevention/schools/creating_policy_for_tobacco-free_schools.pdf) on August 29, 2003.)

Under Alberta’s Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act, anyone under 18 years old found publicly using or in possession of tobacco product will be subject to a fine of \$100 and/or seizure of the product. The Act, proclaimed January 22, 2003, was introduced in response to the increasing incidence of children smoking in Alberta and Canada. It fills a gap in current federal and provincial legislation and will help to reduce tobacco use among youth. (Retrieved from [www.gov.ab.ca/home/news/dsp\\_feature.cfm?lkFid=333](http://www.gov.ab.ca/home/news/dsp_feature.cfm?lkFid=333) on May 10, 2003.)

The Act complements the federal Tobacco Act that makes it illegal for retailers to sell tobacco to minors. Under federal law, retailers can be fined anywhere from \$3,000 to \$50,000 for selling tobacco products to minors. (Retrieved from [www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200301/13767.html](http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200301/13767.html) on May 10, 2003.)

## B. Sample Letters, News Releases, and Forms

### Sample Letter to Parents #1

To the parents or guardians of \_\_\_\_\_,

Plans are underway for an exciting and unique party for the graduating class of [NAME OF SCHOOL] High School. An alcohol- and drug-free party called [DRY GRAD NAME] is planned for the night of [DATE] immediately following the formal banquet and dance. A dry grad is a tradition that we believe the students deserve, and one that is celebrated all across Canada with great success.

A dry grad is an all-night party that is organized by [parents/students] with assistance from [COMMUNITY PARTNERS/BUSINESSES]. The party is chaperoned by volunteers, including parents, local police, and [OTHERS].

We have planned a host of activities and entertainment, and collected donations and prizes that will be given away throughout the evening and early hours of the morning. We need your help to make this evening a success. Please complete and return the form below to the school office by [DATE] to take part in this important and exciting event.

My child \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

has permission to attend [dry grad name] on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number for verification

I would like to volunteer with this alcohol- and drug-free graduation party. You can count on my assistance in the following areas. (Please number from 1 to 10 in order of your preference.)

\_\_\_ Fundraising/Finance    \_\_\_ Decorations    \_\_\_ Advertising    \_\_\_ Security    \_\_\_ Coat Check  
\_\_\_ Entertainment    \_\_\_ Food    \_\_\_ Prizes    \_\_\_ Ticket Sales    \_\_\_ Clean-up

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Evening Phone

My business would like to donate a prize or cash to help make this graduation party a success!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Business Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Evening Phone

Type of prize or amount of donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to \_\_\_\_\_

Source: SADAC Manual – More to Remember: Alcohol and Drug-free Graduations

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## Sample Letter to Parents #2

To all parents of the high school graduating class of year,

The [NAME OF SCHOOL] Dry Grad [YEAR] celebration will be held immediately following the formal graduation banquet and dance, on [DAY], [DATE] from [TIME] p.m. to the next morning at [TIME].

We hope that your graduate will participate in this special event – a drug- and alcohol-free celebration. You may be assured of your son's or daughter's safety and enjoyment, and they can be certain of a unique and memorable evening to close out their high school years.

A fantastic line-up of activities, including air games, music, and entertainment, is available throughout the night. Each grad can have a personal caricature drawn and temporary tattoo applied. There is food, food, and more food, and door prizes galore, and everyone receives a commemorative T-shirt.

### Ticket prices are only \$25 and include everything!

This is made possible, because the [NAME OF SCHOOL] Dry Grad is completely planned and run by a large group of volunteers – including community members, students, and parents.

We are writing to ask you to volunteer some of your time to make dry grad a success for our sons and daughters. Over a hundred volunteers are needed leading up to and during the night of the event. Soon, a volunteer coordinator will be calling you to ask if you are able to contribute towards this night to make the event a success.

We encourage you to say yes – there are jobs for everyone and all of them are fun.

Thank you in advance for your support.

The Dry Grad Organizing Committee

*Source: Chilliwack Community Dry Grad, 2002*

## Sample Donation Request

Dear Sir/Madam,

For the past [UNKNOWN] years, the parents of [name of school] students have been organizing the [NAME OF PARTY] dry grad celebration. This is an alcohol- and drug-free after-grad party commemoration for the Grade 12 students.

The event takes place at the [LOCATION] on [DATE] starting immediately following the formal ceremony, dinner, and dance at [TIME] PM and continues through until [TIME] AM. The evening consists of an array of activities such as air games, temporary tattooing, caricature artists, DJ music, and dancing. Throughout the evening, the grads receive a commemorative T-shirt and feast on pizza, snacks, and soft drinks.

This event relies on significant volunteer support and community donations. The event is partially funded by the grads through ticket purchases, and the remainder of the funds is raised through sponsorship from businesses, service clubs, and community organizations.

We are writing to respectfully request your support in assisting us with the food expense of this event. All sponsors are recognized in official dry grad publications and on the commemorative T-shirts all participants receive.

Any contribution you are able to make is greatly appreciated.

If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at [phone number]. I will be contacting you to follow up on this request in the next couple of weeks.

Our sincere thanks!

Sincerely,

[COORDINATOR CHAIR]  
Dry Grad Organizing Committee

*Source: Chilliwack Community Dry Grad 2002*

## Sample Newsletter Article

### Dry Grad Information for 2003

## Come and party all night long!

Location: At [COMMUNITY FACILITY]

Dates: June 26 from 11:00 p.m. to June 27 at 5:30 a.m.

Ticket Prices: \$25 per person before April 17; \$30 per person after April 17

Ticket Sales: February 17, 18, & 19; April 12, 13, & 14; May 7, 8, & 9

Registration: All students, escorts, and guests must complete a registration form at the time of ticket purchase.

Dry Grad 2003 immediately follows the formal banquet and dance.

### All activities, food, and entertainment are included in your ticket price:

- ♦ temporary tattooing (one per person)
- ♦ caricature artists (one per person)
- ♦ \$1,500 in major door prizes
- ♦ Money Machine (\$3,000 in cold hard cash is given away)
- ♦ Sumo Wrestling
- ♦ air games from "Party Works"
- ♦ Human Foosball (new this year!)
- ♦ Gladiator Joust (new this year!)
- ♦ Velcro Olympics (new this year!)
- ♦ Iron Man Challenge
- ♦ non-stop music and light show
- ♦ water hockey, giant soccer, snorkeling, and hot tubs.
- ♦ all you can eat: pizza, nachos, subs, cookies, donuts, iced coffee, juice, milk, pop, slushes, cotton candy, and popcorn
- ♦ lip-synch performances with up to \$800 in cash prizes
- ♦ karaoke and movies
- ♦ a commemorative T-shirt for everyone

### This is an all-inclusive event – you get it all for only \$25!

**ONE Basic Rule:** This is an alcohol-free and drug-free event. Security checks at the door.

Doors are open for admission from 11:00 PM to 1:00 AM

No admissions after 1:00 AM. Participants are asked not to leave until the party ends at 5:00 AM. There is absolutely no re-admission once you leave the building.

Tickets on sale with convocation, banquet, and dance tickets

Limited tickets available at the door (with presentation of your student card) for \$30

*Source: Chilliwack Community Dry Grad 2002 and Lethbridge Collegiate Newsletter*

## Sample Student Survey

### [NAME OF SCHOOL] Student Survey

To: The Graduating Class of \_\_\_\_\_ [YEAR]

From: [NAME OF DRY GRAD] Planning Committee

To make your graduation night special, we are organizing an exciting all-night event. To assist in our planning, we would like to know what you would like to do and what you would like to eat so that the party will be a night to remember forever!

Please take a few minutes to fill out the form below, indicating your preferences by writing in the number with (1) being your first choice, (2) your second choice, (3) your third choice, and so on.

### Activities

There will be a variety of different activities offered throughout the night. Below are a few ideas we are considering.

\_\_\_ Water Hockey                      \_\_\_ Beach Volleyball                      \_\_\_ 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament

\_\_\_ Sumo Wrestling                      \_\_\_ Scuba Diving                      \_\_\_ Giant Soccer

Other ideas for activities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Entertainment

\_\_\_ Magician                      \_\_\_ Hypnotist                      \_\_\_ Karaoke                      \_\_\_ Battle of the Bands

\_\_\_ Dancing: How many hours? What kind of music? Favourite band? Favourite record? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Food

\_\_\_ Pizza                      \_\_\_ Hamburgers                      \_\_\_ Subs                      \_\_\_ Veggies

What is your favourite snack food? \_\_\_\_\_

What flavour/kind of soft drinks do you most prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

### Prizes

\_\_\_ Personal Music players                      \_\_\_ CD players                      \_\_\_ DVD players

\_\_\_ Clothes                      \_\_\_ Computers                      \_\_\_ Automotive gift certificates

What prizes would you like to win? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other great Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What other ideas do you have that will make the party a success? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Source: SADAC Manual – More to Remember: Alcohol and Drug-free Graduations

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## Sample Volunteer Recruitment Letter

[NAME OF SCHOOL] Dry Grad  
Mrs. Jane Smith, Coordinator  
12345-67 Street  
Good Town, Alberta  
T7T 5R5

Day/Month/Year

[ANY TOWN] Community Partner  
44432 Main Street  
Good Town, Alberta  
T7T 3T3

Re: Volunteers for dry grad

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of our 2003 Community dry grad Committee, I am pleased to inform you that dry grad plans are shaping up already for our big event on Thursday, June 26 – our 12th annual dry grad celebration! Features this year include air games, “The Trampoline Thing,” temporary tattooing, caricature artists, a talent contest, and music and dancing.

We are so appreciative of the supervision you provide each year for the air games. You guys and gals are awesome! We would like to invite you to consider being a part of our dry grad event again, helping us with game supervision.

We require volunteers to be present from 10:40 PM on Thursday, June 26 through to 5:30 a.m. on June 27. We have reserved six games this year and will require nine volunteers (at any given time) for the supervision.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions! If providing all the game supervision coverage is too demanding, please let me know the number of supervisors you can comfortably provide. Thank you so much for your very important contribution of time, enthusiasm, and fellowship!

The kids appreciate you all as much as we do!

Yours sincerely,

Games Coordinator

*Source: Chilliwack Community Dry Grad 2002*

## Sample Insurance Letter

[NAME OF SCHOOL] Dry Grad  
Mrs. Jane Smith, Coordinator  
12345-67 Street  
Good Town, Alberta T7T 5R5

Day Month Year

[ANYTOWN] Insurance Brokers  
555 Young Street  
Good Town, Alberta  
T7T 4R4

Re: Insurance for Dry Grad Event

Dear Mr. [INSURANCE BROKER],

We would like to confirm the date and times of our dry grad event. Set-up begins late afternoon on Wednesday, June 26. The doors open to students at 11:00 p.m. Thursday, June 27. The event runs through to 5:30 AM Friday, June 28. Clean-up is complete by 8:30 AM.

Throughout the event we maintain a rigid no re-admission policy. Doors are open from 11:00 PM to 1:00 AM for admission, and then no students are permitted to leave or re-enter the party until the closing at 5:30 AM the following morning. Throughout this time, we have RCMP volunteers providing security checks at the door. If a student insists on leaving the event, his or her parents are called, and there is absolutely no re-admission.

We are required to provide a Certificate of Insurance naming [OUR COMMUNITY] dry grad Committee as an Additional Insured to the facility manager. This is to be arranged before May 26, 2003. As well, the [MUNICIPAL DISTRICT] requests a copy of insurance by June 1. I would ask that you kindly forward them a copy of the document when it is complete.

Yours truly,

Dry Grad Executive Member

cc: Facility Manager  
Municipal District

*Source: Chilliwack Community Dry Grad 2002*

## Sample Equipment Request Letter

[ALBERTA HIGH SCHOOL] Dry Grad  
Mrs. Jane Smith, Coordinator  
12345-67 Street  
Good Town, Alberta T7T 5R5

Day/Month/Year

[ANY TOWN] Community Partner  
44432 Main Street  
Good Town, Alberta  
T7T 3T3

Re: Equipment for Dry Grad

Dear Mr. [COMMUNITY PARTNER]:

On behalf of our 2003 Community Dry Grad Committee, I am pleased to inform you that plans are already well underway for this year's annual event for our Grade 12 graduates. We have again secured the use of [THE FACILITY] for the night of Thursday, June 26th. The itinerary for Dry Grad 2003 is shaping up nicely and will include a variety of games, live entertainment, performers, music, dancing, and much more! The students from [NAME OF SCHOOL] High School will also be participating in an expanded talent contest ([ANY TOWN]'s very own "Idol" contest). The winners will split almost \$1,000 in prize money and will perform at Dry Grad.

This is our 12th annual dry grad event and we are again anticipating tremendous support from our community! We would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your arrangement for stage transportation, set-up, and takedown last year – it was a wonderful and welcome help to us!

Thank you!

To accommodate this year's live performances, we would like to ask, once again, for the use of [THE PARTNER'S] staging. We would greatly appreciate it if you could arrange transportation of the staging to and from [THE FACILITY], as you did last year and if the workers could again assist us by setting up and taking down the staging, we would be most grateful! We require 24 pieces of stage and four sets of stairs. We will need the staging to be delivered on June 26 and picked up the morning of June 27.

Thank you for your consideration and support. This extra assistance means a great deal to our graduates and the organizers. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Co-Chair Dry Grad Committee  
Phone: 780.555.1234

*Source: Chilliwack Community Dry Grad 2002*

## Sample Newspaper Article

Parents of the [NAME OF SCHOOL] High School have taken the initiative to throw a *new* kind of after-grad party for their Grade 12 graduates – an alcohol- and drug-free dry grad. The event is drawing attention from students, parents, educators, and businesses in the community.

The idea of a dry grad after-graduation party was sparked by concerns about the real safety of students participating in a parent supervised “Safe Grad,” which permits all students, regardless of age, to drink alcohol all night long. While this approach does appear to reduce the risk of drinking and driving, it also ignores the dangers of binge drinking and its related effects, including fighting, unsafe sex, or alcohol poisoning.

Organizers want to show youth that they can have a great time without the use of alcohol or drugs. After-graduation parties that permit the use of alcohol reinforce the mistaken belief that we can’t commemorate important events without the use of alcohol. It also creates the illusion that the majority of people drink heavily when celebrating, when this, in fact, is not true.

This is not just another party. It takes more than punch, a little music, and an all-night venue to shake things up for graduates who have reached one of the most important milestones in their lives. This party takes hard work and some amazing entertainment and prizes.

Those students attending the dry grad party will be eligible to win one of dozens of prizes including a new colour television, a DVD player, a trip to Jasper, or a pair of water skis. And then there is the grand prize: an older model car, totally refurbished and completely restored, donated by \_\_\_\_\_ [NAME OF SPONSOR].

The event will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ [DATE] at \_\_\_\_\_ [THE FACILITY], at \_\_\_\_\_ [LOCATION]. If you would like to make a donation, or volunteer on the night of the dry grad, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ [VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR] at \_\_\_\_\_ [PHONE NUMBER].

## **C. Ideas for fundraising and sponsorship**

### **Air Miles®**

Families or potential donors are encouraged to purchase products with their Air Miles® card, and then donate these items to the dry grad. In the Air Miles® Spring/Summer 2003 catalogue, items that can be purchased with Air Miles® collector points include (See the Air Miles® homepage at [www.airmiles.ca](http://www.airmiles.ca) for more details.)

- ◆ Panasonic DVD player for 2,100 points
- ◆ Palm Zire handheld organizer for 1,700 points
- ◆ Guess ladies' watch for 700 points
- ◆ Famous Players movie package for two for 175 points
- ◆ Roots \$20 gift certificate for 125 points
- ◆ hot air balloon flights for 885 points

### **Alberta Motor Association**

In B.C., the British Columbia Automobile Association donates one membership for each dry grad party that draws at least half of the graduating class. For further information, contact: Diana Nelson, BCAA Communications Manager, phone 604.268.5343 or e-mail [diana.nelson@bcaa.com](mailto:diana.nelson@bcaa.com).

While the Alberta Motor Association (AMA) does not currently have the same program, organizers can contact their local AMA office to inquire about purchasing membership and to ask for the AMA's support for their dry grad event. Locations of AMA offices are available on their Web site at [www.ama.ab.ca](http://www.ama.ab.ca), and in the white pages of local phone directories.

### **Alberta liquor stores**

Liquor stores in B.C. donated over \$125,000 to support dry grad projects throughout the province in 2002 – 2003. There is not currently a province-wide program for Alberta liquor stores, but it is certainly possible to ask for support from the liquor stores in the community. It may be possible, for example, to have a donation box set up on the store's counter beside the cashier.

### **Local unions, service clubs, and businesses**

There are many organizations that have a vested interest in ensuring the safety and well-being of youth, and would appreciate an opportunity to have their corporation or union aligned with a dry grad event. In fact, dry grad organizers have something of value that may be of benefit to a business. By supporting a dry grad event, a union, service club (like the Rotary, Lions, or Kinsmen) are showing the public that youth safety is an important consideration in their business philosophy. This can translate into greater goodwill for a company or organization, and improve their stature in the community.

Some communities receive a lot of support from doctors, lawyers, and health care professionals. Other groups to consider could be car dealerships, local churches, area colleges or universities, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, or local trade unions.

### **Partnership with a local charity**

In order to be able to provide a charitable receipt for donations, it is necessary to have charitable status with Revenue Canada. If the dry grad organizers do not have charitable status, then it could be helpful to ask for the support and partnership of a local community charity. Most charities in Alberta are required to observe a code of ethics called the “Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code” (available online at the Web site of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, [www.ccp.ca](http://www.ccp.ca)).

### **Raffles**

Before you ask, the answer is “Yes!” Raffles require a licence to operate in Alberta. This means a dry grad event too. A raffle is a great fundraising option, but one that must operate within the legislated guidelines of the province.

For a small non-profit group like a dry grad committee, a raffle can only be offered for a prize that is worth \$500 or less, and the raffle itself is not allowed to raise more than \$5,000 in ticket sales.

The actual tickets themselves must be priced at \$2.00 or less (which means a maximum of 2,500 tickets printed), and they have to be sold at a “public place of amusement.” This means that telephone solicitation, door-to-door sales, or distribution of tickets to individual grad students to take home to sell, are not allowed.

For more information, the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) Web site is [www.aglc.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca).

### **Corporate Sponsorship**

A number of large corporations and grocery chains provide sponsorships for community events that benefit youth and children. To acquire sponsorship of a dry grad event, organizers can approach local outlets of larger chains and ask for information about their gift-giving programs, or search online for the addresses and contact information for national corporate offices.

## **D. Car Promotion Program**

In 1997, graduation night in Langley, B.C. ended in tragedy when a local teenager got drunk and drove into a crowd of young people, mowing them down with his car. One teen died instantly, and several others were injured. The community was shocked.

In the wake of this tragedy, Jonker Auto Group decided to do something to encourage teens to celebrate their graduation without drinking. But they knew that convincing teens to attend a completely alcohol-free graduation party would be tough; something big would be needed to draw a crowd. Karen Jonker came up with an idea: give away a car to one lucky dry grad attendee at the end of the event in the early hours of the morning. It wasn't an easy task. Giving away a brand new car would be prohibitively expensive. To make the giveaway idea affordable, Karen had to use a previously owned car; but to keep the offer attractive to teens, she needed to figure out a way to make it roadworthy and looking like new. Her eventual plan was to get suppliers and other businesses in the area involved and have them donate their services to fix the car.

The community embraced her idea, and donations came from a number of sources, including mechanical work by students in work experience, and mechanics from Jonker Honda and Nissan. In June 2000, Jonker donated a 1987 Nissan Pulsar SE. In 2001, two vehicles were donated to two different high schools. By 2002, five years into the promotion, Jonker has donated nine different cars to high schools in the Surrey/Langley area.

For each vehicle, A & B Sound donates a CD player; and local collision repair and body shops provide free dent repair and other bodywork, including fresh paint jobs. The cars are put through detailing, and auto glass and upholstery are repaired or replaced. Finally the car is safety inspected, with a final run through the car dealer's shop. All partners and volunteers who donate their time, talent, and services are acknowledged by Jonker Auto Group with certificates, and are mentioned in the local newspapers.

With the cars as the draw, dry grad parties in Surrey and Langley now have an extraordinary 90% attendance rate.

Although the winner's name is drawn at the end of the dry grad party, the car is not presented at that time. A significant part of the fun and excitement around the car draw is that the make and model is kept secret until a public "unveiling," usually held in front of the entire student body on the next school day after the dry grad party. It is treated as a media event, with representation from the RCMP, the provincial and municipal governments, parents, and other local "celebrities."

One legal aspect of the car giveaway is that the car must be actually sold; so after the unveiling, the student and their parents meet with Jonker and purchase the car for a dollar.

An option to increase fundraising and support for dry grad throughout the year has been to allow students the opportunity to "earn" a second ticket in the car draw by putting in time to raise money for their grad.

The lure of a car has fueled a great deal of support for dry grads all over British Columbia, and has acted as a powerful incentive to stay sober on graduation day. Today, no other graduation party is even planned for students in Langley. Their dry grad, with its car giveaway at the end of the evening, is the party of choice.

Source: Karen Jonker, Jonker Auto Group, 19515 Langley By-Pass, Surrey, BC V3S 6K1, phone 604.530.6281, or toll-free, 1.877.530.6281

## **E. Dry Grads from B.C. and Alberta**

Interviews were conducted with dry grad organizers from Chilliwack, Prince George, Cold Lake and Lethbridge. The following compilation provides answers to some frequently asked questions about organizing a dry grad event.

### **Who has taken the lead in planning the dry grad?**

Parents usually initiate the dry grad and make up the organizing committee.

Student representatives sometimes assist by liaising between organizers and the student body.

One school principal initiated this annual event, and his secretary acts as the primary organizer.

### **How does it work?**

Parents of Grade 11 students set-up for dry grad on the day it is held, so that the graduates' parents can attend all graduation events.

It is held immediately following the graduation banquet, beginning around 11:00 PM or 12:00 AM, and finishing around 5:00 or 6:00 AM.

Graduates and their guests may not leave and re-enter the event.

Parents are encouraged to pick up the graduates, so that participants are not driving home after staying up all night long.

The dry grad is usually held in a large space (rink/arena, indoor amusement park or sports/recreation centre) where several activities are provided onsite. Holding the event outside can be a challenge, due to inclement weather and difficulties supervising all the participants.

Programs may include the following (dependant upon amenities onsite and available for rent):

- ◆ music
- ◆ volleyball, racquetball, handball, squash, weight room and driving range
- ◆ karaoke, dunk tanks, Velcro wall, horizontal bungee jumping, Sumo Wrestling, obstacle courses
- ◆ hockey rink
- ◆ hot tubs
- ◆ swimming pool (for scuba diving, snorkeling, diving, relay races, water sports, canoeing and kayaking)
- ◆ magician, hypnotist, caricature artist, temporary tattoo artists
- ◆ air games (large-scale pieces of equipment that serve as inflatable activity centres; they include Astro Jump, Ironman Challenge, Velcro Olympics and Gladiator Challenge)
- ◆ Money Machine (a glass booth with wind blowing up from the bottom, scattering money and coupons for contestants to grab)
- ◆ prize give-aways throughout the night that students must be in attendance to win (biggest prizes saved for late in the festivities, thus encouraging participants to stay)

### **What has guided you in your planning?**

- ◆ For the most part, dry grad organizers repeat what worked the year before.
- ◆ Some organizers have created a manual that records event planning, and each year items are added, deleted or modified.

### **What are some unexpected challenges in planning a dry grad?**

- ◆ Finding activities the graduates enjoy and providing these throughout the night.
- ◆ Keeping the participants entertained and busy all night requires several volunteers.
- ◆ Some participants may choose to leave by 3:00 a.m., instead of staying all night; when this happens, parents are contacted to pick up their son or daughter.
- ◆ If a participant arrives under the influence of alcohol, parents are contacted immediately to pick up their son or daughter.



- ◆ Busing graduates to the event is expensive; as a result, parents are asked to drive their son or daughter to and from the event.
- ◆ Tickets in some communities may not sell until closer to the event.
- ◆ Fundraising can be difficult – enlist the help of students and offer these volunteers a discounted price for their tickets.

### **Who are your partners?**

- ◆ RCMP auxiliary officers in some communities screen the graduates as they arrive at the dry grad, and if necessary, check for alcohol.
- ◆ Local radio and print media can advertise the event.
- ◆ Local businesses are eager to help out with donations.
- ◆ There is often very good community support.

### **How have youth/students been involved?**

- ◆ Students can help out with fundraising.
- ◆ Students usually fill out surveys to let the parents know what kinds of activities and music they like.

### **Is there anything you think others should know about?**

- ◆ **Getting started** – Dry grad organizers need to get started early. Begin in November and work with the school to ensure that the word gets out. Try to get the school onside, so that information can be posted in the school newsletter, announcing meetings and fundraising events. As an advertising gimmick, organizers can set up an activity (like Astro Jump) at the school for one day. This enables the students to get a sense of some of the fun that will be waiting for them at the dry grad.
- ◆ **Fundraising** – Can cover one-half to two-thirds of the cost. In many communities, there has been strong financial support for the dry grad among the community and local businesses. Often, the rest is made up in ticket sales.
- ◆ **Chaperones/Security** – Ask parents to chaperone the event. They can help out all night or during four-hour shifts. Parent volunteers run almost everything offered throughout the night. Volunteers are asked not to drink at the graduation ceremony, so they are sober for the night.
- ◆ **Student drop-off/pick-up** – You can have all participants sign a paper with their parents, agreeing that the parents will pick up their son or daughter between 5:30 and 6:00 AM.
- ◆ **Food** – All-you-can-eat finger foods, all night long. These can include submarine sandwiches, pizza, fruit, vegetables, cookies, chips, muffins, donuts, popsicles, ice cream treats, pop and fruit drinks. Often, food is donated or provided at a reasonable and reduced cost.
- ◆ **Bringing together two schools** – In one community, parent groups from two schools work together to present a joint dry grad for graduates from both schools. The dinner and dance are separate, then a combined dry grad is offered for the graduates and their guests. While students enjoy a friendly rivalry between the two schools, there has never been any difficulty with the graduates coming together to have fun. For this community, there is a high level of friendship and camaraderie between the two schools at the dry grad.
- ◆ **Identification** – In one community, the hospital donates wristbands to identify attendees when they arrive. If they leave, the bands are cut and the students are not allowed back in. All participants' names and phone numbers are taken when purchasing tickets, so that parents can be contacted if there are problems.

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