



NAHS ACTIVITY GUIDE

IDEAS FOR ICEBREAKERS, COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS, 1-DAY ACTIVITIES, AND MORE!



Make Visual Arts **more visible** at your school!

Left to Right: All Saints Academy - Winter Haven, FL; East Central High School - San Antonio, TX; Carteret High School - Carteret, NJ



NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

MEETING ICEBREAKER IDEAS

The first National Art Honor Society meeting sets the tone for the year, so why not begin with activities that spark creativity, build community, and help members get to know one another? These engaging icebreakers are designed to encourage artistic expression, foster collaboration, and celebrate the shared passion for art to unite your chapter members.

1. Artful Introductions:

Have each student create a quick sketch or doodle that represents something about them (e.g., favorite animal, hobby, or food). Then, go around and have them share their name and the meaning behind their art.

2. Collaborative Mural:

Roll out a large sheet of paper and give everyone 2–3 minutes to add something to a shared mural. No guidelines—just creative expression! Afterward, reflect on how individual contributions came together.

3. Art Supply Personality Match:

Lay out various art supplies (e.g., glitter, markers, watercolor, clay, pastels). Ask students to pick one that best represents their personality and explain why.

4. "I'm an Artist Who...":

In a circle, students take turns finishing the sentence: "I'm an artist who..." (e.g., "...loves using bright colors" or "...makes art when I'm happy"). No repeats!

5. Color Palette Name Tags:

Give each student a blank name tag and let them design it using a color palette that represents their mood or personality. Have them explain their choices as they introduce themselves.

6. Speed Sketching Pairs:

Pair students and give them one minute to introduce themselves and another minute to draw each other. Then switch partners. At the end, have students share their favorite quick sketch.

7. Art This or That:

Ask a series of fun "This or That" questions with art-themed choices (e.g., "Paint or draw?" "Markers or crayons?" "Create alone or with friends?"). Have students move to sides of the room to show their answers.

8. Art Memory Game:

Create a tray with 10 small art-related items (brush, eraser, glue stick, mini sculpture, etc.). Let students study it for 30 seconds, cover it, and have them recall as many as they can.



BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITIES

NAHS meetings are a great space for students to take the lead, collaborate, and shape their chapter's impact. These brainstorming activity ideas are designed to help members generate meaningful projects, plan events, and share their voices. Whether you're organizing an art show, planning a service project, or celebrating Youth Art Month, these prompts will spark ideas and empower student-led decision making.

- 1. "Who Can Art Help?" Brainstorm Wall:** Give each student a sticky note and have them write or draw one group or person they think art can help (e.g., "kids in the hospital," "people who feel lonely," "my school"). Stick them all on a big poster titled: "Art Can Make a Difference By..." Discuss the responses as a group.
- 2. Beautify Our Space:** Have students brainstorm one small way to use their art to brighten the school (e.g., painting planter pots, decorating a bulletin board, making hallway banners). Let them vote on a favorite and plan a time to do it together.
- 3. Service Sketch Prompt:** Prompt students to sketch a idea for an art-based service project (e.g., mural, affirmation posters, kindness rock garden). Then, pair up and share, or conduct a gallery walk to discuss everyone's ideas.
- 4. Fund-Raiser Planning:** Brainstorm creative, art-centered fundraising ideas that reflect your group's strengths and interests. Think of ways to engage your school or community, such as hosting a paint night, selling student-designed items (like stickers or tote bags), or organizing a small art auction. List all ideas as a group, then discuss which options are the most doable, fun, and aligned with your chapter's goals.



YOUTH ART MONTH ACTIVITY IDEAS

Celebrate Youth Art Month by engaging your chapter in creative, community-centered activities that highlight the value of art education and student voice.

- 1. Submit Artwork to the Youth Art Month State Flag & Banner Contest:** Encourage students to design and submit original artwork for your state's Youth Art Month Flag or Banner Contest. The winning design may be displayed nationally at the NAEA National Convention. Visit the [Council for Art Education](#) to learn more.
- 2. Schoolwide Art Exhibition:** Curate a student art show in the school lobby, library, or hallway. Feature work from each grade level and include artist statements or QR codes with student voice recordings.
- 3. Art Supply Drive:** Host a month-long drive collecting new or gently used art supplies to donate to local community centers, shelters, or classrooms in need.
- 4. Art Activity of the Day:** Have students lead a short daily art activity during morning announcements or over the PA—like a drawing prompt, doodle break, or fun art fact.
- 5. Community Art Walk:** Display student art in local businesses, libraries, or town buildings. Students can help hang the artwork and create signage explaining the YAM celebration.

1-DAY ART ACTIVITIES

Looking for quick, meaningful ways to keep your NAHS chapter engaged? These 1-day art activity ideas are perfect for meetings or special events—designed to spark creativity, build community, and make an impact in just a single session.

1. Art for a Cause Button Making:

Provide blank button templates and materials for students to create wearable buttons with messages of kindness, inclusion, or environmental care. These can be part of a future awareness campaign or school event.

2. Community Thank-You Cards:

Design and decorate cards to thank school custodians, bus drivers, lunch staff, firefighters, or local librarians. Include drawings and short notes of appreciation.

3. Affirmation Art Posters:

Create vibrant posters with positive affirmations (“You are enough,” “Be kind,” “You belong here”) to display in school bathrooms, hallways, or counselor offices.

4. Plant Pot Painting:

Paint small pots with cheerful designs and donate them (with a small plant or seed) to a local senior center, school office, or community center.

5. Rock Garden of Positivity:

Paint small rocks with colorful designs and uplifting messages, then place them in a designated outdoor space to create a shared display of positivity. This simple project encourages creativity while spreading encouragement to anyone who passes by.

6. Chalk the Walk Event:

Organize a day where students decorate sidewalks around the school with colorful chalk art and kind messages to surprise and uplift the school community.

7. Environmental Art Installation:

Create a temporary art installation or display using recycled materials to raise awareness about environmental care. Include student-made signs with facts or tips.

8. Warm Wishes Window Art:

Work together to create seasonal window clings or paper art (like snowflakes or fall leaves) to decorate the windows in the main community space of the school (office, cafeteria, library, hallways, etc.).



20 COMMUNITY SERVICE ART IDEAS

Below are some ideas for community service art projects your NAHS/NJAHS chapter can organize! Check out the recent issues of [NAHS News](#) for more ideas and inspiration. Submit reports and pictures throughout the year to share what your chapter has accomplished! Remember to consider the needs and preferences of your local community when choosing which projects to pursue. Also, make sure to obtain any necessary permissions and collaborate with relevant community stakeholders to ensure the success of your projects.

CONNECTING WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- 1. Art for Animal Shelters:** Create portraits of animals at your local animal shelter. Share the images to spread awareness and promote adoption. Consider creating animal toys and collecting necessary items to donate.
- 2. Art for Health Care Facilities:** Create cheerful artwork for hospitals, clinics, or hospice centers to comfort patients and their families. Look at [Youth Art for Healing](#) for ideas, resources, and inspiration.
- 3. Art for Senior Centers:** Interview and create personalized artwork for residents of local senior centers to brighten their living spaces and share their stories.
- 4. Community Storytelling:** Illustrate stories from local history and display them at your community library. Consider highlighting the lesser-known stories and heroes from your community that deserve more attention and recognition.



CULTIVATING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:

- 5. Art Buddies:** Partner with elementary schools to provide young students one-on-one art lessons, mentoring, and guidance.
- 6. Art Workshops:** Organize workshops or camps at local community centers that encourage creativity and promote the value of the arts. Use this as an opportunity to practice and develop member skills as an art educator by creating lesson plans.
- 7. Capture Memorable Events:** Volunteer to craft photo backdrops for school dances or events. By doing so, you enhance the event experience, promote the arts, and create lasting shared memories, all while showcasing your chapter's creativity.
- 8. Free Face Painting:** Offer complimentary face painting services at local community events, charities, or fund-raisers. Celebrate creativity while building connections, spreading joy, and cultivating a shared experience with attendees.
- 9. Public Art Tours:** Create a map featuring art installations and points of interest in the local area. Organize guided public art tours in the community, educating participants about local artworks and the importance of public art.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

10. **Art Supplies Drive:** Organize a drive to collect art supplies for underserved schools or community centers. Consider hosting an art supply swap where students and community members exchange materials.
11. **Blanket Making:** Create and donate blankets to hospitals, shelters, or disaster relief organizations. Look into [Project Linus](#) for ideas, resources, and inspiration.
12. **Cards for Children's Hospital:** Create personalized cards, stuffed animals, or other art to donate to children at your local hospital. Look into [Arts for Little Hearts](#) for ideas, resources, and inspiration.
13. **Community Cookbook:** Illustrate a community cookbook featuring family recipes and stories from your NAHS/NJAHS members. Host a potluck with items featured in the cookbook or give away copies of the cookbook in exchange for donations to your local food bank.
14. **Chairs for Charity:** Restore and paint old wooden chairs and other furniture. Organize a silent art auction where proceeds go to a chosen local charity. Collect and donate gently used furniture and other household items to local organizations providing shelter to refugees and asylum seekers. Look into [Homes Not Borders](#) for ideas, resources, and inspiration.
15. **Empty Bowls:** Organize an [Empty Bowls](#) event in your community. This concept originated with art teacher John Hartom and his high school students, who created handcrafted ceramic bowls symbolizing the empty bowls in need of food. These unique bowls are showcased at a fund-raising event, where attendees buy tickets for a meal of soup and bread served in these bowls. Donate the proceeds from the event to local food banks and hunger-relief organizations.



PUBLIC ART AND SPACES:

16. **Beautify Spaces:** Coordinate efforts to clean up and beautify public spaces in the community. Organize a project to clean up and refresh existing street art or murals in collaboration with local authorities.
17. **Community Garden Art:** Design and create art installations within community gardens to beautify the space. Consider glazing outdoor tiles, painting a rock garden, or constructing benches and signs.
18. **Mural Painting:** Collaborate on creating colorful murals in public spaces like schools, community centers, or parks.
19. **Environmental Awareness:** Use recyclable materials to create art installations or projects that raise awareness about environmental issues and promote sustainability. Look into the [Washed Ashore project](#) for resources, ideas, and inspiration.
20. **Spreading Positivity:** Create a culture of positivity by painting uplifting messages and quotes throughout your school. Consider painting beyond walls and writing these positive messages on bathroom stalls, mirrors, trash cans, and more.

VISUAL ARTS ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Promote the power of art education with these visual arts advocacy activity ideas designed to amplify student voices, raise awareness, and highlight the impact of the arts in schools and communities. These creative actions help students speak up for the value of visual arts in fun, meaningful ways.

1. Letters for the Arts Campaign:

Students write letters or draw postcards for school board members, principals, or local leaders explaining why art education is important and how it impacts their lives.

Student Voice Video Series:

2. Create short video clips of students explaining what art means to them. Compile them into a "Why We Need Art" video and share it on school news, social media, or with school leadership.

3. Art Advocacy Poster Series:

Design posters with facts about the benefits of art education (e.g., creativity, confidence, collaboration) paired with student artwork. Display them around the school or during parent nights.

4. Quote Wall: Why Art Matters:

Gather quotes from students, teachers, and community members about the value of art and display them on a large wall or bulletin board alongside artwork.

5. Art-Grams to Administrators:

Create small Art-Grams with messages like "Thank you for supporting the arts!" or "Art makes our school shine!" and deliver them to the administration as a positive reminder of the arts' impact.

6. Morning Announcements Takeover:

Have students read a daily or weekly "Art Fact" or "Art Quote of the Day" during announcements, sharing how the arts benefit learning and well-being.

7. Public Art Pop-Up Display:

Create temporary student art installations in highly visible locations (school office, community center, library) with signs that promote the importance of art in schools.

8. Advocacy Bookmark Giveaway:

Design bookmarks that combine student art with facts about why arts education matters. Distribute them at the library, book fairs, or community events.

9. Invite a Decision Maker to Visit:

Organize an "Art Room Visit Day" and invite a principal, board member, or city leader to observe or participate in an art activity to see firsthand its impact on students.

10. Host an Art Advocacy Day:

Dedicate a day during Youth Art Month or the school year to spotlight the arts: Wear art-themed clothing, host a lunchtime art demo, give away student-made stickers or buttons, and talk about how art helps students grow.



FUND-RAISING IDEAS

Looking for fun and creative ways to raise funds for your NAHS chapter? These art-inspired fund-raising ideas will help you engage your school and community while supporting your chapter's goals.

- 1. Custom Art Cards & Prints:**
Sell greeting cards or prints featuring student artwork.
- 2. Original Art Merchandise:**
Design and sell T-shirts, tote bags, or buttons with original artwork.
- 3. Paint Night Event:**
Host a ticketed paint-along party for students, families, or community members.
- 4. Art Auction:**
Auction off original student artwork or commissioned pieces.
- 5. Calendar Sale:**
Create and sell calendars showcasing student artwork for each month.
- 6. Photo Booth Fund-Raiser:**
Set up a themed photo booth at events with a small fee per photo.
- 7. Art Gift Basket Raffle:**
Take the gift baskets to a whole new level by adding art materials and artwork.
- 8. Custom Portraits or Caricatures:**
Offer quick drawings at school or community events for donations.
- 9. DIY Craft Kits:**
Sell kits with materials and instructions for fun art projects.
- 10. Coffee House Night:**
Host a cozy evening of student art and live performances, charging an entrance fee to raise funds and showcase creative talent.
- 11. Paint-Your-Own Pottery Event:**
Partner with a local pottery studio for a revenue-sharing event.
- 12. Ornament Sale:**
Create and sell handmade ornaments.
- 13. Art Jewelry:**
Make and sell handmade jewelry like beaded bracelets or painted pendants.
- 14. Sticker Packs:**
Design and sell sticker sheets featuring student art.
- 15. Art Zines:**
Compile student art and writing into a booklet or zine for sale.
- 16. School Spirit Banner Sale:**
Design and sell banners or posters for school events or sports teams.
- 17. Upcycle Furniture Auction:**
Have students refurbish and hand-paint used furniture, such as wooden chairs, to create unique pieces for auction.
- 18. Face Painting:**
Offer face painting at school or community events and ask for donations.
- 19. Create a Children's or Recipe Book:**
Collaborate as a chapter to write and illustrate a children's storybook or compile favorite recipes with original artwork, then sell copies to families and the community to raise funds.