



# STAR POSTER PROGRAM

## How to Run a Poster Contest

If you are interested in having a poster contest and don't know how to go about organizing and operating one, then this should help you. The timelines are a general strategy and will need to be adjusted to your particular circumstance, especially if you are seeking funding support from a foundation. In this case, you will need to do a little research on foundations that would support this activity and what their stipulations are for proposal submissions, along with their review dates.

### 3 - 6 Months Before

Select a topic or theme of the contest.

If you choose "Child Abuse Awareness" you could pick a specific category: neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional.

You could select a phrase like the following:

How I (or you can) Help Stop Child Abuse  
Child Abuse, It Hurts Us All

Have information about child abuse (or whatever social or environmental issue the contest is about) available for those that want to know more about it. (I have a school counselor come talk to the art classes after the students have been taught lessons on the Elements of art and how to make posters. Then the students are told to choose one of the four areas of child abuse to make their poster about. Some of these are humorous, while most are serious.)

Line up sponsors.

Go to the "Sponsor's" page of the Star Poster Program to learn more about sponsorship and its benefits. Potential sponsors can also go to the Star Poster Program "Sponsor's" page to learn more about these.

Keep a list of possible sponsors with contact information. When you are first starting to have poster contests, some potential sponsors may want to help in the future, but are currently committed to other things. As time goes by they may become involved. Update and expand the list from year to year.

Select and line up judges.

Look at the Star Poster Program guidelines for judges. Remember there needs to be three judges; consider having alternates if someone can not act as a judge at the last minute.

Establish a deadline for entries.

Keep in mind that if you are going to order t-shirts, ribbons, and participant certificates, 4-6 weeks needs to be allowed for their delivery. The deadline could be a week or two before the posters are to go on display.



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Decide who is to be the contact person/s for the contest and handle questions. How, in what manner, and when could they be contacted?

Determine where and how the posters will be on display and for how long.

Set parameters for where and how the posters are to be picked up or returned.

### **6-8 Weeks Before**

Disperse announcements and flyers about the contest to prospective participants and to the media. Include schools, local T.V. stations, newspapers, and radio stations. Let them know that the activities and art lessons on creating posters are available at [www.ursidaeenterprises.com](http://www.ursidaeenterprises.com).

If a school or other organization wants youth as a group to participate, they should go through the activities and art lessons on the elements of art and creating posters during this time frame.

### **4-6 Weeks Before**

Complete Order form for t-shirts, ribbons, and participant certificates (see “Other Considerations”).

### **Contest Deadline**

Send out notices to participants and media again about when and where the posters are on display.

As entries are collected with the entry forms, complete and tape a Star Poster Program contest label on the side or bottom of each. These need to be folded back behind the poster so that the names cannot be read during the judging. Blanks can be printed from the Star Poster Program CD or downloaded from the [ursidaeenterprises.com](http://ursidaeenterprises.com) web site.

Have posters judged.

This should be done within 3 days after the entry deadline. After the judging is completed, unfold the labels so the public may see who made each poster.

Within 2 days after the contest judging put notices of awards on (or next to) the posters. Posters can be put on display before judging or they can be put up after judging is completed.

Exhibit the posters for 2 to 4 weeks.

### **After the Contest**

All entries should be picked up within one week of close of display.

Send thank-you notices to judges and sponsors

Complete and mail in contest follow-up report to:

Ursidae Enterprises/P.O. Box 81/Lampasas, TX 76550



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Review what went well and what needs to be improved, then start planning for the next one. Make sure each participant gets their ribbon, certificates, and t-shirts.

### **Other Considerations**

Funding (see “Sponsor’s page” of Star Poster Program)

If you are seeking financial support from a foundation, keep in mind that some only have their board of directors meet once or twice a year. Therefore, find out what their submission requirements are and be familiar with the deadlines. Obviously, you may need to plan further in advance than three to six months.

Enough ribbons and certificates for the number of expected entrants can be ordered well in advance and the t-shirts may be ordered at the deadline and given to the contestants when the posters are picked up.

Entrants should have their t-shirt size on their entry form.

Displaying posters:

Places to display posters may be a local business, walls of a school, an unused store area in a mall or shopping center, a community center, art gallery, bank, or other public building.

This can be done on art display panels, walls, or windows. Posters can be pinned in the corners or taped on the back side. Try not to use tape on the fronts, as this tends to tear the papers more than when put on the back. Some times display panels may be borrowed from businesses or schools. Otherwise, if you are planning on doing this as an annual event, do a fundraiser to purchase these (this could be part of a foundation grant proposal).

Decide how a reception will be conducted in relation to where the poster exhibition is at.

All necessary forms can be down-loaded from the Ursidae Enterprises web site or you can request a free CD with the Star Poster Program art lessons, activities, and forms (enclose \$5.95 for Shipping and Handling).

If you would like to have posters considered to be included on the “Poster Gallery” section of the Star Poster Program web site, send a .jpg format picture with signed release forms from the parents or guardians.

After awards are posted have a reception for entrants, their families, and the public. This should be on a Saturday morning, a Sunday afternoon, or a weeknight between 6:30-8:30.