

GAP YEAR EXPLORATION MONTH

OCTOBER 2023

Toolkit for Programs & Organizations

Participating in Gap Year Exploration Month presents a unique opportunity for gap year programs to join a collective movement aimed at promoting the transformative power of gap years.

By engaging in GYEM, programs can enhance their brand visibility while collectively reaching an enthusiastic and receptive audience actively exploring the gap year option.



Gap Year Exploration Month, celebrated annually in October, is a collaborative campaign led by the Gap Year Association for educators, program providers, industry groups, gap year alumni, and advocates aimed at raising awareness of the gap year option. Let's #explorethegapyear together!

WHY SHOULD MY ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATE IN GAP YEAR EXPLORATION MONTH?

- **Increased Brand Visibility:** Gap Year Exploration Month boosts your gap year program's brand visibility, demonstrating industry leadership and commitment to the gap year option.
- **Inspire Prospective Participants:** Engage with a focused audience seeking gap year information.
- **Support the Gap Year Movement:** Participation shows dedication to the gap year cause, raising awareness about its benefits and positive impact on individuals' lives.

A photograph of a vibrant blue wall with numerous colorful hanging pots (red, pink, green, yellow) containing various plants. The pots are arranged in a vertical line, creating a decorative and lively scene. The wall is part of a building, and the overall atmosphere is bright and cheerful.

EXPLORE
THE
GAP YEAR

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

1

USE #EXPLORETHEGAPYEAR AND ELEVATE GYEM IN YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE THIS OCTOBER

Leverage GYEM to promote your programs and the gap year option. We also encourage you to plan info sessions and/or virtual and in-person events in October to reach more people. Have you staff or alums create dedicated GYEM content!

2

ACTIVATE YOUR ALUMS

Post about GYEM to your alumni groups or reach out to engaged alums directly. You can nominate them to make a video for our student video project on social media or ask them to be Amplifiers. Email an introduction or their contact information to outreach@gapyearassociation.org.

3

NOMINATE FIELD STAFF, PARENTS AND ADVOCATES TO BECOME AMPLIFIERS

Your network can be especially powerful in reaching new people with gap year information. We are looking for "gap year adjacent" individuals who are passionate about gap years to take collective action in October. Think about your field leaders, parents, educators, etc that celebrate your programming and champion the gap year option. Ask them to be an Amplifier by [submitting this form](#).

4

PITCH PRESS & PODCASTS FOR OCTOBER

Use GYEM as a newsy hook to talk about gap year in local, regional or national press. Pen an op-ed. Offer yourself as a guest on education, travel or parenting podcasts.

5

ASK YOUR STAFF TO SHARE THEIR PERSONAL GAP YEAR STORIES

Encourage colleagues in the gap year and educational field how they are participating in GYEM. Share information as needed with people so they can join in.

Download
and use
any of
these
digital
assets :

[Gap Year
Exploration
Month
graphics.](#)



Anyone can use the GYEM logo! Create your own content or access pre-made images for newsletters, announcements and more!

[Gap Year
Exploration
Month
videos.](#)



Share our official Gap Year Exploration Month videos or create your own!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Hashtag: **#explorethegapyear**

[GYA Facebook](#)

[GYA Instagram](#)

[GYA LinkedIn](#)

[GYA TikTok](#)

Here's some suggested messaging to get you started!

- This Gap Year Exploration Month, we are asking people to help others **#explorethegapyear** by sharing their favorite gap year memories. What are yours? **#explorethegapyear**
- Happy Gap Year Exploration Month! We are proud to showcase our amazing gap year alums, starting with [insert Where Are They Now profile from one of your gap year alums] **#explorethegapyear**
- Life experience gained during a gap year sets students up for success in the real world. Here are five skills our alums say they developed on their gap year: [insert skills] **#explorethegapyear**

KEY MESSAGING

What is a gap year?

A gap year is an intentional break in one's formal education or career that fosters personal, practical and professional growth through experiential learning opportunities.

How do gap years set students up for success in life and work?

Today's emerging adults encounter unprecedented challenges such as soaring higher education expenses, elevated rates of anxiety and depression, and the aftermath of a global pandemic. Embracing a gap year offers students a chance to prioritize their well-being, foster personal growth, and equip themselves with essential skills, preparing them for the next exciting chapter in their education journey.

Why consider a gap year?

- 98% of gap year participants say their gap year increased their maturity.
- 97% say their gap year improved their self-confidence.
- 82% say their gap year gave them a competitive edge when applying to college and/or jobs.
- Gap year students are found to have higher G.P.A.s than their traditional peers and tend to graduate sooner than traditional college students.
- Students who have taken a gap year later report to being satisfied with their career.