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Title: Snacks, Stories, and Solidarity: Celebrating June 26 with our Creative Voices

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Today, June 26, 2026, marks the **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking** (World Drug Day). Communities around the world are currently gathering to reflect on this year's urgent global theme: *“World Drug Problem: Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses.”*

Here at the **Collective Arts Development Association (CADA)**, we believe that an "innovative response" doesn't always have to look like a rigid lecture or a formal seminar. Sometimes, innovation looks like creating a safe, soft space where vulnerable youth can completely let their guards down.

That is exactly how we spent today, gathered in a warm circle, relaxing over shared plates of local snacks, cold drinks, and deep conversations with the **10 youth beneficiaries** of our ongoing **Creative Voices** project.

For us, the connection between this cozy, relaxed afternoon and our core mission is simple: healing begins when a young person feels safe enough to rest.

Slowing Down to Meet Complex Realities

The "persisting issues" of substance abuse and peer pressure have evolved rapidly over the last few years, especially here in the Northwest Region. Today's youth face unprecedented challenges—digital isolation, complex mental health pressures, and the rising availability of synthetic threats. Traditional, heavy-handed judgment simply pushes these struggles underground.

When the United Nations calls for *innovative responses*, CADA points directly to the power of community care and the creative arts.

Our mission has always been rooted in a simple but radical truth: **art saves lives, and community sustains them.** By pairing our creative training with a relaxed, family-like atmosphere where we can just sit, eat, and chat without judgment, we are building deep resilience. Our beneficiaries aren't just learning artistic skills—they are discovering that they belong to a community that genuinely values their well-being.

An Afternoon of True Expression and Soft Moments

Today's celebration wasn't an academic event; it was a living, breathing community sanctuary. Between laughing over puff-puff and sharing snacks, our *Creative Voices* beneficiaries took center stage, proving that they are active, vocal change-makers for their generation.

The atmosphere was a beautiful mix of relaxation and powerful creative expression:



Spoken Word over Snacks: With an ice-cream in hand, several youth stood up to share raw, hard-hitting poetry about peer pressure, anxiety, and the courage it takes to stay clean, turning a casual circle into a powerful stage.

Moving Forward: Nurturing the Future

Investing in compassionate, art-driven prevention is the single most sustainable way to protect our youth. By funding creative safe spaces, we help youth build positive identities and authentic real-world connections that keep them anchored against the temptation of drug abuse.

As June 26 draws to a close, everyone at CADA wants to extend our deepest gratitude to our creative mentors, our local art facilitators, and partners and above all, our 10 remarkable beneficiaries. You are the living proof that when young people are handed a pencil, a paintbrush, a space to air their minds, and a safe space to rest instead of judgment, they don't just stay safe—they thrive.

Let's continue to meet today's complex challenges with the most human response we have: our collective creativity and community care.

Want to support our youth? Donate via the link on the donation page on our website:
<https://cadazerodrugs.org/donation-page/>