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Alcohol-Free Hangouts

Laser Quest, Dice Dojo & Caffiene

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As college students, some of us have had to deal with drunk friends. There's always the know-it-all drunk. The fighting drunk. The cuddy drunk. And the-vomit-and-stumble-everywhere drunk. After spending so much time with people who don't have full control of themselves, its nice to get away and relax. The main problem is that clubs and bars usually have at least a few people who drink a little too much. One thing you could do is go to a place that doesn't serve liquor. Try checking out one of these places for a fun hangout with your friends that doesn't involve drinking.

Laser Quest 4167 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge, Il. Tuesday-Thursday: 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Friday: 4 p.m.-12 a.m. Saturday: 12 p.m.-12 a.m. Sunday: 1 p.m.-7 p.m.

Remember fourth grade? Grow up in the 80s? You might remember laser tag. For those of us who don't remember, it's like a live-action "Call of Duty" or "Quake." The only difference is that in this game, nobody gets hurt. For \$8.50 (\$6 if you have a membership) you can run around and shoot your friends or random strangers. Located next to the Harlem and Irving Plaza mall, most students can take the 78 Montrose bus to get there. There are several types of games that people can play: free-for-all, team play and the "ironman" are some examples. Each game typically lasts 30 minutes, which seems like a short amount of time until you realize that it is mostly running around shooting people and avoiding being shot. This game is not for the weak of heart, but it is great with any sized group of friends. Just be prepared to battle some fourth-graders if you have a team smaller than 20.

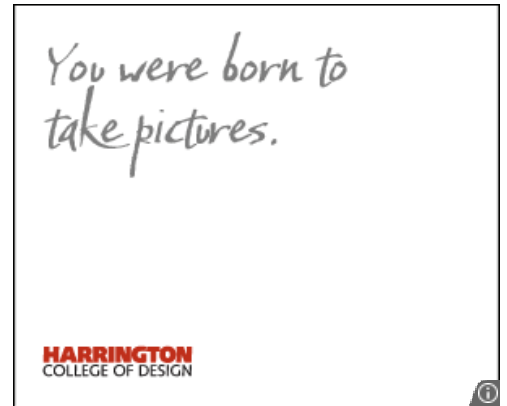
Dice Dojo 5550 N. Broadway St., Chicago Monday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

A recent trend at bars is to have board games available for the patrons to play. How do you remove the liquor without just sitting at home? Go to a place like Dice Dojo. Even though the name sounds like it caters to a specific demographic, it still has classic games that everyone remembers, as well as some fun new games worth a try. Games like UNO and Parcheesi can be fun to play, but why not try a game of "Civil War" or "Lunch Money?" You might be pleasantly surprised. They have games to try out and to buy. Even though they close at an early hour, Dice Dojo usually waits until the last game is finished before they kick people out. For those who are interested in meeting new people, or getting help with a complicated game, they have events for teaching people about specific games. The best part about this place is that if you do spend any money, you end up with a game you can play long after leaving, and that's much better than a hangover brought home from a bar.

Kaffeine 1621 Chicago Ave., Evanston Sunday-Thursday: 11 a.m.-2 a.m. Friday-Saturday: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

Located in Evanston, this "coffee house" has a unique variety of free events. The types of events vary, but there is usually a poetry reading or some sort of performer at least once a week. Catering heavily to the Northwestern University crowd, they keep a college-friendly attitude. The interior looks like something out of a fancy restaurant, with a mixture of Celtic and classic furniture. They have tables that seat anywhere from two to ten, to possibly more (if you squeeze in). This makes it good for a large group to gather. Dietary restrictions are understood at this place. They have both vegan and gluten-free dishes. Not to be seen as too "new age," they also have meat dishes for the carnivores. The atmosphere of this place is a little more calm and formal than the other places but it can be a nice change of pace. It also makes a great study group place, when it's not too busy.

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