

How to Hold a Successful 'Green Living Tips Workshop'

Many of us have made lifestyle changes to reduce the size of our carbon footprint and generally live more lightly on the planet. We're riding our bicycles to run errands, turning the thermostat down a notch or two, and recycling more than ever.

But some folks aren't aware of the simple changes they can make in their lives to be a little greener, and those who are aware can often work a little hard to be even better stewards of the earth. And hey – being greener saves money, something we can all get interested in nowadays.

Holding a Green Living Tips Workshop as part of Earth Day 2009 will help folks learn about and integrate practical changes into their daily lives. We're providing you with a combination of videos, hand-outs, and discussion topics to make your event successful.

1. GETTING STARTED - *Think through the answers to these questions:*

- **Where will you hold your workshop?** Will you partner with a school? A low-income neighborhood association? A church? Another local organization? Or will you hold a workshop in your home and invite friends and family?
- **How will you invite people to your event?** We suggest email and phone calling, but you can also spread the word through the newspaper, local blogs, and flyers in public places.
- **Will you show some of our online how-to videos?** Figure out how you'll do that – on a computer screen, or with a computer and projector set-up? (Links are below.)
- **Are there local resources you can tap?** Think about guests you might invite – people who can answer questions about recycling, public transportation, weatherization, or green dining if you decide to focus on a particular area.
- **Ask someone to take photos!** Be sure to have participants post a photo and short write-up about your event on the new Sierra Club online community – Climate Crossroads: http://connect.sierraclub.org/Groups/Earth_Day_20092
Or, if you prefer, you can email a photo and short write-up to us after the event and we'll post it to the Earth Day 2009 group. Send to: community.manager@sierraclub.org

2. PLANNING THE EVENT

- **Sign up your event today.** If you join our Climate Crossroads social network, you can post your event from the Earth Day 2009 group page: http://connect.sierraclub.org/Groups/Earth_Day_20092
- **Take a look at our online videos and decide what you want to show.**
-- How-To Videos: If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video is worth 5,000, or more! Check out these short, instructional videos by the Sierra Club's Owen Bailey, who

demonstrates how to compost, install a low-flow shower head, install a programmable thermostat, and wrap your water heater in a blanket:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/wecandoit/videos/>

-- Mr. Green's Cool Home Tour: Very simply done, this tour walks you through an actual home and points out where the resident is doing a good job on energy conservation, and where there's room for improvement.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/coolhome/>

-- More video resources: For more handy, how-to videos and cool green home tours, check out Sierra Club Green Home's video collection.

<http://www.sierraclubgreenhome.com/videos/>

• ***Print these flyers for folks to take home with them.***

-- Our "We Can Do It" fact sheet shows people how they can save money (and the planet) with efficiency and renewables, like using compact fluorescent bulbs instead of incandescent bulbs, and hanging clothes on the line instead of using the dryer:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/wecandoit/community/factsheet.pdf>

-- This checklist from Mr. Green, the Sierra Club's answer guy, helps folks walk through every room of the house to see where they can start saving electricity and money.

http://www.sierraclub.org/wecandoit/home/mr_green_checklist.pdf

• ***Educate yourself and be prepared to share green tips!***

-- Green Tips: You've got an amazing resource at your fingertips with the Sierra Club's new Green Tips Library. Topics are organized into categories such as travel, food and drink, entertainment, health, etc. You'll find very helpful (and short) green living tips, as well as a plethora of links to more information if you want to dig a bit deeper:

<http://sierraclub.org/tips/>

-- Cool Tools: Sierra Club Green Home (SCGH) is a site that helps anyone make his/her home more energy efficient, environmentally sustainable, and healthy by offering a variety of assessment tools, educational content, and a directory of thousands of green businesses, which have been vetted for authenticity through the SCGH GreenCheck process. The **SCGH Carbon Calculator** and **Solar Savings Calculator** are great tools to help your guests understand the carbon footprint of their homes and determine the benefit of installing a solar system.

<http://www.sierraclubgreenhome.com/>

• ***Check out the venue:*** If you're not meeting in your own home, you should visit the location to get a "feel" for the place if you are not familiar with it.

- Is the location central to those attending and is public transit available?

- Is there enough room for maximum planned attendance?

- Is there ample parking available?

- Is it wheelchair accessible?

- Do you need tables, chairs – will you have to move existing tables and chairs?

- If this is a large venue – will you need microphones?

• ***Hospitality and materials***

-Do you have volunteers for set-up and clean-up crews?

-Will you serve food or drinks? Where will you place them?

• ***Promotion of the event***

The venue, date, speaker and other event details are set. Now, you just need to get the word out! Think about other ways to promote the event – we recommend emailing and

phoning people you know, but you should also consider publicizing your event on websites, through local bloggers, listserves, local calendar listings in the newspaper or radio, and flyers.

The Sierra Club has created a new online community, ClimateCrossroads.org, for people who are eager to share ideas, information, opinions, and opportunities to make real and urgent progress on climate change. Be sure to post your event on Climate Crossroads so interested parties can join your event. You can also create a group for your event and send invitations for friends, family, etc to join. Creating a group allows you to message groups members all at once (helpful when sending out reminders before and after the event), to post a blog (great way to share important articles or thoughts about the event), and to post photos (participants can share their fabulous photos with everyone who participated).

<http://www.climatecrossroads.org>

3. EVENT – SCREENING AND DISCUSSION: The big day is here!

- Plan to arrive early to set up info tables, arrange chairs, set up food, etc.
- It is very important to perform an audio/visual check prior to the screening if you plan to show any of the online videos.
- Once guests arrive and are seated and ready to begin, introduce yourself and let them know what to expect – what will the workshop include, and how will they be asked to participate?
- If this is a mixed or public event, explain the purpose of hosting it.
- Make sure that during or at the end of the evening participants know how they can “get involved” with the issue. Have print-outs of the home energy audit checklist at a table.

Suggested discussion topics:

1. What are you doing in your own life to live more lightly on the planet?
2. Have you noticed whether your lifestyle changes are saving money?
3. Where do you find it easiest to make change: dining, transportation, home life, other?

4. SAY THANK YOU – AND SEND US PHOTOS!

At the end of your event, be sure to thank everyone who attended and challenge them to make real changes in their habits to be a little greener. Make sure everyone got your hand-outs, and refer them to our Green Life blog for more information. Suggest that they subscribe to our Green Life Daily Tip so they can stay on top of new ways to be green.

https://secure2.convio.net/sierra/site/SPageServer?pagename=Signup_GreenLife

Suggest participants join the Climate Crossroads community so you can keep in touch and share your experiences. Finally, be sure to ask participants post their comments, write-ups, and photos on the Climate Crossroads site: <http://www.climatecrossroads.org>

You can also email your write-ups and photos to us at community.manager@sierraclub.org

Thanks for your participation!