



# Earth Day Event Toolkit

A high school student's guide to organizing a successful on-campus Earth Day event

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This toolkit was created by Abbie Darling, a High School student!

# Introduction

Earth Day takes place annually on April 22 to remind people about the importance of a healthy planet. Since it was established in 1970, Earth Day has become a day to raise awareness on climate change and global warming. As the climate crisis worsens, it's evident that young people all over the world will be the most affected. The one thing all young people have in common is that our future is at stake. Now more than ever is the time to take action.

One of the most effective things to do now is to ensure our voice is heard and educate ourselves. A way to do this is by hosting an Earth Day event. This is where you come in! Imagine students like ourselves, in solidarity across the globe, demonstrating the importance of environmental protection and conservation. No matter who you are, where you come from, or how many opportunities you've been given – this is an essential thing you can do *right now* to create change. Follow the in depth guide below to organize and successfully host your very own Earth Day event!

## Determining Your Goals

**Before you start organizing, ask yourself a few essential questions:**

- What is the goal of my event?
- Who is my event directed towards?
- Do I want this event to have a specific topic?
- What message do I want to spread?
- Is this event a part of a bigger movement?
- What size event do I want?

**Keep in mind:** whether big or small, open-invite or closed-invite, the event will still have an impact. If you need help answering these questions, feel free to visit [this guide](#).

# Organizing Your Event

It's time to start planning your event! This process can be simplified by asking yourself:

## **Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?**

- *Who* do you want the event to be available to? *Who* is helping you out?
  - *What* do you want to accomplish with this event? *What* will you need for this event to be successful?
  - *When* is this event taking place?
  - *Where* is this event taking place?
  - *Why* is this event happening?
  - *How* can people participate in this event? *How* will you fund this event?
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## Funding Your Event

If you require funding for your event, here's how you can acquire the necessary resources:

- Brown & Winters Grant (email [bbrown@brownandwinters.com](mailto:bbrown@brownandwinters.com) for info)
- Local Bar Associations (look up 'bar association near me') have environmental groups may provide funding, support, speakers, etc; try reaching out and asking for what you need

## Getting the Administration's Approval

Now that you have the general parts of your event planned, you can now talk to the administration about approving the event! Remember to not plan too much in-depth until you talk to the admin just in case they want to change a few things.

**Administration includes:**

- Principal
- Vice-principal(s)

### **How to get admin approval:**

1. Email an administrator and ask for a meeting to discuss your event. [Here's a template if you aren't sure how.](#)
2. Meet with an admin to work out details and discuss the event
  - a. If approved, congrats! It's time to start planning
  - b. If the admin doesn't approve the event, ask why and how to change the event to better fit their goals. If they don't budge, no worries, you can always organize the event off-campus during non-school hours.
3. Update administration if there are any changes with your event

[If you aren't sure how to deal with pushback from administration, staff, or teachers, check out this guide.](#)

**Keep in mind you are likely to need other details of your event to be approved by administration throughout the organizing process**

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## **Choosing a Venue**

**When choosing a venue, make sure to consider a few things:**

- How many people will be attending?
- Does the venue allow food?
- Is the venue indoors or outdoors?
- What's the weather like on the day of your event?
- Is this venue on or off campus?
- Does the venue match your event's vibe?
- Does this venue cost money? If so, is it within my budget?

If you are unsure about a venue you would like for your event, talk to administration to help you out. Let them know your plans for the event (who, what, when, why, how) and they can help you

choose a place that's best fit for you! [If you need more general tips, planning around covid, or on-campus venue ideas, check out this Google Doc.](#)

## Volunteer Roles

It's guaranteed that you'll end up needing help throughout this process, and by having a set of specific roles you need filled, you can help eliminate unnecessary stress on yourself.

**When choosing these roles, consider a few things:**

- Are the people you're choosing trusted and will they do the job they are assigned?
- How many of each position will be needed?
- Create a group chat to communicate with volunteers easily
- Create a document that describes each position so people don't flood you with questions
- Have a few trusted people help oversee all of the volunteers
- Send out a Google Form for people to fill out if interested in volunteering

[Check out this document if you need ideas for volunteer positions.](#) This also includes a description of the volunteer positions you can use as a reference.



Guest Speakers: Janis Stuurman and Katrina Wright from B&W





Student Speakers at PHHS Earth Day event

## Choosing Guest Speakers

The inclusion of guest speakers can give students an opportunity to learn about various careers in the environmental sector. Research and reach out to organizations and job positions you are interested in learning about.

### Ideas

- Sustainable architects (look up ‘sustainable architecture near me’)
- Director of Sustainability (look up ‘director of sustainability near me’)
- Marine Biologist/Scientist (reach out to a local aquarium or look up ‘marine biology near me’)
- Professor of sustainability, environmental science, environmental studies, etc... (reach out to a local university)
- Reach out to a local law school or “green” jobs in your area
- Reach out to [350.org](https://www.350.org) and find out if a volunteer or employee in your area can speak
- Reach out to [Greenpeace USA](https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/) and find out if a volunteer or employee in your area can speak

## Event Promotion

Promoting your event will ensure that a broader audience knows about your event. Start advertising when all of the details are solidified and well before the day of the event.

### Things to include when promoting your event:

- What is happening at your event?
- Where is your event located?
- What is the time and date of your event?
- Incentives to join the event (prizes, food, music, activities, guest speakers, etc...)

### Ways to promote your event:

- Social media posts
- Posters around campus
- School's PA or Intercom system
- Telling friends to bring their friends
- Via the school's website
- Mass email (ask your administration)

It's important to promote your event in as many ways as possible. If you can, try to use as many of these methods as possible. [For detailed help on how to use these methods of advertising, check out this guide.](#)

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## Self Organization

By this point, there's a lot of information you have gathered and organized for your event. It's important that you're organized so you can access documents easily without having to dig. Each bullet point is linked to an explanation, example, and template for your convenience.

### Some ways you can help keep yourself organized:

- [Timeline](#)

- [Script](#)
- [Hard copy](#)
- [Checklist](#)

## Strategic Organizing

So far, this guide has included the basic components of organizing, but there are a few other things you can do to improve your event.

### Choosing the right date

- ⇒ Choosing the right date for your event may make the difference between a large and small turnout. When choosing a date for your event, take into account if there are finals or AP testing around that time. Choose a time where you think the most people are available to come.

### Timing your event well

- ⇒ Having good event timing will make your event more organized. First, know the time frame you have to execute the whole event. Make sure you have a list of everything you want to accomplish within this period. Second, choose one or two things to center your event around (e.g. guest speakers or activities) and allow that to take up a good chunk of time. Center everything around the main segment and make sure to leave a little extra time to transition between activities.

### Collaborate with other clubs

- ⇒ Partner with other clubs or campus organizations that have aligned values (e.g. Key Club, Community Service Club, other environmental clubs). Partnering with other clubs can help expand your audience and engage members of your school that might not normally attend. It's always good to build a mutually supportive community to bring attention to the individual causes and how they are linked.

### Activities and music

- ⇒ Including an activity into your event makes it more interactive; the more interactive the event, the more engaged and present the audience is. Include prizes such as school merchandise as an incentive; this also adds the opportunity to have some fun ([Find](#)



[suggestions and tips for activities here](#)). The inclusion of music can add lively ambience to your event.

## Media

- ↪ Inviting the media such as the news, newspaper, public broadcast, etc, is a way to bring exposure to your event and the cause it supports. It's also exciting from an event attendee perspective to see the media; it makes the event seem official and makes the attendee feel like they're a part of something big.

## Visual impact

- ↪ Having a good visual impact makes your event more aesthetically pleasing and can help engage the audience. It's much more fun to look at cool handmade posters instead of a blank wall. You can include your audience by having an open-invite poster making session. The posters made can be hung up in the venue, and those who made posters will enjoy seeing their work being displayed.



Commitments Table



Pizza and Muffins Stand

# Advice for Title I schools

## Use local resources!

- Seek help from local environmental organizations if you need support or help
- Reach out to a local law school and ask if someone is willing to speak at your event!

- Reach out to local small businesses to provide food for your event (sponsor) in exchange for promoting their business on campus
- Food is one of the biggest motives for people to attend; even if they attend for the food, they will still learn about your cause by being there ([here's how I acquired food for my event](#))

### **Finding your focus**

- Make the topic of your event personal to your area- if you're impacted by oil drilling, make that the focus!
- Emphasize people power and voting, change starts from people like us
- Make sure your event is inclusive to every student across campus, no matter their background

## **Host a Debrief Session**

Oftentimes we jump into our next agenda item without giving ourselves time to reset, thank those who've supported us, and receive feedback. Hosting a debrief meeting in the days following your event is a great way to share about your success and improvements and can set your successor up for next year's event.

### **What is a debrief session?**

A debrief session is used to discuss an event after it occurs; it follows up on what went well, what can be improved, highlights important key factors, and can be used to determine next steps.

### **Why is debriefing important?**

Debriefing is important to receive feedback, analyze your event, observe if it was different than what you expected, and to set up next year's event for success (if you are graduating/not returning).

### **How to have a debrief session**

Set up a meeting within the next few days after your event during lunch, after school, over Zoom, etc...with volunteers and co-organizers. Discuss what went well, what can be improved, and a few things core to your event's success. Make sure to thank your

administration and send an email or video to your sponsor(s) thanking them; add photos, ask if you can count on their sponsorship next year, and emphasize that your event wouldn't be the same without their support. Compile resources for whoever is organizing next year into a handoff packet including: contact information, sponsor information, advice/tips, details of your event and how you executed it, and anything else you think would be helpful.

## My Earth Day event experience

I have learned a few things from organizing Patrick Henry High School's Earth Day event in 2022. [I created a guide with what went well, what can be improved, and what I learned overall, which you can access here.](#) Keep in mind our experiences won't end up being the same; we will have faced different issues and had different strengths, but we can both learn from our own events!



Volunteers and Organizers of PHHS Earth Day event 2022

Have questions or ideas to improve this toolkit? Send them to Abbie, [abbiedarling@gmail.com](mailto:abbiedarling@gmail.com)