

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Planning Monthly Potlucks in Your Community

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1. Introduction

Global Justice Ecology Project (GJEP) is located in the town of Hinesburg VT. We work locally, regionally and nationally to advance global justice and ecological awareness through alliance building and by identifying issues that demonstrate the interconnections between social injustice and ecological destruction, promoting a holistic analysis that unifies and strengthens movements. We began organizing monthly potlucks in Hinesburg as a form of community outreach in order to broaden our local constituency and raise awareness about pressing social and environmental issues. The potlucks provide an opportunity for community members to engage in discussions around issues that are occurring locally and globally, and discuss the impacts as well as what can be done to change the current situation. During the potluck we show a timely political film to raise awareness about such issues as global warming, the war on terrorism, the oil crisis, and globalization. We have found it necessary to raise awareness between the interconnections between the local and the global, and to deepen our understanding of the interdependencies that exist between the two. The films are used to stimulate conversation, encourage reflection, and to inspire people to work for social change. In addition the potlucks often include an action component.

2. Statement of Purpose

The potlucks have been created to provide an informal and safe place for people to gather and dialogue around important issues; to connect with others within the community who are equally concerned about the state of the world and to have the opportunity to be exposed to new ideas. We have found that local grassroots community organizing is an essential component of working for real, fundamental social change.

3. Vision

Create stronger communities throughout Vermont that are informed about their world and are inspired to be involved in shaping their futures

4. Sample Poster

Please see sample poster below.

The flyer should include the following: what the potluck is, the location, date, time, what people should bring, the film with a short blurb, and any special event accompanying the potluck.

5. Sample Public Service Announcement (PSA)

Newspapers, magazines, radio, and television stations air free PSAs as a service to the community. PSAs allow you to reach a large audience with only the cost of writing the

announcement. The Federal Communications Commission defines a PSA as an “announcement for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state, or local governments or the programs, activities, or services of nonprofit organizations and other announcements regarded as serving community interests.”

Sample: “Are you concerned about the state of the world, the nation and our community? Please join neighbors and friends for a Community Potluck in an informal setting to enjoy food, talk and a movie! This is a gathering of Concerned Citizens, Not a meeting. We will watch the inspiring film about Howard Zinn – You Can’t be Neutral on a Moving Train. Please bring a dish to share for Thursday, January 26th, 6-8:30 pm at the Carpenter-Carse Library, 69 Ballards Corner Road, Hinesburg. For further information contact: Global Justice Ecology Project, 482-2689, www.globaljusticeecology.org”

6. Sample Email Announcements

Sending announcements and reminders about the potlucks via email is an easy and efficient way to keep community members updated.

- The first email should be sent two weeks prior to the date, then send another one at the beginning of the week, and one the day of the potluck.
- The subject line should read “Community Potluck with the Date”
- Include contact Information, Date / Time, Location, Movie
- Sample:

Hinesburg Community Potluck

Please join friends and neighbors in an informal setting to enjoy food, talk and a movie!

Date: Thursday, January 26th, 6-8pm

Location: Carpenter-Carse Library, 69 Ballards Corner Road, Hinesburg

Bring a Dish and a Beverage to Share

This is not a meeting – it is a gathering of Concerned Citizens

January’s Movie: HOWARD ZINN – YOU CAN’T BE NEUTRAL ON A MOVING TRAIN

The film documents the life and times of the historian, activist and author Howard Zinn. Featuring rare archival materials, interviews with Howard Zinn as well as colleagues and friends including Noam Chomsky, Marian Wright Edelman, and Alice Walker. The film captures the essence of this activist and thinker who has been a catalyst for progressive change for more than 60 years. As a teacher and writer, Zinn has informed and inspired generations of those who struggle for social and economic justice with hope. Now in his eighties, Zinn continues to speak widely to enthusiastic audiences of all ages.

7. Planning: step by step – reserve location, notification, materials, room set up

- A. Venue: local libraries, churches, temples, or community centers serve as great locations to have gatherings. Discuss this possibility of having monthly potlucks with your local library, church, or center.
 - i. Secure the location and time 3-4 weeks in advance.
 - ii. Inquire whether the facility has a TV monitor, vcr, dvd, and other amenities such as water, chairs, tables.
- B. Secure a copy of the film that you will be showing. It is helpful if you watch the film prior to the potluck to insure that the topic is appropriate and is relevant. It will also help you to anticipate ways to generate a discussion around the topic, and if you have any supplemental information about the subject.
- B. Two weeks prior to the date put up flyers around town, have a PSA on your local radio and in the newspaper under calendar announcements.
- C. Send email announcements two weeks prior to the event, along with reminders
- D. Check List of Materials:

- Plates, forks and knives, serving spoons, napkins
 - Clean up material, towels and sponges and dish soap
 - Movie
 - Sign-up Sheet
 - Handouts for next potluck or other community events
- E. Room Set-up: Arrive early at the location to ensure that you have a working TV with vcr and/or dvd player, chairs and tables. Clean off counter space or a table for the food. Arrange the chairs and the tables so that everyone is facing one another, have the TV in a visible space. Its best to not have people facing one another's backs.

Hinesburg Community Monthly Social Potluck

Thursday, April 12 at 6pm

This Month's potluck will discuss:



*Vermont
Yankee*

***THE CAMPAIGN TO SHUT DOWN THE VERMONT
YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AND THE
CONNECTION TO GLOBAL WARMING***

Hattie Nestel and others from the Citizens Awareness Network will speak about the campaign to stop the relicensing of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, and will discuss the reasons why nuclear power is no solution to global warming.

**Where: Carpenter-Carse Library, Ballards Corner Road,
Hinesburg**

Please bring a dish to share and a beverage of your choice

**For more information call 482-2689 or write
info@globaljusticeecology.org**