

# EARTH DAY Action Toolkit

Educating and Activating Communities for Change



Climate change and 21st century environmental justice are some of the world's most complex problems. To effectively respond to these challenges, citizens must be appropriately educated and prepared.

For Earth Day 2017, communities must take the lead promoting Environmental and Climate Literacy. Now more than ever in recent history, people around the world are hungry to engage in public policy. It is up to all of us to use this unprecedented opportunity to build the change we need.

Earth Day Network has created this toolkit so that you, the environmentally-minded citizen, can create tangible change by organizing and coordinating Earth Day events in your local community.

With this toolkit, you will be able to select an Earth Day event, and create a working group to put your idea into action.

## GET INVOLVED WITH EARTH DAY 2017

Every year, Earth Day Network coordinates events around the world to showcase global support for the environmental movement. Hold an Earth Day event and register it with us to be a part of the worldwide celebration of Earth Day.

Register your event at [earthday.org/register](http://earthday.org/register)



The Earth Day  
2017 Theme:

# ENVIRONMENTAL &

# CLIMATE LITERACY

Education is the foundation for progress. We need to build a global citizenry fluent in the concepts of climate change and aware of its unprecedented threat to our planet. We need to empower everyone with the knowledge to inspire action in defense of environmental protection.

This Earth Day we are launching an ambitious goal of achieving global climate and environmental literacy by Earth Day 2020. To accomplish this, we are turning to the strategy of the first Earth Day in 1970: coordinating teach-ins around the world where citizens will gather to learn about local environmental issues and develop the civic engagement techniques necessary to take action.

## WHY EDUCATION?

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Scientific fact is under threat. Lawmakers and business leaders are turning a blind eye to the impending environmental crisis caused by human actions. Environmental justice demands an educated citizenry capable of defending science and reason.

Environmental education is the first step towards progress. The future of technology, the jobs of tomorrow, and the policies and laws that nurture sustainability require all humans to be fluent in local environmental issues and prepared to tackle the unprecedented challenge of climate change.

# How to Organize & Hold a Successful Event

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In the following pages, you'll receive guidance of the various duties you will need to accomplish and templates and samples for the messaging you will need to bring enthusiastic attendees and media exposure to your event. All this information is organized into the major tasks necessary to hold a successful event.

1

**REVIEW TOOLKITS  
& DECIDE ON  
AN EVENT**

2

**DEVELOP KEY  
MESSAGES**

3

**CREATE A WORK  
GROUP FOR  
YOUR EVENT**

4

**LAUNCH A  
SUCCESSFUL MEDIA  
CAMPAIGN**

5

**ENSURE YOUR  
EVENT IS  
WELL-ATTENDED**

# 1 REVIEW TOOLKITS & DECIDE ON AN EVENT

Earth Day Network has developed two event ideas: A Teach-in for 2017's theme and a Reforestation event for 2016's theme. We have also developed toolkits for educators, local governments, and faith groups available below. There are many other potential events one could hold such as picking up trash from a local park, putting on a recycling drive, or teaching people how to set up home compost bins.

## Event Ideas

### Teach-In Event

To build on our environment and climate literacy goal and theme, hold a teach-in in your community.

### Reforestation Event

The theme for Earth Day 2016 was reforestation. The theme continues as we build to our goal of 7.8 billion trees by 2020. Hold a reforestation event in your community.

## Toolkits



### EDUCATORS

Educators are on the forefront of the environmental movement. We must inform and empower future generations to protect our planet.



### LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

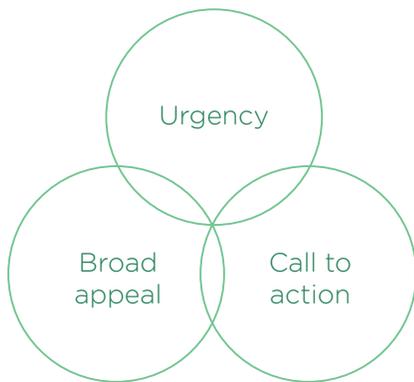
*A Global Conversation*  
Local governments have the power to act faster than national governments, leading the conversation on green infrastructure, jobs, and energy.



### FAITH GROUPS

Earth Day Network recognizes that faith leaders have been a driving force behind the most important and successful social movements. Stewardship of the planet and faith are intrinsically linked.

## 2 DEVELOP KEY MESSAGES



### Sample Key Messages

1

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment. Groups that had been fighting against oil spills, polluting factories and power plants, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides, freeways, the loss of wilderness, and the extinction of wildlife suddenly realized they shared common values.

2

Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, city slickers and farmers, tycoons and labor leaders. By the end of that year, the first Earth Day had led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts.

3

The Earth Day theme for 2017 is Environmental & Climate Literacy. Environmental and climate literacy is the engine not only for creating green voters and advancing environmental and climate laws and policies but also for accelerating green technologies and jobs.

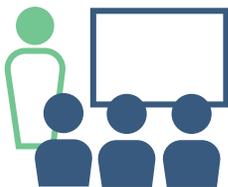
4

Education is the foundation of progress. Using the teach-in concept deployed at the very first Earth Day in 1970, we will build an international populous to work toward the following goals:

- Build a world that internalizes environmental values and create sustainable communities for all people.
- Mobilize a global citizenry to proclaim the truth of climate change.
- Provide avenues for local environmental action.

## 3 CREATE A WORK GROUP FOR YOUR EVENT

The members of this group will tackle the various aspects of coordinating the event. Try to build a team as quickly as possible to spread out the work. As your team grows, members can become specialized into the roles listed below. This group may include:



### Chair

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The person in charge of coordinating the event and delegating tasks to the various group members putting the event together. Recruit someone with past event management experience.



### Communications Team

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This group will craft the message about your event and reach out to the press to promote coverage of your event. They need to have strong writing skills and preferably have contacts in the local press.



### Engagement & Outreach Team

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This team will promote the event to the local community to encourage attendance. Depending on the scale of your event and ability to recruit work group members, consider designating individual roles for the different aspects of Engagement and Outreach:

1. **Partnerships Coordinator**
2. **Volunteer Coordinator**
3. **Events Coordinator**

# 4 LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Press interest is key to building attendance and the attention of elected officials. Create a plan that includes top line messaging, a timeline for media relations, and begin drafting social media messaging.

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	NOTES
John Smith	555-555-5555	john.smith@abc.com	Reporter	ABC News	Call on 2/15, 2/22, 2/29. Ask for lead reporter.
Jane Thompson	555-555-5556	jane.thompson@def.com	Editor	DEF News	Send press release with call sheet.
Mike Wilson	555-555-5557	mike.wilson@ghi.com	Reporter	GHI News	Send press release 1 week before event. Ask for lead reporter.

See sample media list on Page 11.

## BEFORE

### Compile a media list.

Compile the list with a broad range of reporters and outlets. Think creatively – include reporters who might cover environment, public health, community events, politics...etc. Many local outlets only provide newsroom contact information which is fine.

## BEFORE

### Communicate with key reporters & outlets.

Have one-on-one discussions with key reporters and outlets most likely to cover your issue to pitch them on covering the event.

## BEFORE

### E-mail out a media advisory.

Brief language on why this event is newsworthy and relevant. The media advisory should include:

- 1 High profile attendees
- 2 Planned activities
- 3 Location of the event
- 4 Time and date of the event
- 5 Language on the importance of learning about climate change and its impacts



See sample media advisory on Page 12.

## TIPS

- Email the media advisory in the body of the message, to remove the step of opening an attachment.
- Send the media advisory the week of the event and send it again the day before.
- Follow up each email of the advisory with a personal phone call to ensure the intended recipient received the advisory and to ask if they plan on attending.

DURING

### Gather information during the event.

The communications team should gather information during the event for the event’s press release, to update reporters for their stories, and craft real-time social media posts. Some tasks include:

- 1 Tallying an estimated number people in attendance.
- 2 Photographing the various activities taking place and organizing them with captions. Share with us on social media. Use #EarthDay2017 and tag us @EarthDayNetwork.
- 3 Gathering quotes from VIPs in attendance.

AFTER

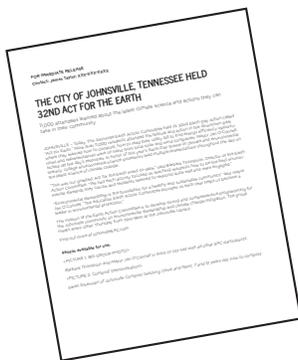
### Send out a press release.

A successful press release will shape the coverage of the event and will give a full story to media outlets to republish. Your press release should include:

- 1 Information on the event and organizers.
- 2 Statistics compiled throughout the day.
- 3 Quotes from the organizer and a couple VIPs.
- 4 Pictures with captions.
- 5 Video clips (optional).

Draft your press release in advance of your event and fill in quotes, statistics, and any multi-media during or immediately after the event. Send out your press release immediately after the event is complete.

The sample press release on Page 13 would accompany the hypothetical event listed in the sample media advisory.



See sample press release on Page 13.

#### TIPS

- Send the press release in the body of your email
- Follow up the email of the press release with a phone call to each outlet and reporter on the event’s media list to ensure it has been received.

## 5 ENSURE YOUR EVENT IS WELL ATTENDED



**Start advertising early.** More time means more opportunities to spread the word.



**Utilize social media platforms** to promote the event. In addition to creating an event, be sure to craft content and updates to regularly post. Diversify your use of platforms. When posting, be sure to tag us @EarthDayNetwork and use the hashtag #EarthDay2017.



**Utilize active advertising.** Create a flier with a logo or image and the details of the event. Hand out fliers in high traffic areas and consider going door to door in your communities.



**Build partnerships with local businesses** who can advertise the event or provide sponsorships or products that will attract attendance.



**Build partnerships with local leaders** who can endorse the event on social media and in the press.



**Get information on the event to school administration** if the event will take place on or near a college campus or high school. They can pass along the information to students.



**Approach community clubs and organizations** to partner with the workgroup and spread event information to their members and followers.



**Register your event with Earth Day Network** and we will help you spread the word.  
[www.earthday.org/register](http://www.earthday.org/register)

# SAMPLE 2016 EVENTS



**British Columbia, Canada**  
 Youth for Climate Justice Now held an environmental march and festival with speakers and musical performances.



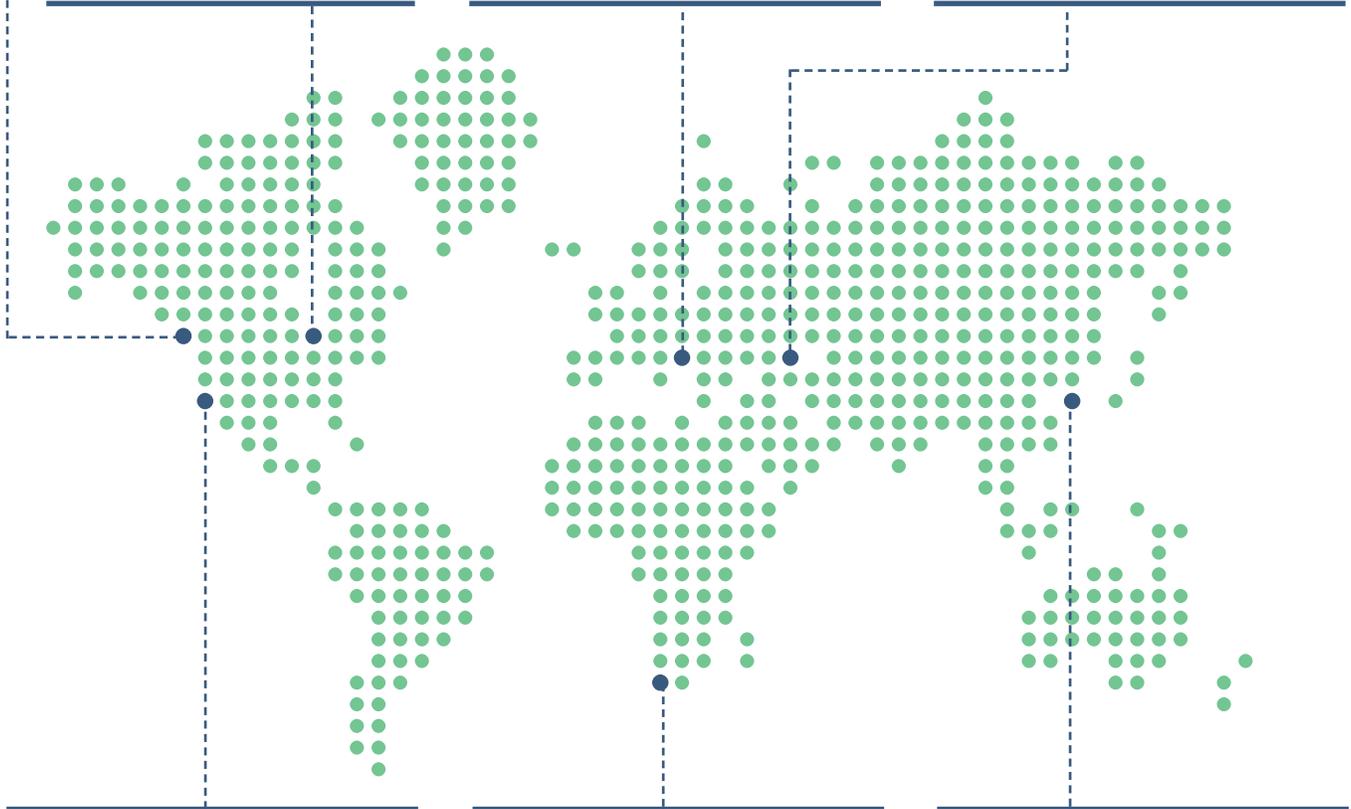
**Illinois, USA**  
 Friends of the Parks in Chicago gathered 4,000 volunteers to clean up the cities many parks.



**Croatia**  
 As part of the "Let's Do it" campaign, 50,000 people worked simultaneously to clean up their entire country on Earth Day.



**Yerevan, Armenia**  
 The Mkhitar Sebastatsi Educational Complex gathered citizens to help plant and water trees and clean up an area to help create an educational park.



**California, USA**  
 Pacifica Beach Coalition gathered volunteers to remove trash and invasive plant species from their local beach.



**Cape Town, South Africa**  
 Oaklands High School invited people to learn from the area's environmental organizations and plant indigenous trees.



**Seoul, South Korea**  
 Thousands gathered for Korea Foundation for Environmental Movement's environmental forum and tree planting.



# MEDIA LIST SAMPLE



OUTLET	NAME	EMAIL	PHONE	BEAT/ TITLE	NOTES
<b>NBC Local</b>	John Smith	smith.john@nbc11.com	xxx-xxx-xxxx	local politics	called on 2/1 - told him about the event, asked for info - shared the advisory. Will follow up
<b>CBS local</b>	Sarah Thompson	sthompson@cbs.local.com	xxx-xxx-xxxx	human interest	didn't answer - will call back
<b>ABC local</b>	Newsroom	news@abclocal.com	xxx-xxx-xxxx	Newsroom	Tanya answered - said they would likely send a photographer - asked for advisory



Media Advisory

## **JOHNSVILLE ACT FOR EARTH CELEBRATION**

Johnsville Earth Action Committee to hold 32nd celebration, Act for the Earth. Climate change is the greatest threat to humanity and will have severe impacts including drought on the community of Johnsville, Tennessee. Mayor Jan O’Connell will kick off a day of activities that include compost demonstrations, solar and wind company representatives, and local Johnsville High School science teachers giving presentations on the latest climate science.

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**WHO**                    **Jan O’Connell, Mayor**  
**Barbara Thompson, Director of Earth Action Committee**  
**Thomas Reed, Johnsville Solar & Wind**  
**David Scaddle, Earth Science teacher**

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**WHEN**                **Saturday, April 22 1pm-6PM**

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**WHERE**                **Johnsville City Hall Big Lawn**

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**CONTACT**            **James Taylor for more information at: XXX-XXX-XXXX**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: James Taylor, XXX-XXX-XXXX

## **JOHNSVILLE EARTH ACTION COMMITTEE TO HOLD 32nd EARTH DAY CELEBRATION CALLED “ACT FOR EARTH”**

11,000 attendees learned about the latest climate science and actions they can take in their community

JOHNSVILLE – Today, The Johnsville Earth Action Committee held its 32nd Earth Day action called “Act for Earth.” More than 11,000 residents attended the festival and action in the downtown park where they learned how to compost, how to read their utility bill to find energy efficiency opportunities and representatives were on hand from local solar and wind companies. Mayor Jan O’Connell kicked off the day’s festivities. In honor of this year’s Earth Day theme of climate and environmental literacy, college environmental science professors lead multiple presentations throughout the day on the latest science of climate change.

“This was our greatest Act for the Earth event to-date,” said Barbara Thompson, Director of the Earth Action Committee. “We had each activity focused on teaching residents how to be the best environmental stewards they can be and residents responded quite well and were engaged.”

“Environmental stewardship is the foundation for a healthy and sustainable community,” said mayor Jan O’Connell. “The education Earth Action Committee provides us each year helps us become a leader in environmental protection.”

The mission of the Earth Action Committee is to develop strong and comprehensive programming for the Johnsville community on environmental stewardship and climate change mitigation. The group meets every other Thursday from 7pm-9pm at the Johnsville Library.

Find out more at [johnsvilleEAC.com](http://johnsvilleEAC.com)

**Photos available for use:**

<PICTURE 1: BIG GROUP PHOTO>

*Barbara Thompson and Mayor Jan O’Connell in front of city hall with all other EAC participants.*

<PICTURE 2: Compost Demonstration>

*Sarah Silverman of Johnsville Compost teaching Olivia and Newt, 7 and 12 years old, how to compost.*