

# HOW TO: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH



EARTH  GUARDIANS

## HOW TO: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH

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### LEAD AUTHOR:

Marlow Baines | National Council Member & Regional Crew Director, Earth Guardians

### CONTRIBUTORS:

Dana Pauzauskie | Interim Executive Director, Earth Guardians

### DESIGNER:

Emily Kryska | Graphic Designer, Earth Guardians

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At Earth Guardians, we take amplifying the voice and leadership of youth seriously. While we work intergenerationally, we honor the power of peer-to-peer connection and support. For that very reason, we have created this unique line of one-of-a-kind 'How to' Guides written by young Earth Guardian solutionaries, plus an amazing Earth Guardian teacher. The guides are all passion-driven and cover a variety of topics, ranging from ridding your school campus of plastic water bottles to becoming a sustainable fashion designer and more. They have thoughtfully been crafted with the intention of supporting you as you step forward into taking actions in ways you love. From our hearts and minds to yours, we hope they enrich your journey.

## ABOUT MARLOW

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**“There is no time for competition. Despite your age, background or passion, you have a voice worth sharing.”**

Marlow Baines is a 16 year old from Boulder, Colorado. She began her journey finding her voice as an Earth Guardians National Council member. The National Council training in 2017, inspired her to do two major things. First, she launched her first campaign “Project Confidence”, which was geared towards shifting culture around school dress code from something negative and toxic to positively empowering for young girls. It emphasized the reality that our beauty shines from within, regardless of society’s standards of body type and physical attributions. Second, she realized that education could be as inspiring as her Earth Guardians work which propelled her to leave public High School and begin a new self learning journey.

Shortly thereafter, she began working with Earth Guardians at an exponential rate, resulting in a newfound responsibility as an Earth Guardians Regional Crew Director for the Central United States. Between planning multi-district dances for high schoolers, schooling herself, and working with Earth Guardians, she has found a passion for bringing people together and talking about self care, because healing yourself, mentally and physically, is the first step in mending our relationship to the planet. Marlow, at 6’2, loves both slaying on the runway and balling up on the basketball court. She loves writing, traveling the world with her bestfriends, and representing the beautiful organization of Earth Guardians.



# HOW TO: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH

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## WHY DID I CREATE THIS GUIDE?

This doc will help youth plan events that are successful AND impactful. It is truly gratifying and fulfilling to put on a 'For Youth, By Youth' event, so my intention is to make the process as easy as possible. There are many things I have learned along the way that I wish I had known beforehand.

Hopefully, this doc will offer many things that will allow your events to be a smash and really make some waves.

## WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

You will learn how to design, plan, and execute a successful event. There will be tips from initial planning phases, to keeping your space safe, and how to make sure people leave with a clear message on why they are there. This doc will give a detailed explanation on every step leading up to your event and follow up tips for afterwards. I will include a few fun ideas to incorporate into your event, as well as, I'll ask some hard questions that you'll need to think about.

**REAL LIFE STORY:** *My Crew, or group of Earth Guardian friends, decided to plan a multi-district dance for high schoolers to build community and get to know each other better. We sold over 275 tickets, and had youth from 10 or more schools attend.*

*There was a lot learned, and a lot that I'm excited to share with you!*

**So, here we go....**

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# PHASE I & II INTRO

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## PHASE I: DESIGN

The first part of the 'How to' guide is going to walk you through the process of...

### 1. BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM

Before you sit down, make sure to build your team with reliable individuals who you can count on. Members should help take their share of the planning. They should recruit their friends and mentors to help out. Also, from the beginning, create a group chat that everyone can use to stay in touch. I cannot emphasize the importance of communication enough!

### 2. THINKING UP YOUR EVENT

Events might be thought up by an individual, but having group input will allow diverse ideas to go into making the event more cohesive.

### 3. SETTING INTENTIONS & GOALS

Begin to ask yourself, what does a successful event look like? What are our intentions? A list of goals will help measure the success of the event, and will help keep you on track as you create an impactful event.

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

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The second part of this 'How to' guide is going to walk you through the process of...

### 1. ENVISIONING

Envisioning your event is creating a blueprint which will allow you the space to see the different pieces of your event and accomplish your vision and goals.

### 2. IMPLEMENTING PLANS

It's time to go, go, go, now! Start taking actions and accomplish the goals you have created for yourself.



# PHASE I: DESIGN

The first part of the 'How to' guide is going to walk you through the process of...

## 1. BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM

**Step #1: Getting Started. Celebrate.** By choosing to get started, you are already on your way to creating an impactful event.

### — Action items:

- 1 If you are at square one and have no idea, start with a list of potential team mates. Select people that you can work with and who might be interested
- 2 Talk to friends and family about your dreams and passion
- 3 Ask them about their goals and what they want to accomplish
- 4 If there are similar interests, tell them your ideas (specifically your event) and dream with them
- 5 Realize that not everyone will be right for your team and different projects may entail different people
- 6 Collect everyone's contact information
- 7 Select a good time or day to talk, set a standing meeting time for moving forward, and get started!

**Step #2: Guidelines and Procedure.** Come up with rules and guidelines for everyone to follow! Planning an event is no easy task and sometimes group dynamics aren't easy either. This is just a part of the process, so speaking ahead of time about some of the challenges, that might come down the road, is smart.

### — Action items:

- 1 Create a shared document and write down a list of team guidelines and agreements for event planning participation. Some good guidelines include:
  - We will keep the intention of the event clear and purposeful
  - We will keep Individual agendas set aside or brought to attention to the WHOLE GROUP if necessary!
  - We will positively impact our community
  - We will represent Earth Guardians with pride
  - We will not discriminate against anyone
  - We will commit and follow through on our word
  - We will ask for help when necessary

# PHASE I: DESIGN

## Step #2: Guidelines and Procedure cont..

- 2 Write down procedures to follow if team challenges arise. Some are as follows:
  - If one person does not agree with a decision that must be made, there are two options:
    - a. come up with an alternate idea or solution, and
    - b. Bring in a mentor to help you come to an agreement, because decisions must be made that might not make everyone happy.
  - Brainstorm ahead of time. Who is a good person to run ideas by? Is it a team leader, teacher, mentor or someone else?

These steps will definitely keep you and your team on the right track in the midst of your planning.

## 2. THINKING UP YOUR EVENT

This is about getting more clear on event activities. If you're not sure where to start, think about things you enjoy doing and come up with some intentions for what you want the event to invoke; consider something fun like dancing, playing basketball, painting, reading, creating community, or educating people about your cause. Ask yourself, why are you organizing this event? What are your intentions and goals? What kind of event would be something fun you and your friends would want to attend? What is realistic? What are your intentions and goals? (We will get into planning and staying organized. Don't worry!)

## 3. SETTING INTENTIONS AND GOALS

**Step #1: Intentions.** The event's purpose will stay clearer if you make sure everyone is clear on the intention of the events, and how every team member will be needed to create a successful event. For example, we wanted to create space for youth to come together in a fun space from all walks of life, as well as, bring more awareness about our work as Earth Guardians.

**Step #2: Goals.** Goals are important, especially in creating a larger impact on the general public after your event.

— **Action items:** Write down your goals. Think about the following and more:

- 1 What are the takeaways you want everyone to walk away from the event with?
- 2 How many people do you want to inspire to learn more about, or join, Earth Guardians?
- 3 How many tickets do you want to sell? Minimum and maximum numbers?
- 4 Do you want to give everyone an opportunity to join an action after the event? What do you want to see happen after the event?



# PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

## 1. ENVISIONING:

Envisioning your event is starting to create a blueprint which will allow you the space to see the different pieces of your event and accomplish your vision! Narrow it down; ask yourself

- 1 What's really doable?
- 2 What will need to be done to make it possible?

**TIP!** Create lists and weigh the ACTION ITEMS on a scale from “urgent” to “get to it later”. This will help keep you on track. You don't need to have all of the answers yet. Now you are simply building the blueprint to keep your team organized. The lists will be with the team through the whole planning process, and I highly recommend keeping them clear and concise.

— **Action Item:** Create a document for a simple list of details and tasks. For example:

- 1 Where will the event take place?
- 2 When will it take place?
- 3 How many people do you want to attend?

— **Action Item:** Create another document for a running list of ideas to start forming what the event will look like. For example:

- 1 How much space do you need?
- 2 What equipment will you need?
- 3 Do you want decorations?

— **Action Item:** Add points about what people should research if needed.

- 1 Note what research will need to be done.

— **Action Item:** Create another document for a running list of ideas to start forming what the event will look like. For example:

- 1 How much space do you need?
- 2 What equipment will you need?
- 3 Do you want decorations?

— **Action Item:** Again, create a group chat, email string, or google group for all team communications. I cannot say this enough! Communications are so important.

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

— **Action Item:** At the end of your envisioning session, make a list of questions for everyone to think about before your next meeting. For example:

- 1 In your opinion, what are good minimum and maximum participation numbers?
- 2 What part of planning are you interested in? This one is super important.
- 3 What strengths do you bring to the team?
  - Tracking communications?
  - Strategizing and tracking progress?
  - Running errands?
  - Facilitating meetings?
- 4 Is there anything else you can you come up with?

### 2. IMPLEMENTING PLANS

1. Event Blueprint
2. Fundraising
3. Location
4. Marketing
5. Day of Event

#### 1. Event Blueprint: Outline, Design, Materials / Decorations / Waste, & Volunteers

As you now know, the event blueprint is crucial to make the whole event run like a well oiled machine. Think of creating a membrane, with multiple checkpoints to allow positive energy into your event. Invite dedicated members from your team to help plan this portion.

**TIP!** As you go, write down which individuals will be responsible for different areas of planning (you are about to do) and add this to your event document with team guidelines. Keeping a timeline helps pre-planning and makes sure to ask all the difficult questions before your event occurs.

#### Step #1: Outline Your Event

— **Action item:** Create a document for Event Outline, and make a list of everything that will be happening the day of the event. Write down the schedule, sequence of events, and list of announcements for your event. Here are a few prompts:

- 1 At a dance, you would block out long periods of time where music was playing  
Introduce Earth Guardians
- 2 Share important venue information, if needed

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

- 3 Share important venue information, if needed
- 4 Another block of music
- 5 Then add in a sprinkle of announcements about the next EG meeting
- 6 Add in some fun performance from one of your team and/or Earth Guardians members. Maybe it's a poem or a song, but keep it engaging!
- 7 By the end of the evening, think about having a fun giveaway or something interactive. It could also be a game, something like a closing prayer, etc.
- 8 As people leave your event, ask everyone to follow your crew's social media pages, hand out flyers, or give exclusive information to next events. How do you want to keep interested participants hyped for the next thing?

— **Action item:** Write down everything that will need to be set up. This includes check-in stations, water stations, garbage stations, parking etc. Next to each station, write down a rough estimate of how many volunteers will be needed for each. This part is very important.

— **Action item:** Simply leave a space for “how people will enter your event”. You will revisit this later.

The Event Outline will determine a good event from a bad one. It will keep the worrying to a minimal as your event gets closer, and you can revisit this piece however many times as you want!

**Step #2: Design Your Event Space.** This is about keeping your event a safe space for your participants, as well as ironing out any wrinkles before the big day. Consider not allowing bags into the venue so no uncalled for liquids or substances enter into your space. This may not apply for everyone. I advise keeping your events sober events because you are Earth Guardian representatives. How we treat our bodies is as important as our impact on the Earth!

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**REAL LIFE STORY:** *My biggest lesson was looking at event space before our event and proactively planning for anything that might arise. I loved the enthusiasm and excitement that arose out of our event, but more structure would have made that night of the event even better. I was putting on an event for high schoolers, so we needed to be cautious of unwanted energy. I learned that keeping bags out of an event is a good way of maintaining a safe and healthy environment. I also recommend checking how many points of entry there are into your venue so people cannot sneak in unwanted materials and substances. Being proactive really pays off.*

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

— **Action item:** Revisit your event outline, and carefully walk through how people will get into your event. Think about the following and whatever else you might need to think about:

- 1 Consider making your event single entry so people have to stay for the majority of the event.
- 2 Put wristbands or stamps on participants before they enter the event.
- 3 Will there be a bag check? Another option is checking bags before they enter the venue or having a place people can keep bags outside of the space.
- 4 Will people need special permission for re-entry?
- 5 Have an outdoor space people can retire to **that is supervised.**

**Step #3: Materials & Decorations & Waste.** Event materials and decorations will be the physical portions of what's needed for your event. Remember to keep your event sustainable!

— **Action item:** Materials. Think about practical materials you may need for your event. For example:

- 1 Check-in tables
- 2 Chairs
- 3 Stage

— **Action item:** Decorations. Buy decorations that are reusable or compostable/recyclable. Avoid single-use plastics. Great resources include:

- 1 Local stores
- 2 Amazon (if necessary)
- 3 Make sure to do a lot of research and find the best decorations and materials for event!

Try to make all of your event's waste compostable or recyclable. Offer big recycling and composting bins, then have small trash bins. Waste bins are very important! THIS PIECE IS HUGE!

**TIP!** Create a water bottle station so people can bring empty water bottles to your event and store/refill them throughout the event.

**Step #4: Volunteers!** Make sure to double, triple check how many people you need for each part of your night. Also, take time to calculate a good youth to adult ratio, and ask trusted adults in your life to be there the day of your event.

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

- **Action item:** Send out an email to all your volunteers and ask them to hop on a call or set up a meeting to go over your event, and what is needed from them.
  - **Action item:** Clearly list out the different positions your crew and volunteers will need to cover. Have time slots and make sure people sign up!
- TIP!** Volunteers are something you need. Don't overlook them or else you will find yourself too overwhelmed on the big day.

### 2. Fundraising

**Step #1: Budget.** Make sure to talk to your team about how much money you want to spend on the whole event. It's ok to make it very inexpensive or to go big!

- **Action item:** Decide how much your spending budget will be and make a clear plan on how you will be attaining the funds. Here are a few ideas:
  - 1 Have everyone pitch in \$15-20. If you decide to go with the latter, come up with a strategy to pay everyone back by the end of the event. This is also a good way to keep people engaged, because if their personally paying to put this event on, they're more likely to help.
  - 2 A mini-fundraiser
  - 3 Ask local businesses to help fund your event and sponsor.



**REAL LIFE STORY:** We did a GoFundMe for three weeks and were able to meet our goal. This was pretty low but we got some great deals, and partnered with some awesome organizations that gave us extra funds.

*(Photo: The crew takes a photo to support the Youthv Gov court case, and later, uses the photo for their GoFundMe page)*

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

**Step #2: Sponsors.** Ask local businesses to sponsor your event! This is a great way to get people excited, as well as support local businesses.

— **Action item:** Come up with a list of establishments close to you, and work on a game plan, such as:

- 1 Who will take on which places?
- 2 What is your ask? Do you want them to support you financially or would you like products for auctions or such?

— **Action item:** Talk through how you will approach the establishment, in person is best.

- 1 Ask them for a manager or someone they can contact in regards to supporting the event.
- 2 Tell them briefly about your event
- 3 Let them know what your ask is, for example:
  - We would love you to sponsor beverages for 40 people

The support and willingness to contribute surprised me the most. Refine your search to places with similar values to your event, this way, that way there is more cohesion between you and your sponsors.

### 3. Location

Finding the right location is necessary to having a successful event. There are certain things that you need to know while looking for the right venue. Make sure not to overlook anything while looking for the right space. Think about the layout of the event, as well as keep an open mind about changes in your initial vision. Finding a location is difficult, and can be stressful! Make sure to give yourself plenty of time for this part of your event planning.

**TIP!** Clarifying details about the venue may seem miniscule, but trust me, they can really make or break the day of your event. Doing your research ahead of time will help you avoid unnecessary stress and have more fun!

— **Action item:** Start looking for places that meet your basic goals. For example:

- 1 Ideal max capacity
- 2 Space for check-in, concessions, information booth, etc.
- 3 How much will it cost? Does it fit your budget?

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

- **Action item:** After researching a few places, draft a simple email to send out. Here are a few points that you should cover in your email:
  - 1 Talk about who you are and why you are doing this event
  - 2 Touch base about who Earth Guardians is
  - 3 Tell them your basic goals like ideal participation
  - 4 Let them know you are a youth led group
  - 5 Ask how much it will cost and let them know you are on a budget and might need to work with them to create a payment plan
  - 6 Make sure to mention what time and date you want!
  - 7 End the email with some simple gratitudes and excitement with working with them, as well as best ways they can contact you
  
- **Action item:** Set up a meeting with the owners and ask questions:
  - 1 What are the venue's expectations for before and after the event. Clean up and such.
  - 2 When can you set up?
  - 3 What should you know about the venue?
  - 4 Will participants need to sign a waiver?
  
- **Action item:** Decide on a venue after you have made sure it's the right fit.
  - 1 Secure a contract with the venue. Chances are, you will need an adult to support this step. Find out from the venue exactly what they require in their contracts and ask a mentor, teacher or parent to go with you to co-sign.
  - 2 Ask the venue questions throughout the process. They only silly questions are the ones left unasked!
  
- **Action item:** MAKE SURE TO GET INSURANCE FOR THE EVENT SPACE!!!!
  - 1 Ask the venue if their insurance covers your event. If not,
  - 2 Do your research. There are resources online where you can buy "day of event" insurance to protect you in case any property or persons are accidentally injured.

**REAL LIFE STORY:** *DO NOT RUSH THE PROCESS! I had to contact over ten different venues. We renegotiated over and over again with different places. It took us two months to pick our venue. NEVER LOSE HOPE!*

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

### 4. Marketing: Tickets & Media

Once you have your Event Outline, Fundraising, Date, & Location, it is time to Market your event! Marketing is the key to your event's success. Use platforms like Eventbrite, Instagram, and Facebook to spread the word far and wide while selling tickets. Also remember to use old fashion tactics like flyers!

**Step #1: Tickets.** Selling tickets can be challenging, and I know you are up for it. Make sure to have the right tools, making it as easy as possible.

— **Action item:** Materials. Think about practical materials you may need for your event. For example:

1 Find your central ticket sales option. Ex:

- Eventbrite is easy to use and allows easy check-ins. Another great tool is you can send out follow up emails after your event. You can also sell tickets in person, and add them to the platform later.

— **Action item:** Revisit your ticket sales goals, and make a goal for every crew member to sell a certain amount of tickets. A few good ideas:

- 1 Make sure everyone asks at least 10 people
- 2 Have a competition and see who can sell the most

**Step #2: Media.** This is a great time to use your creative juices. Social media should be fun and exciting, but make sure to stay consistent!

— **Action item:** Create a social media page for your event if you don't already have one

— **Action item:**

- 1 Create a simple flyer and print out a handful for everyone to distribute
- 2 Share them with local businesses and post them around town or in schools
- 3 Word of mouth is always the best way to get strong commitment and to get people excited!

— **Action item:** Make a series of simple social media posts that your team can post on their stories, on their pages, and personally send to friends.

— **Action item:** Take photos throughout your planning process and post fun photos of your team!

**TIP!** Come up with weekly posts that follow a theme, like 'simple ways to get involved'! Or 'Why people should come to your event'! Have fun weekly facts you can share or tips and tricks people can use to get ready for your event. Make sure to stay consistent!



## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

### 5. The day of the Event: Event Management

The day of the event will be exciting and may seem a little scary. Not to worry. Here is a quick list of what to do:

— **Action items:** Go time!

- 1 Text your team members, tell them how proud of them you are.
- 2 Send out final intentions and goals to everyone
- 3 Everyone should gather the things they have committed to bring
- 4 Show up as early as you need to start setting up, and listen to your team members who have helped plan this out
- 5 Meet up with volunteers and team members before any participants show up, and run through the schedule. Read through final intentions and goals. Have everyone go around and share something they are looking forward to.
- 6 Set up
- 7 Everyone take their places and let the show begin
- 8 After the event, come back together, quickly do some gratitudes and have a few people share their observations. Keep it positive
- 9 Ask people to reflect on the night
- 10 Set up your follow up meeting
- 11 Clean up, go home

### 3. EVENT FOLLOW-UP PROTOCOL

After the event, there may be a lot of excitement and emotions arising for everyone. Make sure to give space for everyone to think about the event. You will want to observe, talk to others, and think about the event. Make sure to take time to hear about others experience and take the good and bad.

#### **Step #1: Pre-meeting**

— **Action item:** Send out follow-up questions for your team to reflect on before your post-event meeting (which you already scheduled). Ask everyone to write their answers before the meeting.

- 1 What was successful about the event?
- 2 Were the intentions for the event met?
- 3 How do you feel about the event?
- 4 What lessons were learned?
- 5 What would you do the same and what would you do differently?
- 6 What was the impact on your community?

## PHASE II: IMPLEMENTING PLANS

**Step #2: Meeting.** Have a meeting about successes and failures.

- **Action item:** Ask everyone to get out the answers they wrote to the questions you sent.
- **Action item:** Go around the room and ask for favorite and least favorite parts of the event. This is the time to share, reflect, and learn from your mistakes so you can get better!

Events are crazy things that take a lot of time and energy. Make sure to learn from them and bask in the beauty of your creation!

**REAL LIFE STORY:** *The weekend following our multi-district dance, we gathered at my house and talked over the event. It was helpful to hear everyone's opinion and gather inspiration for your next action. We had a trash pickup the next day, and it was a perfect way to end the chapter of our first big event!*

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Hopefully this guide has helped you put on a successful event. My intent was to give you information I wish I had known when planning my purpose-driven 'For youth, By youth' event. I really wanted to bring people together, from different walks of life, and invite them to join Earth Guardians. In the end, the multi-district dance was a success!

I would love to hear how your event goes, so email me pictures or tell me a little bit about it. If you have any feedback or have any questions, feel free to shoot me an email at [marlow@earthguardians.org](mailto:marlow@earthguardians.org).

Remember, working with your friends and peers to plan an event is always a learning opportunity, be proud of your efforts. Putting on an event is hard work, and you can do it!





# EARTH GUARDIANS

[reachout@earthguardians.org](mailto:reachout@earthguardians.org)

720-263-2292

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