

HOLD A SCREENING

When using film for community outreach, holding a screening is by far the most popular activity. A well-planned screening of *Living Downstream* can be a catalyst for change in your community—educating audiences, encouraging discussion, and inspiring action.

When planning a screening of *Living Downstream*, above all, have fun! People love an entertaining, thought-provoking film, and they enjoy spending time with others. The excitement, creativity, and hope that you bring to your screening will be felt by your audience.

Watching the film will build your audience's awareness and concern, laying the foundation for a deeper connection with the issue of environmental health. But your screening should be about much more than the film itself. Use your event as an opportunity to further engage your audience, by conducting a post-screening discussion, hosting a keynote address by a local expert, or strategizing around an issue of concern. Before your event ends, present participants with a simple action to take in support of your work, and invite them to a follow-up meeting or workshop.

Use the following checklists to plan a successful and customized screening event:

- Part 1: Goal and Vision
- Part 2: Logistics
- Part 3: Promotion
- Part 4: Audience Engagement
- Part 5: Next Steps

Email us with any questions at screenings@livingdownstream.com.

This worksheet is designed for use by anyone who is planning to hold a screening of *Living Downstream*. Print it from the PDF version of this guide, photocopy it from the hard copy, or download the stand-alone document from www.livingdownstream.com/hold_screening.

Part 1: Goal and Vision

Setting a goal and a vision for your event will help make all the decisions that follow easier. Keep your goal in mind as you make your way through this worksheet.

What is my goal for this screening?

- Raise awareness about the general issue of environmental health.
- Raise awareness about a specific and/or local issue.
- Inspire individuals to become active in cancer prevention and/or environmental protection.
- Grow my organization by encouraging members of the community to become volunteers.
- Reinvigorate and inspire existing activists to continue with the work they are doing.
- Build relationships with other individuals and groups that are concerned about the same issues.
- Encourage individuals to take a specific action.
- Brainstorm solutions to a specific problem or concern in my community.
- Identify an environmental health issue with the community members who would like to work to solve it.
- Introduce the issue of environmental health to the community in the hopes of encouraging others to participate in follow-up workshop sessions. (See *Living Downstream ~ In the Community*, when available for several possible workshops.)
- Fundraise for my organization.
- Fundraise for a specific campaign or project.
- other

Notes: _____

Who is my target audience?

- members of the general public
- members of my organization/group
- grassroots activists
- health care professionals
- public health workers
- cancer patients and cancer survivors
- my colleagues and co-workers
- my staff and volunteers
- my neighbors, friends, and family
- members of my community group
- members of my faith group
- government representatives
- representatives of local businesses
- farmers
- members of my union or my non-unionized co-workers
- potential allies and partners
- donors and funders
- members of the media
- other

Notes: _____

Tip: Even if your screening is intended for the general public, consider whether you might wish to invite specific people from your community. Invite key stakeholders to begin a longer conversation about environmental health. Or invite government representatives, funders, or members of the media as a way to advocate on the issues.

With whom will I partner?

- an individual
- an organization with a similar mandate to mine
- an organization with similar values to mine, but a different focus (e.g. a cancer prevention organization could partner with an environmental organization)
- a local school, hospital, library, business, community center, or faith group
- a local theater
- a film festival or arts group
- nobody
- other

Notes: _____

How will the screening be held?

- as its own hallmark event (e.g. fundraising evening, dinner and a movie)
- as part of an existing event (e.g. conference, film festival, environmental fair)
- as a small and intimate gathering (e.g. house party, lunchtime screening for colleagues)
- as an unexpected special feature (e.g. at a meeting with a politician, at a block party projected onto an outdoor wall)
- other

Notes: _____

Part 2: Logistics

A well-planned event helps attendees and organizers to feel relaxed and engaged. Having prepared for any contingencies in advance will allow you to spend time at the event dealing directly with those present, and keeping the event running in the service of your goals.

When will the screening be held?

date: _____

time: _____

Where will the screening be held?

- at a local cinema
- in a school auditorium
- in a place of worship
- in my home
- at a conference facility
- at a hospital or other health care facility
- in a community center
- at the public library
- at my workplace
- at a local place of business
- in the offices of government officials
- outside (projected onto a wall or screen, or on a television)
- other

Notes: _____

What will we charge for tickets to the event?

- free
- \$5
- \$10
- other

Notes: _____

[Tip Format]

Tip: When setting a ticket price, consider the following factors:

- Your total costs for the event, and whether you have other sources of funding.
- Your goals for the event: are you primarily interested in raising community awareness, or in fundraising for your organization?
- The current cost of movie tickets in your community.

What will I screen?

- feature-length film (85 min.)
- one-hour version (55 min.)
- single scene(s)
- scene compilation(s)
- mini doc(s)

Notes: _____

Tip: Make sure to screen your copy of *Living Downstream* well in advance of your event. Watching the film (or the selected clips) ahead of time helps you to get in touch with the message of the piece and will inform your planning of the event. It also helps you to ensure that the DVD is in good working order and that the screening will not be interrupted due to technical problems.

What kind of equipment will I need?

- DVD player
- projector and screen, or television
- sound system
- comfortable seating
- microphones, chairs, and tables (for the post-screening activity)
- other

Notes: _____

What elements can we include to draw audience members?

- An appearance by a “special guest” (e.g. someone in your community that people know and respect).
- A performance by a local musician, or an introduction by a local media personality or actor.
- An appearance by someone connected to the film (e.g. Sandra, a featured expert, or a member of the crew).
- A post-screening discussion of an issue of great importance to the community.
- other

Notes: _____

What will I do to reflect my commitment to environmental health in the details of the event?

- Use rented plates, linens, and cutlery, as opposed to disposables.
- Offer speakers and audience members pitchers and glasses of tap water, as opposed to bottles.
- Provide refreshments from local, organic producers.
- Use electronic dissemination of materials whenever possible—when not possible, print materials on unbleached recycled paper with non-toxic vegetable inks.
- Collect donations for a local organization during the event.
- Contribute a portion of ticket sales to a local organization.
- Hold the screening in a venue committed to environmentally sustainable practices, and mention this commitment during the evening and in your publicity.
- Hold the screening in a venue close to public transit.
- Assist out-of-towners with carpooling.
- Invite speakers from out of town to participate by video conference or Skype.

Notes: _____

What tasks will I need help with?

- selling/distributing tickets
- outreach to other groups and individuals
- media outreach
- distributing posters, flyers, and invitations
- venue setup
- refreshment preparation and sales

- collecting tickets
- greeting audience members and showing them to their seats
- managing the literature table and distributing printed materials
- taking photographs
- signing people up for further actions or information
- DVD projection
- facilitation of the discussion
- venue cleanup
- post-screening follow-up with audience members
- other

Notes: _____

Tip: Check with your venue to determine what equipment, staff, and publicity they can provide.

What will I do to document the event?

- Invite members of the media to report on the event and the issues.
- Take notes on audience numbers, interesting topics discussed, and any measurable outcomes.
- Invite audience members to complete evaluation forms, sharing their perspective on the event.
- Invite audience members, panel participants, and staff and volunteers of the venue to blog, tweet, and email their impressions of the event.
- Take photographs of the event.
- Log your action, describing the event at www.livingdownstream.com/logyouraction
- Share your learnings at www.livingdownstream.com/forums/viewforum/7/
- Using a ten-point scale, create a brief evaluation form for audience members to complete, or use the “Evaluation Form” handout found in *Living Downstream ~ In the Community*, when available.
- other

Notes: _____

Part 3: Promotion

Promotion of your screening is a major factor in whether your event will be successful. How well you promote your screening will determine how many people are there, but it will also determine who is there. Use promotion and outreach strategically to increase audience numbers and ensure that your event is attracting your target audience.

How will I publicize the screening?

- post my screening at www.livingdownstream.com/hold_screening
- contact local media
- email distribution lists
- post on my group's website
- post on my blog
- post on the venue's website
- list on the venue's marquee or sign board
- post on listservs
- use my online social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter)
- post on the *Living Downstream* Facebook page at www.facebook.com/livingdownstream
- by word of mouth
- call and emailing friends, family, colleagues, etc.
- hang posters
- distribute flyers
- in newsletters
- place community calendar listings
- free ticket giveaways
- mandatory attendance (e.g. for a university course, a workplace training session, etc.)
- other

Notes: _____

What official screening resources will I use?

- customizable flyer
- printable poster
- pamphlet
- press release template
- publicity photos
- film trailer (embed it on your website, or play it in front of live audiences in the weeks leading up to your screening)
- short teasers (embed them on your website)

Notes: _____

Tip: When hosting your screening, you don't have to do everything from scratch. Visit www.livingdownstream.com/hold_screening to see the full range of resources available.

What information will I include in the promotional material?

- date
- time
- venue name and address
- ticket price
- how to purchase tickets or RSVP

- description of *Living Downstream*
- my organization's contact information
- link to my organization's website
- link to www.livingdownstream.com
- link to Sandra Steingraber's website at www.steingraber.com
- what activities will occur during the event
- any special information that might draw an audience to your event
- other

Notes: _____

Where will I go for ideas and inspiration?

- discussion forums at www.livingdownstream.com/forums
- resources page at www.livingdownstream.com/resources
- contact others in my community who have previously held film screenings or similar events
- visit websites of others who are using film for making change
- other

Notes: _____

Tip: Many documentary filmmakers and nonprofit organizations are using film to make change in their communities. Some websites to visit for inspiration include www.workingfilms.org and <http://citizenshift.org>.

Part 4: Audience Engagement

When people attend a screening, they often come with something on their mind—the thoughts and questions that led them to attend. Then, over the course of watching the film, new ideas will come to mind. The success of your event hinges largely on your ability to engage your audience in a way that captures and grows these ideas.

Who will do the introduction at the event?

- I will
- another representative of my organization
- a representative of my partner organization
- a representative of the venue
- a “special guest” (e.g. a media personality, a government official, another well known individual in my community)
- other

Notes: _____

Tip: If a special guest will introduce the event, be sure to include this information in your promotional materials.

What will I say to welcome the audience and briefly introduce the film and the event?

- who am I, and what is my connection to cancer and the environment
- what organization is hosting the event and why
- what *Living Downstream* is about
- why this film is relevant to our community
- what am I hoping the audience will take away from the event

Notes: _____

If facilitating a short pre-screening discussion, what questions will I ask?

- What are your reasons for attending this screening?
- What are you hoping to learn?
- Are there specific environmental health topics that are of concern to you? If so, what?
- What is your current level of knowledge about the issue of cancer and the environment?

Notes: _____

Tip: The pre-screening discussion is most appropriate for small screenings that will be followed by an interactive discussion.

What kind of activity will I use to engage the audience immediately after the film?

- question-and-answer session with a local expert
- question-and-answer session with Sandra Steingraber or a member of the film crew (contact us at screenings@livingdownstream.com to assess this possibility)
- facilitated audience discussion
- panel discussion with individuals representing different points of view and/or areas of expertise
- small group discussions

- half-day workshop (for workshop ideas, see *Living Downstream ~ In the Community*, when available)
- meet-and-greet over refreshments
- presentations or speeches by local community members
- town-hall meeting about a specific issue
- advocacy letter-writing session
- strategizing session
- other

Notes: _____

If my post-screening activity includes a discussion, what questions will I ask to energize and direct the discussion?

- How did the film make you feel?
- Are there any moments that stood out in your mind? What did these moments make you think about or realize?
- What surprised you? Moved you? Angered you? Impressed you?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- How did the film confirm or contradict previous information you had heard?
- What questions did the film raise?
- The film features many different communities in North America. Which one do you think most closely resembles our community? Why?
- Are there health and environmental problems in our community that we should be addressing?
- Are there groups already working on these issues in our community? If yes, describe their work for us.
- Is anyone here currently doing work related to these issues (e.g. cancer, environment, environmental health)? If yes, describe your experiences for us. What are the challenges and successes? What can the larger community do to support your work?
- What can we, as concerned citizens and community members, do?

Notes: _____

Tip: Here are some ways to ensure your discussion is successful:

- One question that audience members almost always ask is: “How can I protect myself? What can I buy, what can I do differently?” Answer this question as best as you can, but also be sure to encourage people to see that if there are toxic chemicals in the environment, we can't fully protect ourselves and our loved ones without protecting the entire community. That means taking public action by changing the way our institutions function, our laws are made, and our communities behave.
- Make sure no one—including you—monopolizes the conversation, and ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to speak.
- Invite concrete contributions to the conversation.
- Encourage people to speak personally and to be direct and brief.
- If an individual begins discussing something that feels like a side issue, invite the audience members who are interested in this issue to speak with the individual one-on-one after the event, then gently redirect the conversation.
- Maintain a hopeful, positive tone. Strive to energize and uplift your audience. Don't allow the discussion to end on a note of despair. Remind the audience that these problems can be solved if we work together.

What one piece of information about environmental health do I want my audience to know by the time the event is done?

- There is no barrier between our bodies and our environment.
- Chemicals can travel far from where they were released—pollution knows no boundaries.
- Chemicals are not tested for safety in the U.S. or Canada before being released on the market.
- When evidence exists for the harm of a chemical, it is not automatically withdrawn from use.
- Once chemicals are released into the environment, it's difficult to clean them up.
- Atrazine, one of the most popular herbicides, is a chemical that may be causing cancer.
- PCBs, although banned, still exist in our environment and have been linked to many health problems, including cancer.
- The experience of cancer has lifelong impact on cancer patients and their families.
- The Precautionary Principle means that we should take action when we have some evidence that a chemical may be harmful to human health.
- other

Notes: _____

What will I do during the event to support audience members' interest in obtaining further information?

- Invite an expert in the area of environmental health to answer questions after the screening.
- Distribute literature about the issues and my organization/group.
- Invite audience members to register for a follow-up discussion or workshop.
- Direct audience members to visit www.livingdownstream.com or my organization's website to learn more.
- Sell books and videos at the event.
- Remain in the audience after the screening and invite audience members to seek you out for further conversation.
- other

Notes: _____

Sandra always ends her speeches on a hopeful, positive note. What positive message will you leave your audience with?

- One person can make a difference, by working in collaboration with others.
- The world is a beautiful place, deserving of our protection. (Or, as Sandra says in the film, "What we love, we must protect.")
- Environmental health is an issue we can do something about—we can change our environment.
- There is a better way to do things, and we can get there together.
- Others are already working on solving the problems presented by synthetic chemicals, and you can too.
- We all have talents and skills that we can contribute to the new environmental human rights movement.
- other

Notes: _____

Tip: Consider offering the audience one hopeful example of an initiative or change that is already occurring in your community.

What will I do during the event to ensure that audience members commit to taking further action?

- Collect names and contact information for my organization's mailing list.
- Provide audience members with a simple action they can do immediately:
 - sign a petition to an elected official on an environmental health issue
 - sign and send a postcard to an industry group that advocates for the use of toxic chemicals
 - join an organizational campaign or action
 - sign up as a volunteer for my organization
 - act on an action alert featured at www.livingdownstream.com/action_alerts
- Have a computer located at the venue for people to immediately become a member of www.livingdownstream.com, where they can participate in discussions, share resources, and find ideas for taking action in their communities.
- Invite audience members to host their own screening of *Living Downstream*.
- Encourage the audience to share the film and its message with others at home, work, school, in worship services, and in the broader community.
- other

Notes: _____

Part 5: Next Steps

The greatest value from your screening may be in how you wrap up the event and use it as a launch pad for future work. Evaluate the outcome as soon as the screening is over, remembering not only to explore what you might have done differently, but also to celebrate your successes. Take the time to appreciate what you have accomplished, and to thank those who helped you with the event. While the screening itself may be a one-time event, it should be seen as a starting point for new work, relationships, and discussions in your community.

When will I debrief the event with my co-organizers, staff, and/or volunteers?

date: _____

[Tip format]

Tip: Some questions for your debrief might include:

- Did we meet our goals?
- Should we plan to hold more screenings? If so, what will we do the same, and what will we change?
- Who were the audience members that expressed interest in taking up the issue of environmental health? When will we follow up with them?
- What trends do we see in the audience evaluation forms? (if applicable)
- What will our next steps be, and what is the timeline for these actions?

How will I know if the event has achieved its goal?

- The audience displays a greater awareness of the issues during the post-screening discussion.
- Audience members sign up to volunteer for my organization/group.
- The issue of cancer and the environment becomes a topic of greater concern in my community.
- Follow-up sessions are well attended and productive.
- Existing activists give positive feedback on how the event affected their outlook.
- A stronger network now exists.
- My community is now actively engaging with a local issue.
- The audience indicates that the event was successful in their responses to my brief evaluation.
- other

Notes: _____

Who will I thank for their help with the event?

- my co-organizers, staff, and/or volunteers
- other individuals, groups, and organizations that helped publicize the event
- members of the media who attended the event or announced it to the public
- special guests who attended the event
- event funders
- the venue
- other

Notes: _____

What will I do now to follow up with audience members and encourage them to take further action?

- Send out a thank you email, with action ideas and links to more information.
- Follow up with audience members by phone. Invite them to:
 - attend a training to learn how to hold their own screening of *Living Downstream* (see *Living Downstream ~ In the Community*, when available)
 - participate in a workshop (for ideas of workshops you could lead, see *Living Downstream ~ In the Community*, when available)
 - volunteer with your organization
 - join an organizational campaign or action
 - discuss with you what actions they would like to take—and find a way to support them in this work.
 - join you in a visit to your elected representative

Notes: _____

When will I do this follow up?

date: _____

How will I share what I have learned with others?

- Log my action at www.livingdownstream.com/logyouraction
- Join the discussion at www.livingdownstream.com/forums
- Talk with friends and family
- Write an article for my local paper, or for my organization’s newsletter
- Share photos of the event on my blog, website, or Facebook page.
- Train others to hold a screening (see *Living Downstream ~ In the Community*, when available).
- other

Notes: _____

Tip: Reporting on your screening is an important part of the process—for you and your group and for the wider community. Sharing your reflections on the event helps the film’s producers to learn how to better support screening organizers, and the lessons you learned will be of value to others planning future screenings.