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.

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 the 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 first action to take in support of your work and invite them to a follow-up meeting or workshop.

Use the five checklists in this worksheet 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

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.

This handout is an excerpt from Living Downstream ~ In the Community, a 200-page guide created for nonprofits, community groups, and professionals. Many of the suggestions in this worksheet are supported by additional resources in the community guide (such as workshop outlines, info sheets, and handouts). Learn more about the Living Downstream guides at www.livingdownstream.com/use_guides. Email us with any questions at screenings@livingdownstream.com.
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
☐ begin a conversation about the connection between human health and seemingly unrelated environmental issues, such as climate change
☐ 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 people to participate in follow-up workshops
☐ fundraise for my organization
☐ fundraise for a specific campaign or project
☐ other

Details:

Who is my target audience?

☐ members of the general public
☐ members of my organization/group
☐ grassroots activists

(checklist continues)
Hold a Screening  |  Part 1: Goal and Vision

- health care professionals
- public health workers
- cancer patients and cancer survivors
- my colleagues and coworkers
- 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 nonunionized coworkers
- potential allies and partners
- donors and funders
- members of the media
- other

Details:

**TIP** Even if your screening is intended for the general public, consider whether you also want to invite some specific people to attend. Whom you invite will depend on your goal. If, for example, your goal is to raise awareness about a toxic waste site in your community, you might consider inviting local public health officials, the residents who share the neighborhood with the waste facility, and the waste management company. You could also 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 health organization could partner with an environmental organization)

*(checklist continues)*
☐ a local school, hospital, library, business, community center, or faith group
☐ a local theater
☐ a film festival or arts group
☐ nobody
☐ other

Details:

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**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

Details:

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**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](http://www.workingfilms.org) and [http://citizenshift.org](http://citizenshift.org).
PART 2: LOGISTICS

A well-planned event helps attendees and organizers feel relaxed and engaged. Preparing for any contingencies in advance will allow you to spend time at the event interacting with participants and ensuring the event serves your goal.

When will the screening be held?

Date: ____________________________
Time: ____________________________

TIP When selecting a date for your screening, learn about other events taking place in your community and choose a time when few events are competing for audience members.

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

Details:
What will I charge for tickets to the event?

☐ free
☐ $5
☐ $10
☐ donation
☐ other

Details:

TIP When setting a ticket price, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the total costs for the event and are there other sources of funding?
- What is the goal of the event? Is it primarily about raising awareness or raising funds?
- What is the current cost of a movie ticket in this community?

What will I screen?

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

Details:

TIP Screen your copy of Living Downstream well in advance of your event. Watching the film (or the selected clips) will help connect you with the message and will inform your planning of the event. It will also allow 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

Details:

What can I include to attract audience members?

☐ an appearance by a special guest (e.g., someone in the community whom people know and respect)
☐ an appearance by an elected official, giving them the opportunity to meet with their constituents and answer questions about environmental health
☐ partner with a range of different groups, asking them to promote the event to their lists in exchange for the opportunity to talk about their work at the screening
☐ 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 on an issue of interest to the community
☐ other

Details:

**TIP** If you are interested in having someone connected with the film appear at your screening, please contact us at screenings@livingdownstream.com to discuss the possibilities.
What will I do to show my commitment to environmental health?

☐ use rented plates, linens, and cutlery (as opposed to disposable)
☐ offer pitchers/glasses of tap water (as opposed to bottled water)
☐ provide refreshments from local, organic producers
☐ share materials electronically whenever possible—and otherwise print them on unbleached recycled paper with nontoxic 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 using environmentally sustainable practices, and use the event to profile these practices
☐ hold the screening in a venue close to public transit
☐ assist with the coordination of carpooling
☐ invite out-of-town speakers to participate by video conference or Skype

Details:

What tasks will I need help with?

☐ selling and/or 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

(checklist continues)
Details:

**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, 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 the action by describing the event at www.livingdownstream.com/logyouraction
- ☐ share lessons learned at www.livingdownstream.com/forums/viewforum/7
- ☐ using a ten-point scale, create a brief evaluation form for audience members to complete
- ☐ other

Details:
Part 3: Promotion

Whether or not your event is successful depends significantly on how much promotion (including word-of-mouth) you are able to generate. 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 draw an audience to 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
☐ advertize on the venue’s marquee or signboard
☐ post on listservs
☐ use my online social networking tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)
☐ post on the Living Downstream Facebook page at www.facebook.com/livingdownstream
☐ use word of mouth: talk about the screening with neighbors, local business owners, and coworkers, and encourage others to do the same
☐ call or email friends, family, colleagues, etc.
☐ hang posters
☐ distribute flyers
☐ use existing newsletters
☐ place community calendar listings
☐ use free ticket giveaways
☐ require mandatory attendance (e.g., a university course, a workplace training session)
☐ other

Details:
What official *Living Downstream* 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)

Details:

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**TIP** When hosting your screening, you don’t have to do everything from scratch. Visit [www.livingdownstream.com/hold_screening](http://www.livingdownstream.com/hold_screening) to download the resources listed above.

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What information will I include in the promotional material?

- [x] date
- [x] time
- [x] venue name and address
- [x] ticket price
- [x] how to purchase tickets or RSVP
- [x] description of *Living Downstream*
- [ ] my organization’s contact information
- [ ] a link to my organization’s website
- [ ] a link to [www.livingdownstream.com](http://www.livingdownstream.com)
- [ ] a link to Sandra Steingraber’s website at [http://steingraber.com](http://steingraber.com)
- [ ] the activities that will occur during the event
- [ ] any special information that might draw an audience to the event
- [ ] other

Details:
Where will I go for additional ideas about how to promote my screening?

☐ discussion forums at www.livingdownstream.com/forums

☐ members of my community who have held similar events

☐ other

Details:
Part 4: Audience Engagement

People often come to a screening with something specific on their minds—such as the thoughts and questions that led them to attend. Then, over the course of watching the film, new ideas emerge. 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?

- [ ] me
- [ ] 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 your community)
- [ ] other

Details:

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

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

- [ ] who I am and 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 I am hoping the audience will take away from the event
- [ ] other

Details:
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 concern you? If so, what?
☐ What is your current level of knowledge about the issue of cancer and the environment?
☐ other

Details:

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**TIP** The pre-screening discussion is most appropriate for small events that have an interactive discussion organized after the film.

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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
☐ 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

Details:
If my post-screening activity includes a discussion, what questions will I ask to energize and direct this 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 information you have heard previously?
☐ 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 today currently doing work related to these issues (e.g., cancer, environment, environmental health)? If yes, describe your experiences for us. What have been your challenges and successes? What can the larger community do to support your work?
☐ What can we, as concerned citizens and community members, do?
☐ other

Details:

**TIP**  Here are some ways to ensure your discussion is successful:

- Expect audience members to ask what they can buy or do differently to protect themselves. Provide some examples, yet emphasize that personal action provides limited protection. We need to all help change how chemicals are used in our communities.
- Make sure no one—including you—monopolizes the conversation.
- Encourage people to speak personally and to be direct and brief.
- If someone begins discussing a side issue, invite interested audience members to speak with the individual after the event, and then gently redirect the conversation.
- Strive to energize and uplift your audience with a hopeful and positive tone.
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.
- Most chemicals on the market in the US and Canada have not been thoroughly tested for toxicity.
- When evidence exists for the harm of a chemical, the chemical 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 commonly-used herbicides, 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 a 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

Details:

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
- 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 DVDs at the event
- remain in the audience after the screening and be available to audience members for further conversation
- other

Details:
Sandra always ends her speeches on a hopeful and positive note, but never downplays the seriousness of our situation. What positive message will I leave with the audience?

☐ 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.

☐ 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.

☐ It is time for us to become heroes in the struggle for environmental human rights.

☐ Sandra often says, “I believe we are all musicians in a human orchestra. It is time now to play the Save the World Symphony. It is a vast orchestral piece, and you are but one musician. You are not required to play a solo. But you are required to figure out what instrument you hold and play it as well as you can.”

☐ other

Notes:

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**TIP** Consider offering the audience one hopeful example of an initiative or change that is already occurring in your community. For some examples, see “Stories from the Movement” on page 127 of *Living Downstream ~ In the 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](http://www.livingdownstream.com/action_alerts)

*(checklist continues)*
☐ have a computer located at the venue for people to use 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, and school, in worship services, and in the broader community

☐ other

Details:
PART 5: NEXT STEPS

The greatest value from your screening may come after the event itself—in how you wrap up the effort, share what you learned with others, and use the event 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  Here are some possible questions for your debriefing:

- Did we meet our goal?
- Should we 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 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.
☐ 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 on the evaluation form.
☐ other

Details:
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

Details:

What will I do 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 and invite them to do any of the following:
  ☐ attend a training session to learn how to hold their own screening of Living Downstream
  ☐ participate in a workshop to further explore the issues and the opportunities for action
  ☐ volunteer with my organization
  ☐ join an organizational campaign or action
  ☐ discuss what actions they would like to take—allowing me to find a way to support them in this work
  ☐ join me in a visit to an elected representative

Details:

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
- other

Details:

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