



CAP TIPS is a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at annesey@atlantech.net

CAP TIP #10

To Improve Public Awareness

Tips for Sponsoring **Green** Events for NCVRW

Introduction

As you plan your 2013 NCVRW activities, it's a great idea to consider in advance how you can make your events and activities "environmentally-friendly." The idea is to "leave no 'footprint' bigger than the one you had" at the beginning of your event. This means you can give careful consideration to the overall impact your events will have on the environment and your "carbon imprint," and seek ways to ensure that you limit any negative impact on the environment.

Listed in this CAP TIP is contact information for some online vendors that may be able to meet the needs of NCVRW CAP projects for sponsoring green events for NCVRW. However, *NCVRW CAP is not recommending nor endorsing any of these vendors*. We are providing this for information purposes only. In addition to the listings below, you may be able to find other vendors online or in your communities that can also supply these items. Use any search engine by looking up terms such as "biodegradable balloons," "biodegradable ribbons," and "butterfly release events."

Partnering with Organizations that Promote **Green** Activities

Organizations that promote eco-friendly policies and green approaches to community development and sustaining the environment *seldom* have opportunities to partner with crime victim assistance organizations. NCVRW offers the chance to collaborate with such organizations to ensure that your NCVRW events are environmentally-friendly, and may provide future opportunities for collaboration on activities that protect victims *and* protect the environment. For example, consider holding your event in cooperation with or at a local park, zoo, or botanical garden. You should contact these organizations in advance of your NCVRW events and activities, and seek their advice on how to promote "green" events.

A good place to start in identifying environmental organizations in your community is Envirolink (<http://www.envirolink.org/categories.html?catid=5>), which lists hundreds of non-profit environmental organizations in a variety of categories.

Some long-established and well-respected environmental groups that have many chapters with which to collaborate include (but are not limited to):

- Sierra Club (<http://www.sierraclub.org/>).
- National Audubon Society (<http://www.audubon.org/>).
- Green America (<http://www.greenamericatoday.org/>).

Quick Tips for Sponsoring “Green” Events

- Promote your environmental efforts as a marketing tool for your overall NCVRW activities, emphasizing any partnerships you may have established with environmental organizations (see *above*).
- Reduce paper communications by using electronic communications whenever possible, for example, promoting your NCVRW activities via:
 - Email.
 - Listservs.
 - Websites.
 - Teleconferences and webinars.
 - Podcasts.
 - Social networking websites.
 - SMS/texting.
 - Fully-electronic media relations (via email).
- For special events, provide online registration forms in PDF format (so registrants can return the form electronically, or have the option to print and mail it in).
- When you *must* print materials for victim and public outreach, use recycled materials; and for communications and written resources for your Planning Committee members and other key stakeholders, commit to double-sided printing. The Center for Sustainable Tourism offers excellent tips for reducing paper waste at public events – before, during and after – which are available at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/Reducing-Paper-Waste-at-Conferences.pdf>.
- Consider holding your event at a venue that has a clearly-established “green” policy, and include this in your publicity.
- If you are planning on providing “swag bags” with information and resources about victim services, visit websites that offer eco-friendly bags that are recycled and reasonably priced, for example:
 - <http://is.gd/JVzefy> (4AllPromos for recycled tote bags)
 - <http://www.customgrocerybags.com/>
- Consider selecting an event site that is accessible by public transportation to reduce your overall “carbon imprint.” Encourage carpooling among participants who choose to drive.
- Provide ample parking for bicycles, and advertise this feature in your promotional outreach.
- Carefully plan your event with consideration to the expected number of participants, duration and number of rooms to ensure the minimal use of resources.

- Seek and use energy-efficient stage and audio/visual equipment.
- Practice good waste management that focuses on:
 - Reduction of waste
 - Recycling of waste where it cannot be reduced or reused.
 - If possible, buy products made from recycled materials (such as paper, cups and plates, plastic utensils, etc.).
 - Use recyclable or biodegradable products when possible.
 - If you are making posters, use water-based pens and paints and recycled paper.
 - Recycle your:
 - Plastic nametag holders.
 - Paper nametags.
 - Publicity and awareness posters.
 - Paper plates and cups.
 - Plastic cutlery.
 - Any other paper resources provided to participants.
 - Provide bins for recycling paper and plastic products at your events.
- If you are hosting a training program, provide participants resources on a USB flash drive (versus paper copies).
- Seek local sources for food (including donated items!) to reduce energy used in food transport.
- For any leftover food or refreshments:
 - Arrange in advance to provide any leftover food to a local domestic violence shelter or homeless shelter.
 - Compost food scraps.

Balloon Lifts

Some NCVRW CAP recipients may be planning on sponsoring balloon lifts in their communities to generate victim/survivors and public awareness during 2013 NCVRW. It's important to note that *balloon releases are considered by many to be harmful to the environment*. However, here are some ways you can make balloon lifts more environmentally-friendly:

- A good place to begin is by visiting BalloonRelease.com. This site provides an excellent overview of balloon releases and tips for making them green, including an important tip for making sure that your balloons are *biodegradable* (<http://www.balloonrelease.com/faqs.htm>).
- One source for biodegradable balloons at a reasonable cost is Greenopolis (<http://greenopolis.com/marketplace/products/100-biodegradable-helium-quality-latex-balloon>).
- If you plan on attaching ribbons to balloons, make sure that they, too, are fully biodegradable, such as those offered by Sweet Organics and Naturals. They have inexpensive cotton ribbons (such as "Organic Twist: Nature's Gift Accessory" that is beautiful hand-twisted and naturally-dyed paper ribbon, available in multiple colors) (<http://stores.ebay.com/sweetorganicsandnaturals>).

If you are looking for *high-impact alternatives* to outdoor balloon releases, please consider the following:

- Plant a tree or a garden to honor victims and survivors.

- Blow bubbles; you can purchase individual bubbles at any Dollar Tree store (www.dollartree.com) or at Oriental Trading (www.orientaltrading.com).
- Drop non-helium-filled balloons from a tall building (this is a great activity to engage children!).
- Release balloons *inside* a building, such as a gymnasium, courthouse or faith institution.
- Release butterflies in lieu of balloons. A wonderful alternative to a balloon release event is a butterfly release. Amazing Butterflies (<http://www.amazingbutterflies.com/>; 800-808-6276) offers release butterflies that are shipped overnight in cardstock boxes (if you visit the website, click on the link for “Live Butterfly Release Brochure” for more information). However, butterflies are *not* inexpensive; ordered in bulk, they are \$65.00 to \$95.00 a dozen. Yet they can contribute to a truly eco-friendly NCVRW event!

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annesey@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.547.1732.