

National Crime Victims' Rights Week
Community Awareness Projects
April 19 - 25, 2015

"Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims."

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 #6

To Improve Public Awareness

Tips for Sponsoring "Green" Events for NCVRW

Introduction

As you plan your 2015 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 giving careful consideration to the overall impact your events will have on the environment and your "carbon footprint," and seeking 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 subgrantees 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. You may be able to find other vendors online or in your communities that can also supply these items. Also remember that NCVRW CAP subgrantees must adhere to the financial requirements of the program, including budget variances and modifications. Please contact Project Director Brenda Noel at brenda@navaa.org if you need to modify your approved NCVRW CAP budget.

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. You can contact such organizations in advance of your NCVRW events and activities, and seek their advice on how to promote "green" events.

The internet is a great place to start for finding opportunities. Here are two sites that offer many possibilities to begin identifying sustainable organizations in your community.

GreenPlus is a non-profit with a purpose to certify sustainable and green businesses. GreenPlus maintains directories by state (<http://gogreenplus.org/regional-sustainability-organizations/>) and by type of business from their certified businesses (<http://gogreenplus.org/network/>).

Envirolink (<http://www.envirolink.org/categories.html?catid=5>) lists hundreds of non-profit environmental organizations in a variety of categories.

Some long-established and well-respected environmental and sustainable 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/>)
- Rotary International (<https://www.rotary.org/>)

Quick Tips for Sponsoring “Green” Events

- Promote your environmental efforts as a marketing tool for your overall NCVRW activities, emphasizing the partnerships you may have established with environmental organizations.
- 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)
- When you *must* print materials for victim and public outreach, use recycled materials; keep paper to a minimum; use postcards instead of envelopes and fold outs; and for communications and written resources for your Planning Committee members and other key stakeholders, commit to double-sided printing; and remember, glossy coated papers cannot be recycled in most communities.
- Consider holding your event at a venue that has a clearly-established “green” policy, and include this in your publicity.
- Consider selecting an event site that is accessible by public transportation to reduce your overall “carbon footprint.”
- Consider purchasing a greenhouse gas reduction at another location from your event in order to offset your greenhouse gas usage. This is considered a “carbon offset credit” and is mandatory in

some countries; however the United States is considered a “Voluntary Credit” country so we decide when we want to offset greenhouse gases. Many organizations and conservancies will plant or maintain forests, coral reefs, mangroves, and other means for reducing carbon on the planet.

- The first step is to calculate carbon use amount in tons for the event, then consider buying credits in the same amount as your carbon tons from one of the offset organizations to help them maintain the environment. There is a wonderful event and conference carbon footprint calculator here (<http://www.terrapass.com/events-conferences-carbon-footprint-calculator/>).
- Then find a carbon credit to purchase. These are a few organizations that can help:
 - TerraPass (<http://www.terrapass.com/>) works with a large portfolio of different carbon offset projects that are only United States based to fight climate change.
 - The Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/urgentissues/global-warming-climate-change/help/carbon-offset-program-frequently-asked-questions.xml>) Carbon Offset program “supports projects that protect standing forests, improve forest management and plant trees where forests once existed, as well as measure and verify the amount of carbon that they store over time.”
 - COTAP (<http://cotap.org/buy-carbon-offsets/>) is “Carbon Offsets to Alleviate Poverty,” an organization that “pools carbon offset transactions from individuals and organizations and supports projects which compensate farmers for planting and maintaining trees and under-utilized portions of their land.”
- Carefully plan your event with consideration to expected number of participants, duration and number of rooms to ensure the minimal use of resources.
- 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
 - Conspicuously provide bins for recycling paper and plastic products at your events
- Provide resources on a USB flash drive or Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) link from a phone app or website to download the information (versus paper copies).
- 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.

Sponsoring Balloon Lifts

Several CAP recipients proposed to sponsor balloon lifts in their communities to generate victim/survivors and public awareness during 2015 NCVRW. It's important to note that *balloon releases are considered by many to be harmful to the environment*. However, there are ways to make balloon lifts more environmentally-friendly.

A good place to begin is by visiting BalloonRelease.com at <http://www.balloonrelease.com/faqs.htm>. This site provides an excellent overview of balloon releases, and tips for making them "green." Included is an important tip for making sure that your balloons are *biodegradable*. *Foil and mylar balloons are NOT biodegradable*.

One source for biodegradable balloons at a reasonable cost is Chico Party (http://www.chicoparty.com/Earth_Friendly_Balloons.aspx). You can also enter "buy biodegradable balloons" into any Internet search engine to identify other possible vendors.

If you plan on attaching ribbons to your balloons, make sure that they, too, are fully biodegradable. You can enter "biodegradable ribbons" or "compostable ribbons" into any internet search engine, and you will find companies such as Custom Paper (http://www.custompaper.com/earthsilk/earth_silk_ribbon.html) that offer gorgeous paper, silk, or cotton ribbons that compost or biodegrade.

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) (see CAP TIP 4 *Tips to Produce Promotional and Personalized Imprinted Items for 2015 NCVRW*).
- 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:
 - **Butterflies for Release**
www.abutterflyrelease.com
407.896.8389
Three dozen butterflies are available in release envelopes for \$100.
 - www.swalotailfarms.com
888.441.4902
This is the "original butterfly company."

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.