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North Brooklyn Compost Project

From: Kate

A volunteer-run compost pile in McCarren Park that helps members reduce waste and improve soil. Our project provides a place for people to drop off their compostable waste locally and divert a large portion of their household waste from export. Plus, we make "black gold"!

Ingredients:

\$1100

Fence Replacement

5 Worm Bins

5 Workshops

300+ Members



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Kate: The compost project started as a project in the community garden. It grew alongside it and now is its own project but we still have a relationship with that garden and also McCarren Park that we're located in. We started just handling the organic waste of the garden, then added kitchen scraps from the gardeners. When we became more independent we focused on the other users of the park and getting their kitchen scraps as well. No pun intended, it was an organic process. It started because there was one gardener who was really focused on it and within the community garden framework, and I've seen this in other community gardens too, people tend to have their specialty. Someone is really into pruning all the trees, and someone is really into soil quality, and someone is really into community programs. I've seen it start this way in other gardens too, where someone just gets really interested in compost and the garden culture supports people just doing experiments. So it started as me getting interested in compost and having that kind of supportive community.

How did you start organizing the project?





Part 1: Your project's story

Kate: The other thing was that we had space available. It was at a time in McCarren Park when there were spaces that needed to be adopted. It wasn't the same park that it is today. The space the compost project is in now was kind of abandoned; no one was really using it or taking care of it. How it was organized was modeled a lot like how a community garden would be organized. We were a loose organization; there was a core group of people who had each other's emails, phone numbers, and would see each other regularly. We had periodic meetings just about the composting project. The other level of organization was that we started to have work hours that were the same and designated every week. If people happened to see us when we were working they would ask us what we were doing. Maybe they went to the farmers' market the same time every week and they would pass by. Or they would pick up their community-supported agriculture (CSA), which is the Greenpoint/Williamsburg CSA that grew up around the same time and place as us. So we have a lot of overlapping membership.

How did you implement your project?

Part 1: Your project's story

Kate: People would kind of see us at the same time and same place and that kind of got worked into their routine. So the organization of it was really light. Since we were on the way for them they could drop off their scraps. I used to say we operated at the most organized level of anarchy. So far it's been sustainable. We've only grown over the years. Projects like ours have raised awareness about composting. One of the new kids on the block this year is the green market system. The farmers' market began a compost pilot. We were in a pilot site and they actually hired one of our volunteers to first staff it. So what we were able to do this year was really take a breath because we have a new collaboration that lets people bring as much as they want to compost. At the compost project we can take as much of that as we want, and make compost. We can focus just on making compost. Now we're in this stage of our growth where the system has changed a bit around us, so we're doing more thinking now and less labor. Our workload is different; we're having a meeting Friday to discuss who we are now and what we want to do.

We have all of our informal social networks in the park. The dog runners, the Saturday morning people, the joggers, the food, the CSA.—if you think about





Part 1: Your project's story

the nutrient cycle, it's kind of interesting what goes on in McCarren Park on a Saturday morning. Because all of the people who are involved with the CSA and with the farmers' market are basically the same people who are going to actually put their food scraps in their freezer and save them all week. And so it fits.

How it is implemented now has changed, but one of the things that we've always done is try to find creative ways to educate people. So we've had workshops, stewardship days, we tried to use the compost with the public. We gave the compost away in a very public way, we documented how people use it.



Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Kate: We've always prided ourselves in not really having any money. But the

Part 2: Funding your project

truth is we've always had a little bit of money. At first we were just free-loading off the garden but when we moved to our own site we needed material. The garden had written a small grant, I think it was \$400 or something, it was a community foundation. We needed about \$1,000 per year and we would have a party and a raffle to raise the funds. We would get money for coffee, gloves, some tools and repair of the equipment. Our website is free, it is a blog we maintain ourselves. I have a laminator at home I use which is great to make a lot of different things.

How did you fundraise?

Kate: ioby was the first time we thought about what we would do with a budget. ioby funded more tools and the workshops we did this year. Is the mission of your project dependent on people's availability? Because money makes people more available. Or do you run your organization based on having an abundant amount of people? We based our project on having enough people, in a neighborhood that is constantly growing. When people leave, more people find us. Our core group is stable.





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Kate: There are 6 to 12 people who are more involved. I found that to be true in any group. There are about 400-500 people on our email list. There's an advisory core of six of us that will always be involved and then every year there is always a new handful of people to join us but they turn over faster. Even if we are busy we've come to this, 'If we don't do it this week, it's going to be OK. And it's just fine' because we know we are just volunteering our time. And I think that's how we've stayed together. People can get really overwhelmed by life in general and you have to make priorities. So this is definitely and "extra" for all of us. Not having judgement about how much time you volunteer is how you keep volunteers. It's OK if it doesn't happen this week, because what's most important is that the big picture stays really positive. We had to learn this attitude because it came from getting mad at each other and like 'Why didn't you show up?' and 'Where were you?' and 'Nobody sent an email, what happened?'. This is something people can really learn, that if you hold on to it, if you're grasping all the time to make it work work work, nothing is going to work perfectly. You just have to be chilled out.

Part 3: Lessons learned

That's not to say volunteer work can't be excellent. But it is to say, applying everything you learned from your MBA to your volunteer group is going to crush people. And people are not going to respond well. It's a social entity it's not science or corporate.

What are your tips and tricks for others?

Kate: I wrote a letter to the commissioner saying what we wanted to do but never waited for a reply. We just started doing it. We just ignored each other. But then gentrification happened, all the condos started going up around and there were just a lot of local changes. It's a long story but we became not secure in our site. There was a time for awhile when we weren't sure, maybe we would show up one day in the park and it would all be gone. So we did two things: we started really documenting our relationships and demonstrating the value and support that we had. To kind of make sure everyone was aware of intrinsic good. We used the press with photos, also events. Every year we held an It's My Park Day. We participated in the opportunities that already existed with Partnership for Parks and the Parks Department, and Green





Part 3: Lessons learned

point has a big festival so we participated in that.

You have to do things that are newsworthy. Press is relatively easy to get, not like the New York Times is coming, but a neighborhood weekly is always looking for something to write about. If you give them two weeks advance notice, they will send someone to write a story. They're always looking for interesting things happening. Knowing what is newsworthy is important and then having that level of organization to just make a press release or even just send an email invitation. Knowing what your weeklies are and who are the contacts takes some research and you have to have someone who understands that. Smaller press leads to bigger press.

We are a compost pile but the project is a group of people who are so interconnected in the community that we're immovable now. So now I don't worry about it not being there in the morning.

Besides the social networking we also made the site appear physically heavy. We got a shed, we made very big piles of things, we made it look like it was

Part 3: Lessons learned

used. Making your site look cute is also helpful. We made a nice gate for it, a nice sign, and whenever I leave the site I make a little arrangement of cobble stones, a pile of twigs and the wheelbarrow tipped over. Making it photogenic is important.





Car Free Astoria Water Walk From: Martha & Steve

The Astoria Park Alliance closes Shore Blvd. for three consecutive Sundays to host a series of events and activities by the river. Our hope is to reduce carbon emissions on the street and allow families and children to move freely.

Ingredients:

\$972

Three Coordinators

Sound Equipment

Table and Chair Rentals

Generator

Banner

Transport Equipment



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Martha: There were a number of us doing different things in the park and Helen Ho was at the time the Western Queens Outreach Coordinator for the Partnership for Parks. She saw these individuals doing things and thought to make a catalyst project to bring these people together. It was for people who wanted to act as park stewards, because volunteerism is very important and vital to how NYC parks are run. So we were recruited and got together with other like-minded people and started discussing what we wanted to do, what projects interested us. And so from there we started to grow as a group for other like-minded people who were interested in park issues, and that's how we were approached. This venue, Shore Boulevard lies adjacent to the park and the shoreline, very quickly people start to find each other. 'Oh you're interested in green space,' or 'Oh you're interested in trees' or 'You're interested in gardening' or 'You're interested in composting'. These things kind of make sense. And these are people you probably know, or have heard of. So it was kind of like a little snowball effect and then we were approached by a group who thought this particular venue would be an excellent pedestrian





Part 1: Your project's story

street. The venue was reviewed by the head of the Queens Department of Transportation who came out to see the venue and fell in love with it.

Wanting to join the park to the actual shore was something that tied the team together. Between the park and the shore is this wide boulevard that has been in the community. Should it be a permanently closed situation? People like to cruise there, people like to park their cars there, so what is its most optimal use? And so what we're actually asking the community to do is to re-think the space. Even for just these three short days, re-thinking the space and saying we're not necessarily challenging all your concepts of this space, we're just saying 'Keep an open mind', 'Give us three days and see what can happen'. So our interest is in creating a greener use of that space rather than just a venue for cars, but a venue for people.

How did you start organizing the project?

Martha: We had our own reasons why we thought it was a perfect venue but we still had to sell the idea. And that's part of the communication of under-

Part 1: Your project's story

standing selling. You have individuals in your group who are good at marketing, those who understand elevator-speak, those who can write a good press release, these are assets you need. So you have to use all your tools in order to form partnerships.

We built a good relationship with our community board that signs onto permits. Doing something like closing a street is a difficult thing to ask a community board to sign onto, you start small and successful, you're asking them maybe to do a big favor and they may not know you that well. So you have to get to know them, you try to acquaint yourself with the process and you try to become very facile at that. Then they can say 'We'll try this, we'll give it a shot'. And then you follow the rules meticulously, you follow all the procedures, and you don't expect any special compensation so then they know 'These are responsible individuals, we can trust them', 'They understand what our needs are as a community board', and then when you tie things in like promoting business that ties into what a community board does, then they're satisfied. They'll think, 'Well this might have been a little difficult but we see that these people are helping the community', and it will





Part 1: Your project's story

help things run smoothly. If you have any problems you have to be very adept at stepping in, solving problems, being creative and having good communication.

Permits have to be paid for and you should start early with all the paperwork. Get them in extremely early. There's no use in planning things when you don't have a permit. The Department of Transportation deals with a lot of heavy permits, but I would advise any group to go online, they can call 311. There's a lot of ways to find out how to get permits, give yourself plenty of time. Timelines are very important in these kinds of situations because you never want to be caught behind the wheel without a permit or something like that. Start out 6 months ahead and do your homework. This is New York City and permits and things like that sometimes are put in one year ahead of time.

Steve: We were sitting there in the dead of winter, in February already and Jules was talking about the permits she was lining up. August seemed so far away at that time but whatever amount of time you think you need, you probably need more, push it all the way back and get those major steps in.

Part 1: Your project's story

How did you implement your project?

Steve: Our organization meets once per month. But then we specifically set aside committee meetings for the Astoria ShoreFest because it's grown that much. We had weekly meetings so that we were able to get a lot done and then take a break. Then we came back to the weekly meetings after a certain period of time had gone by. But it's a lot about designating certain people who are going to be in charge of certain parts of the event.

Martha: And there's the outreach component. When Steve hands out a card, he also grew up in the neighborhood so people have questions that he can answer. He can build a face-to-face relationship with them and it creates a wonderful bond. There's no substitution for that. Because also people will ask about the street being closed and parking issues, and you can answer that directly to help ease their concerns.

Steve: By handing somebody something and talking to them about it you get instant feedback.





Part 1: Your project's story

Martha: That's the thing, you really don't know until you have those conversations, what those concerns are. When people have the opportunity to speak to you and they know you, they know you're OK and we can hear their concerns right away.

Steve: As opposed to just having a little box on the website where they can write their comments. There's a more likely possibility for them to be nasty because it's anonymous. It's harder to deal with unless you've met them.



Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Martha: Because the pedestrian street is a Department of Transportation sponsored event we were able to receive support from them. The whole idea of a pedestrian street is still morphing and changing and that is a credit to them because they're still learning as we are. What they decided this year

Part 2: Funding your project

was to provide X amount of funds so that the community and the groups using the pedestrian street would use those funds in the most effective way for their own community. And so that enabled us to do something.

How did you fundraise?

Steve: We wrote out the ioby ask using some of the language Martha wrote for an earlier one. Once that was set up on ioby it was just a matter of emailing it out to different people with a different message depending on who it was. So for my network I took a certain email I wrote for all of my family and friends that was maybe a little more intimate, a little more joking about the fact that I was asking them for money. Because it's a little different when you're asking people who you know personally for money than when you are just sending a request out to just anybody who may know about your organization.

We knew our plan for the money before it even showed up. We were ready to go about this event without that money from the city. We didn't know we





Part 2: Funding your project

were going to get it. Then once we found out, we immediately in our meetings strategized where we were going to put the money. We made lists.

Go minimal so that as the next year comes in you can add information. Like with what we did with the banners, we just used black electric tape to re-date it for the following year so we wouldn't have to get a new banner every year that gets expensive.



Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Martha: Take the opportunity to grow each year, learn from the things that don't work. See what works and take part, don't get discouraged. You constantly are learning and that's alright, that's part of the process.

Steve: We didn't have a website last year and it made a huge difference

Part 3: Lessons learned

having one this year. And that came from a member who said they wanted to do it and we said go for it. Yola site does free sites and it's pretty easy to put together. You just have to have the time to put it together. Once our member made the template I was able to edit it and that definitely put the word out. So for any event it helps to have its own site that breaks everything down for people.

Martha: So the lesson there for up and coming groups is to utilize your talent. Allow people to contribute in the way that they know how. It really creates much more access because sometimes you're a little overwhelmed and people only have certain pockets of time especially in a volunteer not-for-profit. If you enable people to contribute it really helps the whole thing.

We made flyers and left them in cafes and bars. We also did lawn signs and banners. These are things that can be inexpensive and become an investment you can use each year.





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are your tips and tricks for others?

Steve: Keep those partnerships alive from year to year, which means checking in. People underestimate a simple email just to let somebody know you appreciate it that they were there. One thing we have to do is make thank you notes for everyone who was involved to let them know we appreciate them and their help. And it's also a way to remind them that this happens every year and it would be good to have them back.

Think about how you could bring a little more benefit to your partners because then they're going to put that much more effort in.

Only try to involve yourself with people who also share the same energy, who also share that same willingness to for it to happen because you're not getting paid. I've caught myself struggling to get somebody to be involved. And I have to catch myself and say maybe they're not suppose to be working with us. And that's fine, and then drop it. Make sure you appreciate those entities and partners who do have that same energy. It makes it that much

Part 3: Lessons learned

easier and that much better to drop the ones you feel like you're dragging. And solidify the partnerships that are definitely there for the same purpose.

You find like-minded people who want the same thing in your community, and you only have each other to rely on. You're only doing it for that good feeling of having it happen. The benefit is that there you are on the day of, and it's occurring. People are enjoying it and they're like 'Wow how did this happen?'

Martha: It's great to just meet people and as a person it helps you grow. It just kind of opens your life up. All volunteerism does that, it opens your life. And so you don't know what's going to walk through that door but it's always an opportunity to grow.

And there are loved ones, unsung heros, that you want to acknowledge in your personal life. Our family and friends really pitch in. They don't always get as much acknowledgement but they support us and we couldn't do it without them.





Soundview Bikesplorations, The Bronx From: Naomi, Karyn, Samelys & Mel

Our summer program will offer high school students from the surrounding Bronx neighborhood an experiential, community-service learning opportunity to explore the connections between active design, environmental justice and health outcomes by bicycle.

Ingredients:

\$3,000

Fleet Preparation and Maintenance

Youth Stipend

Ride Leader

Water & Lunches

Green Map Printing



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Naomi: Soundview was the second year of bikesplorations and bikesplorations was piloted in 2010 in Chinatown in the Lower East Side. Essentially, it was a program that parents, families, and I all put a lot of hours to create a curriculum around urban planning, community involvement, and introducing young people to these career options. We thought the best way to do that would be to do something fun and engaging, like cycling, which is what we do in our spare time. We have grown to love our professions even more and have grown to love our city.

Karyn: At the beginning of that, one thing that we also wanted to do with our mission was introduce issues in urban planning and design at a younger age. I think that it's important to expose high school students to career options. We thought about how we never knew about urban planning as a career option; we only found out about it once we had finished undergrad or entered grad school. One way to diversify the profession would be to expose people at a younger age about the city. The bike is a tool to do that, as an





Part 1: Your project's story

to the profession.

How did you start organizing the project?

Samelys: It was difficult, we would meet in the morning, on our lunch breaks, after work, on the weekends. Occasionally, at your desk, on our computers, on the phone, through emails-we were leading double lives.

Things aren't going to come easy. Partnerships are crucial. There's no way we'd be able to do all that we've been able to do on our own. We have a lot of great friends and partners that we work with. That helps with the outreach and the spread of ideas. Utilizing technology, crowd sourcing platforms, social media. It's hard staying organized, but to the extent that you can stay organized when you're starting out, charting some short-term goals and some long-term goals, and revisiting those goals along the way and adjusting is important. You're going to learn things along the way.

How did you implement your project?

Part 1: Your project's story

Naomi: We piloted the program last year. It was really successful, because we partnered with Recycle-a-Bicycle; they were our fiscal sponsor, and supplied the bicycles. We partnered with Parks; they have a catalyst coordinator program for certain parks-- the East River Park is one of them, and Soundview is another. That program's focus is to activate those parks that are under-utilized. They were just trying to draw programming and people. They wanted to makes parks more visible, to encourage community participation.

We had developed really strong partnerships with Partnerships for Parks, we met Mel Rodriguez with Bike the Bronx. He'd been doing bike rides up in the Bronx already. We started talking about what a program there could look like, and basically formed a coalition there with organizations that are working in that neighborhood already, in the Bronx, and in the Soundview community. We developed the curriculum together. We were very fortunate to have Mel lead our bike tours this summer. It worked well.





Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Naomi: We really wanted to get Bikesplorations up and running. Our medium term goal was to expand it to different boroughs, and our long term goal was to do longer, more extensive programs. Also, working with a design studio to allow students to do a design project. And for long-long term, we want to not only work with youth, but also with local residents to create some community based plans.

We had an intern at one time that was literally just developing a database of potential grants. A lot of times people would actually say to us, "There's a grant you might be interested in." That's how we found the Citizen's Committee and the Catalyst grants. It just took working with community members, and having them point us in the right directions. We did a lot of networking, meeting a lot of different people. Social media has helped out a lot, Facebook has helped out a lot.

Part 2: Funding your project

How did you fundraise?

Naomi: We held fundraiser events: we've annual fundraisers, we've done the Polar Bear ride, we've done Sake tasting events, and other sorts of themed rides. ioby helped us secure a lot of individual donations. We did the Feast, which stands for "Funding Emerging Artists through Sustainable Tactics." That was our first official grant, it was for \$400. We were so excited we won it. People voted on our project idea, it was pretty exciting. We did a project on Kickstarter, we applied for a Partnership for Parks Catalyst Grant, a Citizens Committee for New York City grant-there was a lot of grant writing. And there's more to come!





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Naomi: We took a grant writing class through the Foundation Center, which gave us a 101 on how to structure a proposal. But the thing to remember is that each proposal is different. One thing that helps is being able to be succinct and writing clearly. You have to be able to explain yourself in such a way that people “get it.” We have our own jargon, and everyone does. After a while, you can kind of create a boiler plate because a lot of organizations ask the same questions. Things become a lot smoother. The first grant we did took a really long time, but then it got a lot easier from the experience. It was a learning experience, in terms of learning how to manage time.

What are your tips and tricks for others?

Naomi: A lot of community groups that we partnered with had insurance, because a lot of them do outdoor programming. So what we did was found out what insurance one of our partners, Bronx River Alliance, had. They have

Part 3: Lessons learned

insurance because they do kayaking programs and bicycle instructions. So basically we went to the insurance provider they had, and inquired as to how much it would be to cover the program. There's insurance for every situation you can think of, it seems. Any group that does any sort of outdoor programming has to have something like this; it's just a part of the deal. The insurance covers anyone participating in the rides, and the bicycle equipment.





Prospect Park Lake Clean Up From: Tami

Our project will address the trash clean up that is needed along the shoreline of the Prospect Park Lake. Cleaning up the lake will help provide its seasonal and year round residents a safer and healthier environment to thrive in.

Ingredients:

\$460

One Concerned Resident

Park Paddle Boat Rentals

Trash Picking Tools

Trash Bags

20+ Volunteers



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Tami: I was on a tour with the boathouse, I'd lived here for a long time but never done it. So I finally decided to do it. While the guide was talking there were plastic bottles floating in the lake and little pieces of trash and plastic bags. I asked the guide if there was some sort of clean-up crew for the lake and he told me to ask the people who are the Green Team at the boathouse. They told me they used to clean it but not anymore. They weren't sure who was running the clean-up now. I know Erin from ioby and I sent an email to her and she pointed me to the Prospect Park Alliance. I ended up having this idea, I wanted to take the paddle boats and clean the inside of the lake. And that's kind of how it all happened.

How did you start organizing the project?

Tami: I had no idea they'd let me do something like that. They thought it was interesting and asked if I would be interested in raising money and that kind of thing. So at first it was just me in the paddle boat picking up the plastic





Part 1: Your project's story

bottles and bags floating. From there I went back and forth with Prospect Park Alliance for awhile and we came to an agreement of how much I would pay to rent the paddle boats just so they could make something and raise money for the park. And so I started a Facebook page, I started an email campaign, I made a set of Google docs. That was enough to generate the buzz for it, lots of people called. Every single time I posted on Facebook, or sent an email around, or asked my friends to join I always got responses.

How did you implement your project?

Tami: From there I kept a Google spreadsheet with names and contact information. Some people had a group of ten people. I said OK and asked for their contact info: telephone and names just so I could keep track of how many people were involved. Then some groups fell off, other people couldn't. There were 3-4 people to a boat at the beginning for a total of around 20 people. It was really fun.

The park does it as part of a larger coastal water clean-up day. I just sent

Part 1: Your project's story

the information to people that called or emailed. There were a ton of other groups as well besides us taking part. We tied into an existing program to do something that really needed to be done and wasn't getting enough attention.

I brought doughnuts and orange juice for everybody because I figured people need sugar to do the work. I didn't want anybody fainting while cleaning up. It generally made people happy to have the food and drinks.

I had a contact at the park that was a partner for the event. He helped motivate the volunteers. The Prospect Park Alliance and Parks Department gave us sheets to keep inventory of what we picked up and they supplied all the equipment for us to use.

Before beginning he taught us how to operate the boats, what not to do. He took it from there. It was nice, he had lots of advice, things I would have never thought of to tell a group of people. And then he said 'Good luck' and we were all out there 2-3 hours doing the clean-up. They wanted the boats





Part 1: Your project's story

boats back in by 12pm. That was it and everybody had a great time. People stopped at the little duck and turtle islands. We picked up tons of stuff.



Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Tami: I also went around and took pictures of the lake. Just showing everybody what I wanted to clean-up. I made signs and I posted them all over the neighborhood. I also went into a few different businesses and asked if they were interested in donating, that they could go to the site, ioby.org, and donate towards the project. We had a certain goal, around \$250 just to rent the paddle boats. But we were trying to raise as much money as we could. We raised a total of about \$400.

How did you fundraise?

Part 2: Funding your project

Tami: I used ioby and friends. I went to different businesses who went on the website. I got a check from the 5th Avenue Bid and Park Slope as well. That was from going around to different restaurants. I gave them the sign that I made, like a flyer. I told them about the project, what I was trying to do. I told them I didn't want to take money from them right now but that there was a website they could go to and donate. That was important because I didn't want to carry around a lot of cash. I didn't always ask for a manager but just if they could pass on the information.

I submitted my idea to ioby, Erin helped me step through the process. I put a picture up, the minimum amount I wanted to raise, did the steps asked. That was all I really had to do.

All the money raised went to the Prospect Park Alliance. I'm sure they can do a lot of things with it. It was fun I enjoyed it, I met some really nice people. We did it the next year and they were also really helpful, we flew through it and it was a faster process.





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Tami: I feel like just asking questions led me to other questions I had to ask. Then those questions, when answered, led to other things so it was just like following a trail of cookies-a kind of mystery to be solved. You think this question, you ask it out loud, someone says you can do that but you have to do this, and then you go and do that. Open your mouth and ask questions.

Things that I would have done differently, I told people there could be no more than three people per boat. I thought three was better than four because you need a place to put the big garbage bag you ended up having. Some people had two garbage bags.

I should have done a group picture before we started because everybody came in from cleaning at different times, because different people have different stamina. It was hard work, you weren't just picking stuff up, you were really bending over and it was kind of awkward on an unsteady boat. It wasn't for the weary.

Part 3: Lessons learned

What are your tips and tricks for others?

Think about it if you have volunteers, take care of them. Feed them, make sure they understand they need to bring sun block and gloves. They're donating their time and they're awesome. If you can, go to a bar or business and get a sponsor to have a beer afterward. My friend's place offered a pint to each person after the clean up.



Jackson Heights 78th St. Play Street From: Donovan



Jackson Heights is a very dense urban neighborhood with a large immigrant population, low to moderate median income, and very little public open space. This project provides additional safe space for neighborhood residents of all ages to play, socialize, relax, and be outside during the summer months.

Ingredients:

\$3,150

4 Picnic Tables

10 Shade Umbrellas & Stands

Portable Soccer Goals & Play Equipment



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Donovan: It's a very dense community but there's not a lot of park space. There's very little in terms of green space and even less in terms of park space. I mean I have New York Times articles that talk about this problem in this neighborhood since the 70's. It was planned as a cooperative housing community, so most of the apartment complexes have inner courtyards, but they're all private so you have to live there to use them. A lot of them have just turned into dirt patches because there hasn't been enough money to maintain them in the past years. The ones that are in good condition tend to have rules, like you can walk on the sidewalk, read the newspaper on a bench, but there are no barbecues or kids playing. So even where green space exists, it's not that usable. So there's a big need and also a big baby boom in this community right now. A lot of families with young kids are moving in.

This is just a way of creating a little extra open space. The park gets very crowded on a Saturday afternoon at 4pm, and we just wondered how we could get a few extra thousand square feet to augment the crowd. So that's



Part 1: Your project's story

really the idea.

How did you start organizing the project?

Donovan: We met with the Department of Transportation and they originally had some existing programs to close streets but they're more set up for commercial strips. They thought at first to close other streets besides 78th but we thought that would be a traffic nightmare and it didn't really solve our open space problem next to the park. So we talked to them and we proposed the idea of 78th street. We worked with them for a few months figuring out a way we could make this happen.

The Department of Transportation was a big partner, the other huge player from Day One with us was our city council representative. He ran our platform of expanding open space and communal space in the neighborhood. Some of the people in our group were big supporters of his and had worked on his campaign. I think when we went to him he had just been elected but wasn't yet sworn in, but even so we had people from his office meeting and





Part 1: Your project's story

saying 'We're in support of this'. We applied for the permit through the Department of Transportation and the NYPD had to sign off on the permit for street activity.

We're basically running a small park. We're a group of all volunteers to keep it clean, fix things, buy stuff, make sure no one gets run over by a car-there's a lot of things to do. We divided the work up by task. So there's one person who coordinates the volunteers, I mainly work with the Department of Transportation and the city council representative, there's another person who does all the emails and keeps supporters updated, maintains the website and mailing list, there's a couple of other people who are more engaged with making sure we have enough money in the bank when we buy stuff. Another woman's specialty is asking places for coffee and doughnuts when we have events. Everybody has sort of taken on their own task. We do a lot of things via email, it's hard to all get together. Everybody has a busy schedule so we communicate via email. We also set up an online forum, but then it didn't really work and we all went back to just email.

Part 1: Your project's story

How did you implement your project?

Donovan: The first year was pretty easy, we just went to the Department of Transportation and said we were doing this on Sundays from 6am to 6pm, and it was no big deal. A couple of years later when we had to do this full-time, 24-7 street closing for two months-and this year for 3 months, that took a lot more work. We had to petition and gather signatures; we had to go to community sub-committees and the community board. We felt we had to organize a march in support of the Play Street, gathering about 100 people in the community. We started small and I think that was good, but as things went on we had to get better about soliciting community support, letters of support and getting people out to marches.

We started off the first year with 12 Sundays for 12 hours and that was a good test-run to show that no one was going to get hurt, that we could keep it clean, that it was manageable and that people would use it and like it. I think that was a good strategy. We didn't bite off more than we could chew that first year. Now this is our fourth year and it's pretty ambitious with what





Part 1: Your project's story

we've set out to do. It's been a lot of work.

There were six to eight of us in the organizing group the first year. We had to get letters of support from all the property owners that were adjacent to the site, saying they didn't have anything against us being there. We had to be very organized about collecting emails so that we could contact them in the coming years for support. Getting people to generate letters, it's very simple stuff, getting names and emails and then asking them to do things. But it's a lot more work than you realize. Somebody has to remember to bring the clip board, and someone has to put all the data into the computer. It's basic Community Organizing 101, but on a rainy night when there's a community board meeting and we want to petition for signatures, someone has to get off the couch and go.

A lot of what we've done is not that innovative, we just did it. It's just remembering things and getting them done. Remembering that email needs to get sent out, that you need to get volunteers out to an event and making sure someone is responsible for it.

Part 1: Your project's story

Some people get upset that they're losing 50 parking spaces on that street, or think it's going to get dirty. Some people think the Play Street is going to cause gang activity or drugs. There's always someone who can look at something and say 'This is the most awesome idea ever!' or say 'This is the worst idea', and they're both looking at the exact same thing. You have to figure out how to anticipate all of those responses or arguments ahead of time. We were really persistent in gathering people who were supporters.

Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Donovan: One of the things we've tried to do is be proudly low-budget. Especially because the Play Street isn't permanent, so anything we buy that goes out on the street has to be stored come October. We didn't want to pay to have storage but we have a shed that we rent on the sidewalk. We thought about buying a playhouse that we could chain and leave out, but a





Part 2: Funding your project

volunteer has to be there to unlock it. We were having these discussions and how we could raise money at the same time we heard about ioby from Helen. We tried ioby to see what would happen, and I was shocked at how fast we raised the money.

How did you fundraise?

Donovan: As it is right now we rely mostly on asking for donations when we're having an event, going around door-to-door at businesses, fundraising from places like ioby, we've received a couple of other small grants. We really haven't asked the community to do much besides volunteer time. The one thing we have asked people to do is write letters, write emails, come out and support us; no-cost things are what we ask. But you know it's hard because when you ask 20 people to write a letter you'll only get one. It's a lot of persistence and just trying to be one step ahead of the opposition but at the same time being prudent. We don't want to try to mobilize people too early when we don't need them.

Part 2: Funding your project

We bought sports equipment, picnic tables, soil for these big planters. The Department of Transportation gave us the permit and these big empty planters to use as traffic barricades. Everything else we had to come up with—the soil, the plants, any amenities that we wanted to have on the street. We bought Astroturf and basically glued it to 78th Street, and you see people having picnics on it.

Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Donovan: No matter how good of a job you do reaching out to the community, someone will come out in opposition. This is public space, it's for everyone. So the question is who gets to decide the use of it? Is it the majority of people or is it the person who says 'This is how it's always been and I live right across the street from it, why should I have to change everything about my life because you want to change the use of this space'. It's a delicate balance trying to figure out how you make the argument that this is change for the





Part 3: Lessons learned

better, and everyone is going to benefit in the long run. Our community is going to benefit in the long run but certain individuals may suffer in the short term.

Some people are never going to be happy about what you want to do and it's understandable. When something has been the same way for a long time, change is hard for a lot of people. Giving up parking for instance, in a neighborhood that is notoriously tough to find parking in. It's a valid concern, but my argument is at the end of the day it's more important to have space for kids to play.

We've applied for permanent closure of the street. If that happens we're going to have to really re-think how we organize ourselves. We'll have to go one of two ways: Either we will have to scale back and just do a small number of activities that are done well or we'll have to raise a lot of funds to be able to hire a full-time staff person. Or try to get a bigger organization to take on this project with us. Either we will have to really slim down or go for broke. And it's this middle that's hard. It's trying to do a lot with a little, which you

Part 3: Lessons learned

can do for a year or two, but to try and maintain something gets harder and harder. The more successes you have, the more expectations you have.

What are your tips and tricks for others?

There's a few ways to go about getting a permit for a Play Street. One is to go directly to the Department of Transportation, they have a public spaces program, and there's an office there that deals with that. The Department of Health also is now helping to facilitate Play Streets. If you look on their website they have a program and can help you through the process. Basically one city agency helps you apply to another city agency. Also Transportation Alternatives has a Play Street initiative as well. So those are all places you can go for technical assistance to help you through the process of applying for a permit. You just have to tell them when and where you want to do it, show that your organization has capacity to take on the project, and that the people involved in organizing have some sort of specialty or knowledge. When we originally applied, the team was comprised of a filmmaker, web designer, hospital worker, two urban planners-so we were able to illustrate





Part 3: Lessons learned

some sense of what we were doing. Obviously having the support of the city council representative was as important if not more important than all of that. Now we can just say we've done it before.

If your organization has successfully completed any sort of program or event in the past I think that's important for city officials to see in your application. That proves you have the fiscal capacity and know what you're getting yourself into organizationally. They know you can keep something going if you have done something in the past.

Veterans Square Beautification, SE Queens From: Fred



This is one project of many, done mostly by a group of elderly residents in Queens, to cleanup and beautify public spaces in their neighborhoods.

Ingredients:

\$102

6 Bags of Mulch

6 Flats of Flowers

Trash Bags



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Fred: if your project is in your heart, it's in your head. I think that was the trick. I'm not an engineer, I'm not an architect. But I live here. Basically what we do is keep parks and monuments as clean as possible.

Pretty much everyone's from Southeast Queens. We consider it all the same neighborhood. If my park gets crappy, they might go to another park and make that crappy. We have to stop it where it's happening, and improve things where we can. But it's been good, we've been very lucky with the help, and Parks has been pretty good. But of course, why wouldn't they want to help us? When there's five billion leaves here, we're raking them up, and that saves them a lot of time and manpower.

How did you start organizing the project?

Fred: All told, we have 50 volunteers in the cornucopia. But people do different things. There are ten Citizen Pruners, who are officially licensed to do



Part 1: Your project's story

tree pruning and the like. They usually come once a month to do a major cleanup. I'm here three times a week on the way to the office. I pick up all the litter, even on the weekends. Over there there are four or five people who make sure the flags are okay, that no one's tried to pry something off the monument or write graffiti, and pick up the litter.

Everyone donates their own equipment. They donate their time, equipment and gas. I carry my pruning stuff in my car, because sometimes you see a tree that's in distress, and you don't want to have to go home and get your stuff. You can do it right there on the spot. And sometimes when you try to come back, you can't remember where the tree was.

How did you implement your project?

Fred: We have this site, we have that one, we have this one over here, which is smaller, and we have Carlton Playground. That's a miniature park; it's a playground within a bigger park. The important thing to remember with all of this is that it's not just taking care of it, it's watching it. In the morning, I'll go





Part 1: Your project's story

by for a half and hour and I'll clean. I'm not messing around. A "Parky" would take an hour and a half, but I'm not knocking them, because they're on the clock. I'm on my own clock, so I don't have time to fool around. Our workers are mostly retired. I'm the youngest one, which is the problem. We want more young people. But we take anybody who volunteers. We have a blind lady. She thought that she couldn't do anything, but you know what, when the wind is blowing, we need someone to hold the bag up. And believe it or not, that's really important. If you can hold a bag, you can work with us.

Maybe sometimes you don't want to join an existing group, because maybe the volunteers are old. But sometimes, you talk to older people and realize that they have it going on. If you want to do your own thing, God bless you. But if people see that a job can get done by a bunch of old people, a 25-year-old would think that they could surely do the same and keep up. The trick is to see what other people are doing, either join them or copy them, and duplicate it in another area. That's why we did so well here, because we welcomed people. We didn't turn people away, or tell them to do their work someplace else. I think that was the secret of retention. We had no problem with recruit-

Part 1: Your project's story

ing, because all the volunteers would talk and get their friends involved. And if they couldn't do a strenuous job, they could hold a bag, like the blind lady, or hold the clipboard, sign people in, give people gloves. You don't have to dig a hole. And everyone found their niche. They do get a little territorial though: "I'm raking over there, don't do that!" I don't think I've ever had a problem with a volunteer not wanted to do more, and we're not talking about spring chickens. They understand the value of a good day's hard work. A lot of people have lived here for 20, 25, 30 years. So they're stakeholders.

Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Fred: We got the application on line, and did it manually. It was through New York State DEC. We do get some grants from the Parks Department, which are substantially smaller, but a lot easier to get. We have a good reputation with them. They asked what we wanted to do this year, and I said, "Trees!"





Part 2: Funding your project

They throw all kinds of money at tree pruning because the trees are in such bad shape. They know we're going to do a good job and not spend the money recklessly. Reputation helps. If you're around long enough, you get a good reputation or a bad one. They see the work. You can do a lot when you have all volunteers who are all dedicated. You can do a lot with a little grant.

How did you fundraise?

Fred: It was so easy it was shocking. Everyone always says that state or federal grants are disasters, but I thought it was worth a shot. And we did the homework, we put it in, they liked the project. They gave us a grant of \$18,000 and they were very happy when we only spent half of it. We found we didn't need certain things, like the tree pull pruners. We bought the first ones, and we thought we would have to replace them, but because people took such good care of them, we didn't have to. So, we turned back the money. The state was like, "Wha?!". I think we got some bonus points, but there was a lot of paperwork. You have to think about it like a thesis, planning the project from start to finish, who would be involved, the expenses, a

Part 2: Funding your project

detailed budget. I'm talking a budget where you actually go to the store and price it out. Because they check on that, and you get points. If you get above a certain score, you make it to the final elimination period. It takes months.

We keep using the tools as long as possible. If I can take two rakes that are broken and put them together to make a good, one, it's going to happen. Grant money is becoming far less available. You have to take care of what you have. I don't have to buy shovels and rakes, because I already have them. Why put in for more money if you don't need it? A rake is good for five years. A shovel for five years, maybe longer. Don't take advantage of the goodness of grants.

Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Fred: Not that we're that good, just that the projects have not been more than we can handle. You have to make it appropriate for your group, not too





Part 3: Lessons learned

large, because otherwise people will run away and won't be fulfilled. I never thought of that: how the projects really fit, and we know we can handle it. A lot of times, we do the same projects. The clean-ups and stuff at the monuments-- I don't even have to be there. The people know that they have to sweep, clean, paint, do your job. It's like assigning tasks and people know what's expected of them.

What are your tips and tricks for others?

Fred: You have to spend some time thinking about who can do what. You can't give them something too easy, because then they won't be challenged; you can't give them something too hard, otherwise they'll go home and have a heart attack. And then when they're done, you don't just give them a thank you, but you take them out for pizza. Appreciation is spoken, but when you sit down with them, you get to talk to them, and they remember that. If you spend a few dollars on that, it'll be the best money you've ever spent: investment in a volunteer. There's nothing better than "I know you because I worked side by side with you." That's what bonds people.



Kids for Compost, The Bronx

From: Jared

This project helps us reduce our environmental impacts and create a fun learning opportunity for students. Students collect data about the compost process and learn about the bins' ecosystems.

Ingredients:

\$293

3 Garden Gourmet Compost Bins

1 Compost Thermometer

Sorted Biodegradable Trash

15 Pairs of Gloves

1 Teacher

32 Students





Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Jared: In my first year of teaching, I started keeping worm compost bins as a hands-on learning tool. In my second year, our student environment club started paper recycling for the building. The kids were exposed to composting already from the worms, and it was in our third year that we saw a huge opportunity in the cafeteria: banana peels, orange peels, and uneaten salad were going straight into the garbage.

How did you start organizing the project?

Jared: After getting approval from the school administrators, the principal and I reviewed potential areas for the future composting site. We had four candidate areas, with each one having their pros and cons. We selected one that had ample space and was private from street views (our neighborhood has had problems in the past with theft and vandalizing).

I purchased one plastic outdoor compost bin in the fall 2009. The kids and I



Part 1: Your project's story

set it up so we could learn more about outdoor composting. Our first act was to collect all the leaves that had fallen and store them up. The custodian helped us out and we had four trash bags full of dried leaves. We put as many as possible into the one bin, and then set up the remaining bags so they would not get wet through the winter.

How did you implement your project?

Jared: Once we got the ioby funding, we set up three additional bins. I let the kids set up the bins; it was a good learning opportunity for them to build something real by following the given instructions. When the bins were set up, we added about 6 inches of sticks to the bottom to provide air flow.

Getting the food scraps was time consuming. For the type of composting we were doing, we did not want breads, oils, cheeses, meats, or milk (and certainly not plastic trash, etc). It was not worth our time or even sanitary to sort through the waste after it was put into one container. We needed people to put the desired items in one bin and the waste into a separate bin.

Part 1: Your project's story

This did not work without someone there to prompt them, so Environment Club members would take the responsibility after they finished eating. We only have a few seconds at best to capture the vegetable and fruit scraps we were looking for, so the kids learned the best ways to do it. Some would stand next to the waste bins while others roamed around asking if kids would compost their fruit and veggie scraps when they were finished. The kids really enjoyed the task, and if they hadn't, I am not sure we would have had any scraps to compost.

Once we had the food scraps, I would take the kids to the compost site (one of its downsides was that it required adult supervision even to visit). We used a scale to weight the materials and recorded their weight. We would mix the food scraps and the dried leaves using sticks we had collected from the area. About twice a week, we would use our compost thermometer (also funded through ioby) to check the temperature and mix the compost bins as needed. The kids loved being outdoors and mixing the compost. It was a different experience for them and for their age group (12-14), I think they enjoyed the increased attention they got from an adult (class size 32, compost group size





Part 1: Your project's story

never more than 8). We had four bins, so we would fill one up and then move on to the next one. By about the time we finished the last bin, the first one would be ready for harvest (and then we could empty it and use it over again).

After about 6 weeks with our mixing and monitoring, most of the food scraps and leaves were composted into finished compost. The students would use a sifter I built to sort what was finished from what was not. We gave the finished compost to people we knew would use it (our principal was a gardener, for example) and put the rest in tree pits around the school.



Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Jared: I knew where to get the compost bins as I had been involved in the compost community in NYC for a while. In this case we bought them from the

Part 2: Funding your project

Lower East Side Ecology Center. For the gloves and thermometer, I found what I wanted on the Internet and ordered them from those sites.

How did you fundraise?

Jared: I funded the initial bin and the scale we used. I wrote up my proposal for ioby. I sent the link to friends and family and posted it on Facebook. The proposal for three more bins, gloves, and a compost thermometer was funded fairly quickly. Once we got the materials, Brandon from ioby helped us transport them by train from the ioby office in Manhattan to the school in The Bronx.

I emailed the ioby link to people I thought would be interested and would help me spread the word. I kept my proposal fairly small so that it would not be a difficult amount to reach.





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Jared: It is important to remember that each obstacle requires its own analysis and solution. Sometimes there are easy fixes, but sometimes you will have to compromise. Many times obstacles require you to work harder at least at the beginning until the situation changes.

What are your tips and tricks for others?

Jared: Find allies. That our principal was a gardener was huge (she wanted our compost). Our custodians had tough and messy jobs; we met with them and helped them by encouraging all the students to sort their waste (and we collected the paper, which reduced their work load).

Make it fun. The kids loved doing the recycling and the composting. For one, it got them special hall passes that allowed them to roam around to do their jobs. It got them out of certain required things, like sitting in the cafeteria all of the lunch period. It also allowed them to socialize; I noticed the environ-

Part 3: Lessons learned

ment club eventually hanging out together outside of our activities (we even had a couple that were boyfriend/girlfriend, you know, in that hold-hands-in-the-hallway 13-year-old sort of way). Finally, I motivated them on Friday afternoons, especially as we started getting huge amounts of materials, by taking them outside to play Frisbee if we finished our work by a certain time. Other fun things included the occasional party, a special field trip, and making a video we showed to the whole middle school.



Staten Island St. George Day Festival

From: Jenny



The festival re-imagines the St. George and the Dragon story so that the protagonists resolve their conflict peacefully and learn to share and wisely manage the water from the park fountain.

Ingredients:

- \$6,000
- Art Supplies
- Promotional Story Book
- Organizing Committee
- 3 Committee Leaders
- Local Community Groups and Schools



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?

Jenny: We thought to use peace to resolve conflict through the story of St. George and the Dragon. In the story St. George slays the Dragon but in our version they actually get along. Our neighborhood is called St. George, it's not named after that St. George that slayed the dragon, but after a completely other George who used to own property at the ferry terminal. One way to build communal pride is to showcase it through all its arts and talents. It's all day long music and dance, art around the park and we have an all day reading stage for literary stuff and then we have artists teaching people how to do arts and crafts. It's just a huge day of arts and culture of this neighborhood, and this neighborhood is so incredibly diverse, it's mixed income and it's mixed race. To celebrate St. George Day with this big myth makes a fun day.

It started just as a performance night. It was just an evening of contests about creating an alternative story. You know, if we rewrite history we can



Part 1: Your project's story

change the future sort of thing. It wasn't until the third year that we moved it outside because we decided to make a dragon and have a puppet show. I think that was what inspired the whole park thing. The parks commissioner had also just redone this park outside the café and they were very supportive of us doing events in it to promote the park and build the community. To raise awareness about the value of parks, the greatness of parks, the value of this park. I think it was the dragon puppet show that moved it outside, and the fact that it was Earth Day, it just all came together. So we thought, why don't we just do this festival, wouldn't that be fun? You can dance all day and you can celebrate Earth Day.

The inspiration was the International St. George Day and the fact that we thought we could express these themes that were important to the community. We invited people, talked about it with people. We made these contests and then we carried the contest into the park. Everybody got a book and a rose and the winner got a trophy.

How did you start organizing the project?





Part 1: Your project's story

Jenny: There were certain people we approached and people who asked us if they could be part of the planning committee. And it sort of just grew from approaching people in the community. We approached most people who were doing different things and had open meetings. At the meetings we put out the larger vision, a lot of people came to different meetings. And then we just threw out the areas people could organize, someone who could organize a bit of the larger idea. We met every two weeks initially and then every week closer to the event. It helps to generate momentum, people get more and more interested. We were making this dragon out of trash and I brought the head in one night. The herbalist group wanted to make cupcakes with little dragons inside of them. We show and tell at each meeting and it builds the energy, it's inspiring to get people to do more.

How did you implement your project?

Jenny: The whole thing is created out of a community collaboration. We always have an organizing team and bring people together to organize different elements of it. It's meant to all be a communal collaboration. There were

Part 1: Your project's story

three or four of us if there was a final decision to be made. Having the guiding vision helped facilitate. Usually there was 10-15 people in the group. Each year you get better and more organized. Figuring out how to really utilize volunteers is good because then you can get more people involved. This year we got more high school students involved for their community service and they got really into it and we had things for them to do.

Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Jenny: We already had support of Parks, they were part of the planning team from the beginning so we had that contact. On Staten Island COSI is the place to get a grant, it's a small community out here. It's not like it was hard to find. It's a lot of work, it takes someone who's motivated to make it happen. We didn't have manpower or desire to go around and get all the donations. We got what we got and we did well with it.





Part 2: Funding your project

How did you fundraise?

Jenny: We did grant funding, ioby funding and we published a program book in the festival. This is our map and different stories, here are the illustrations. We published this book and we added ads in the back. We're a low-budget operation, we're talking \$6,000 for the whole thing. It's little for a project. A local school does the printing as part of their courses, it's a tech school in the community so it all links in with the theme. Then back cover in color ad is a donation of \$500, these are \$300, but then you can have an ad for as little as \$10.



Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Jenny: We definitely ran into conflict. Some conflicts in terms of how broad to let the scope go. To stay within our mission of community building and sharing resources but not letting it get too broad at times. Should we have all

Part 3: Lessons learned

the local business pass out their flyers, should they all have tables, is there enough space? Defining what is a family-friendly play, if it's appropriate to have something about teen suicide, if that's appropriate for the 7-year old walking by even though it's a good thing to talk about. But people have different takes on it. So having conflicts but meeting about them to discuss. There's often someone who may have an idea that no one wants to do and may turn critical towards the group. Someone like that can really damper the feeling of the group. We handled it by trying to be as positive as possible and by being open to all the ideas. We tried to nicely dismiss the ideas that were off of the mission, without putting them down. Once you say it doesn't go with the mission don't re-engage with it, move on to the next topic. If they have a lot energy you have to direct it into an idea that would work with the mission, try to have them do something else that works for the group. Try to match their interests with the mission and find something they would like to do and still feel like they are participating.

What are your tips and tricks for others?





Part 3: Lessons learned

Jenny: Clarity of mission is good. For us, because it was part of our mission to be open and really expand the festival to different people's ideas made it richer. Being located in one space, not to have it all over the place. Different festivals do different things. We've gotten better over the years just because we know so many more of the steps and so many things have already been put in place.

I think it's really good to involve schools, to get the mission out to school children, to get them involved and performing in it. If you have a parade, if the kid is in it dressed up as a frog, and there are 20 kids, you've got 20 families who otherwise for the most part might not have come.

Don't try to do everything on your own, specifically involve those people who are in charge of organizing groups. We let things go that didn't work as well. It's good after the event is over to bring everyone together again, recognize them, or just a meeting to go over what worked or what didn't. Something for the group that brings them closure and thanks. Not like we thank them, but a communal thank you from everyone involved, we thank them

Part 3: Lessons learned

they thank us. We're all part of the creation so no one's sitting there like 'Did they notice?' It's important to get that energy back up to thank the volunteers and recognize them. The first year we did just a meeting to bring the group together about what worked and we all took notes. For the next year there was no recollection and it was good to have the notes to look at to remember what we did.

Remembering to get good documentation of your event, good photos and videos of people. Comments from people, publicity photos to use for promotion, because the next year you'll need it for grant-fundraising.

It's important in the planning of the project, that the plan be consistent with the mission of the project. If it's a problem-solving-oriented project and you don't have any problem-solving methods in the organizing group, that's a problem. Or if it is just one person who's creating something that's suppose to be collaborative. It should be a collaborative process if it's a collaborative event, keep it consistent. The energy that goes into creating a big thing is going to reflect in the product. So a clear mission and creation out of the





Part 3: Lessons learned

spirit of that mission. If you have someone that is really controlling, it will reflect in the product. You have to have fun putting it together. If you're supposed to be putting together a fun event and it's just a nightmare of a lot of fighting then it's not worth it. Invest the type of energy you want in the product into the process.

How to manage a rain date is a really hard thing. It would have been good to have the date in promotional materials, we knew that but we were so conflicted about it. Whether we wanted to have a second location or not, the second year we decided we would just cancel the whole thing if it rained-point blank. And what happened to me was during the second year I felt if it had rained I would have been so disappointed to have let the whole thing go. We can't really do a rain date because we can't ask the volunteers to save two days and shift everything-and the city won't give you a rain date permit. So we needed a rain location. It was helpful to have the rain location near the actual location. Think hard about a rain date or rain location, how to promote it and what your plan is going to be at the last minute for shifting your whole program. Consider rain really early on.

Add Your Own Recipe: Tools For Your Project

Your Project Name & Location:



In a few sentences, what do you think your project is about?

Ingredients:

What do you need to complete this project?



Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about? What is your mission or main goal?



Part 1: Your project's story

How will you start organizing the project? Do you know or could you connect with anyone who could help you?



Part 1: Your project's story

How can you turn your idea into action? What resources do you have that could help?

Part 2: Funding your project



What are the essential items you need to complete your project ideally? How much would you estimate each item costs?



Part 2: Funding your project

Where could you look for funding sources? Could you also do something to raise money for yourself?

Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons from others you want to remember for your project?





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some tips or tricks you want to remember for your project?



How To Take a Photo:

Think about what's in the background: no telephone poles coming out of someone's head!

Tidy things up in your shot, remove garbage, cords, etc.

Think about what your photo is about, and move closer to remove things that don't add to your image.

Take photos when people are in action: look up and smile!



Add Your Photos: Physical, CD or Link



How To Make a Video:

Begin with an opening shot that let's the project speak for itself.

Introduce yourself: Tell us who you are, who you'll be working with, and a little about your community.

Take a walk around the block: Give us some context for where your project will take place.

Tell us about the project: Talk about what you want to do and how you plan to make it happen.

End with a closing shot that is about the project's vision.



Add Your Movie: Tape, CD or Link



Make a Draft Budget

Start by listing everything you think you will need to ideally complete your project. Then you can edit this list down to the basic items you need depending on the funds you receive.

Item:	Reason of Need:	Estimated Cost:	How You Will Try To Get Funds:

[illegible]

Item:

Reason of Need:

Estimated Cost:

How You Will Try To Get Funds:



Item:	Estimated Cost:	Actual Cost:	Funding Available:	Funding Left:

Item:

Estimated Cost:

Actual Cost:

Funding Available:

Funding Left:



Make a Timeline



Draft a timeline based on your short-term and long-term goals.

Long-Term Items:

Your Resources:

Amount of Time You
Hope to Accomplish It By:

Short-Term Items:

Your Resources:

Amount of Time You
Hope to Accomplish It By:



Make a Schedule



Fill in the calendar with important meetings for items in your timeline.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

						



Add Your Own Finished Recipe

Your Project Name & Location:

Write a short description of your project:

Ingredients:

List your ingredients:

Part 1: Your project's story

How did your idea come about?





Part 1: Your project's story

How did you start organizing the project?

Part 1: Your project's story

How did you implement your project?





Part 2: Funding your project

How did you find funding resources?

Part 2: Funding your project

How did you fundraise?





Part 3: Lessons learned

What are some lessons you learned?

Part 3: Lessons learned

What are your tips and tricks for others?





**Copy what you need and send this kit
back to ioby to recycle for a new project!**



Thank You



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