**STEP ONE: Get clear about your goals**

This is a celebratory event to mark national environmental movement achievement and solidarity. As with any school-based celebratory event, this should be:

- Fun
- Community spirited
- A showcase for campus sustainability projects
- Educational and informational
- Engaging for all participants
- Easily accessible

Questions to consider at this point:

- What kind of event will this be?
- What are our goals? How will we measure our success?
- Is this a one-day event? Multiple day event? Week-long event?
- How many students will we be serving at a time? Will multiple small groups be more manageable than one large group?
- Should it be during lunch, a half day, after school?
- Who might have a unique contribution to this event?
- What resources are available to us?
- Do we need to go to the administration with any specific requests?

**STEP TWO: Identify your activities**

Since this is an environmentally based event, it is important that attention is paid to the ecological messages and impacts of your activities.

Questions to consider at this point:

- Do we want prizes at any booths?
- Can we incorporate a “Passport to Sustainability”? - Kids get stamps for booth visits
- How much time will we need to allot for set up?
- Who will staff each booth?
- What materials do we need?
- Do we need to provide any extra services? Water? Restrooms? Shade structures?
- How will we physically lay out the event? Should we map out a “plan”?
- Will we need to do any fundraising? (either before or as part of the event)
- Again, do we need to go to the administration with any specific requests?
Ideas for activities:
- Plant seeds in cups for kids to take home (include a detailed care sheet!)
- Make tie dye shirts earlier in the week – get a prize for wearing them on Earth Day
- Recycling relay
- Solar oven cooking
- DJ battle event powered by solar panels (winner based on louder claps)
- Solar powered Guitar hero, iPod chargers
- Recycling drives/competitions: paper, electronics, ink cartridges, etc
- Sustainability videos (Cape Wind Project on East Coast, Futures Channel Website)

**STEP THREE: Invite others**
You can expand the impact of your event by either inviting other people to act as participants, teachers, or observers.

Questions to consider at this point:
- How many students, and is there a certain grade level this event should impact?
- Would we like to invite kids from neighboring schools or daycares? If so, how might booths need to be modified?
- Would we like outside support? (i.e., vendors, booths, etc.)
- What community leaders and businesses can contribute to the event?
- Would we like media coverage?

Potential contacts for outside participation:
- APS booth (our energy provider)
- Local sustainable grocery stores
- Fulton homes
- Solar energy companies
- Other schools engaging with sustainability
- Maya’s Farm
- Waste Management
- City of Phoenix/Tempe
- Valley Permaculture

ASU specific potential contacts:
- ASU research projects: [http://sustainability.asu.edu/research/all-current-projects.php](http://sustainability.asu.edu/research/all-current-projects.php)
- Arizona Hydrological Information System (AHIS)
- Center for Earth Systems and Engineering Management (CESEM)
- Institute of Human Origins (IHO)
- Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC)
- Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family
- ASU: Sustainable Dining, School of Sustainability
STEP FOUR: Create Excitement
Preparing an event is only half the battle! It is important to be sure that potential participants are aware of the event and make time to attend.

Questions to consider at this point:

- What media outlets can we use within the school to raise awareness? Morning announcements? Newsletters? Newspaper?
- Who can we enlist to help raise awareness? For example, can the graphic design teacher have students make posters as an assignment?
- What outside media outlets can we use? Local newspapers? News channels?
- When do we need to contact community members? How often should we contact them? (one year advanced notice is not too soon!)

STEP FIVE: Have Fun!
This should be a fun event not just for students, but also teachers and staff. Enjoy yourself, but plan to meet the week after the event while your memory is fresh to reflect on how it went and what you might need to change for next year’s Earth Day celebration.

Lessons learned from Tempe High’s first Earth Day Celebration
The initial plan was to have a big afternoon event, but we couldn’t get a school-wide release for it. Instead, we ran a smaller event for 4 consecutive lunch breaks (3 for students, 1 for teachers). This meant that we were unable to have outside exhibitors like Engrained sustainable dining from ASU or farmers market promotion, because it was too short a time for them and they would not be able to attend more than once. The smaller scale also meant it was a less attractive event for media to cover. Other schools were able to get outside participation for even a half-hour time slot.

However, the consecutive lunchtime format was good in other respects. It built up awareness on campus throughout the week with participation increasing as the week progressed. With a single event, we feared that most students would just enjoy the time off. The Passport to Sustainability ended up being a helpful tool to encourage participation and great prizes were given out to the students that viewed the most exhibits.

Booths:
- Art showcase booth
- Solar oven cheese crisps
- Video booth - Three televisions playing Planet in Peril, The 11th Hour, and Home
- Cutout hands from recycled plastic to put together in shape of the Earth
- Recycling game
- Sustainability posters

Lessons Learned:
- A great event.
- Passport to Sustainability was a brilliant idea.
- Consecutive lunch breaks work well and built interest through the week
- Big events require early notice! (Ideally May of the year before).
- Engaging outside communities is an important aim, as is attracting media attention. Adding a longer, afternoon event (in addition to the lunch times series) might make it more accessible to these two groups.