

Granny's Got Game

Website: www.grannysgotgame.com

Email: outreach@grannysgotgame.com

COMMUNITY SCREENING TOOLKIT

This guide is designed to assist you in planning screening events in neighborhoods, community groups, non-profits, schools, faith-based organizations and other venues to propel your audience to think critically and to take meaningful action.



PLANNING YOUR SCREENING

Here are some helpful hints for organizing a screening, from securing the location, to publicizing the event, planning a discussion afterwards and involving your audience in meaningful action.

1) Buy the DVD or Screening Kit

Visit the [“Host a Screening” page on the Granny’s Got Game website](#) to find out how to buy the DVD with the appropriate screening rights based on the type of venue you use. Here is a basic outline of permissions (*always read the fine print when purchasing a DVD to make sure it’s best for your purpose*):

House parties are a nice way to bring friends, family and neighbors together, raise awareness and get everyone more involved in the issues raised by the film. You might schedule your house party around a broadcast or DVD release, a national day of action, a holiday or just “because.” Most house party options allow you to purchase a home-use DVD or watch the film on TV.

Community screenings in a library, church, community center or other public space offer opportunities to reach a larger public and build a base of support. Most often, community screenings require a public-licensed DVD. DVD’s bought on Amazon or rented from Netflix **do not** cover this kind of screening. Campus screenings fall into this category only when hosted by a student activist group.

Educational Screenings take place in classrooms, auditoriums and other spaces in schools and on college and university campuses. Campus libraries or academic departments typically purchase and secure the rights for educational licensed DVDs.

Assess Your Community and the Issues

What are the major messages in the film that connect to your community? Who's involved in the issue at hand, and who has a stake? What is already happening to address the problem? Considering these questions will help you determine:

- The aspects of the film and related issues to focus on when promoting and creating the program for your event;
- Whom to invite to the screening. Consider the following to identify your target audiences: *Who has an interest in the topics at hand? Who has the power to make a decision or implement change to resolve the issue? Who can influence the decision makers? Who has been left out of the conversation but needs to be heard?*

Set Goals

What do you want to accomplish with this screening? What are your goals for the event? Do you want to take action on an issue, build membership, build alliances, pressure decision makers or raise funds? How can you help people do something meaningful or point them toward the most relevant resources? Answering these questions at the beginning will help make every step of the way easier and more effective.

2) Plan for Max Impact

Remember, a screening isn't just a chance to watch a great film. It's an opportunity for the audience to *get involved* and *do something!* Consider one or two actions that attendees can take to make a difference. Visit the ["Take Action" page on the Granny's Got Game website](#) for suggestions on how your audience can take some next steps.

Choose a Location

Secure a venue for your screening that will be comfortable, have the right atmosphere and provide the basics. This could be your living room, a community center, a place of worship or even a park – you decide.

DON'T FORGET... If you need to reserve a space, try to contact the venue at least two months in advance and confirm your reservation within two weeks of the screening. Here's what you'll need:

- A television or projector with a screen large enough for everyone to see
- Speakers that provide plenty of volume
- An accessible entrance and amenities for all people, including those with disabilities
- Comfortable seating
- An information table for petitions, handouts and sign-up sheet for follow-up with attendees
- If you plan to provide snacks and drinks, make sure there is a place to set them up and that the venue permits refreshments

Share Tasks

Consider partnering with other individuals or organizations to make your event more dynamic, split the workload and increase the number of attendees and diversity of the audience. Your partners can also extend the reach of your get-the-word-out efforts. Be sure to reach out to people directly affected by the issues.

In order to make planning easier, to ensure that the event is as successful as it can be, and have fun, we highly recommend that you delegate some tasks. These may include:

- Inviting people by making calls, putting up flyers, posting to community calendars, sending a press release to local newspaper weeklies, and making announcements through organizational listservs and social networking sites like Facebook or MySpace
- Arranging for snacks and drinks
- Handling the technical aspects of setting up and playing the film
- Greeting attendees and collecting signatures at the door so you know who to follow up with later
- Introducing the film and any speakers, facilitating audience discussion to assist in balancing the energy of the audience and the speakers, and keeping an eye on time
- Interacting with the media
- Taking photos and video

SAMPLE AGENDA (total time: 2 - 2 1/2 hours)
This sample agenda should be utilized with the actions and resources in the second half of this guide.

> **Start on time** (no later than 10 mins. from posted time)

> **Brief introduction to the film** (5-10 mins.)

Introduce the film and make a brief introduction of any speakers or guests that you want to recognize. Make sure the audience knows that the film will be followed by discussion and action, and encourage them to stick around after the credits roll. If the group is small enough, ask the audience to make very brief individual introductions. Tell them an ending time.

> **Viewing of the film** (factor in time here)

> **Discussion** (10-20 mins.)

This is a key part of the agenda. Folks will likely have strong emotions about what they've seen and will want to reflect on the film and find out what they can do to make a difference. Make sure that everyone who wants to speak has a chance, but keep the conversation flowing.

> **Take Action & Thanks** (about 5-20 mins.)

Now, this is the most important part: Invite your audience to get involved in the issues and in your organization (if you represent one). At the end, be sure to thank everyone for their participation.



3) Get the Word Out

Below are a number of avenues you can use to leverage your networks and reach beyond your immediate circle:

- **Tell Your Friends.** Utilize listservs, bulletins, flyers and social-networking sites to let folks know about the screening.
- **Tell Your Allies.** Engage organizations or constituencies that you know will be interested, and ask them to cosponsor the screening event. Then, reach out to the larger public by posting flyers, placing notices in newspapers or community calendars and forwarding notices to various email lists.
- **Tell Community Stakeholders.** Invite them face to face or over the phone. They could be potential speakers. Reach out to community leaders such as clergy or elected officials, a policy expert or an expert on the issues covered in the film. Tell them why their participation is important, and ask them to preview the film so they can tailor their talk or help you talk to reporters.
- **Tell the Press.** Contact a reporter who covers the issue-related beat. Be in touch early on, let them know that your event will be part of a national screening campaign, and give them the local angle: How do the issues raised resonate in the community? Why should your audience be passionate? What impact do you aim to have? (See more in the Make Your Screening Media-Friendly section, below.)
- To share your event with the *Granny's Got Game* community, contact us at outreach@grannysgotgame.com.

4) Take Action

After the film, ask your audience to get involved with your group or take action on a local issue. Visit the ["Take Action" page on the Granny's Got Game website](#) for suggestions.

5) Report Back

During the event, take pictures, and video your audience's reaction to the film. Ask attendees how they liked the event and what they'd like to see next. Did the film change their understanding, raise their awareness or motivate them to take action? Pay attention to press representatives who attended and outlets that printed or aired stories. Save these!

Share photos, video and press with your members and networks to show how the collective efforts around the film are making an impact. Your story may inspire others to replicate your efforts in their community.

SPECIAL FEATURE: MAKE YOUR SCREENING MEDIA-FRIENDLY

Use the tips below to catch the media's attention for your event and cause.

Things Reporters Can't Resist

Reporters need a story. There are certain activities, language and hooks that can grab their attention successfully. Make your pitch pop out of the stack of releases they receive each day. Here are some suggestions based on the book "Stop Global Warming Now" by author and activist Bill McKibben:

Court a Reporter. Ask to meet with the editor of a paper for 10 minutes in person. If they say yes, it is a worthwhile investment. If not, think about other ways that you can engage a reporter who covers a beat that includes the issues raised in the film you're planning to show.

Give your event a local angle. Think from a local perspective and reference the significance of the film's content to your community in your press release and other communication you have with media outlets.

Send pictures. Share images or videos to accompany your story. Is your event going to be photogenic? Can reporters view a clip of the film online in advance? Do you have any good quotes from important people about your event or the movie? Send these in (or as a supplement to) your press release.

What is new about the event? What are you planning to do about the issues the film raises that is the first, the best, the most recent or the most creative? Highlight these aspects of your screening event.

Is this a case of strange bedfellows, or the happy odd couple? Are people who normally aren't found together coming together around your screening? Is your event inspiring people to reach out and build coalitions across lines that usually divide them? Use this angle to gain press attention.

Media and Social Media Timeline

As soon as possible:

- Create a Facebook Event
- If the film has a Facebook page, "Like" it, so you can keep up with related news and announcements. Encourage your friends to do the same.
- Follow the film on Twitter and tweet about your event so everyone following you will be clued in and help spread the word.

Two weeks out:

- Blog about your event, including a description of the film and the issues it raises. Be sure to include images, or embed the film's trailer from YouTube. Ask friends or your favorite bloggers to link to your piece or write their own.
- Submit an op-ed to your local paper or online news source to draw attention to the event and the related issues.

One week out:

- Send a 5- to 6-sentence email description or a press release to reporters and follow up with a phone call to gauge their interest in attending. This email should succinctly describe your event, the national film campaign, and mention any "big names" that are coming. Include links to relevant websites, clips from the film, press that the film or your event has already received, your editorial, and anything else you think is attention-grabbing.
- Check in with your friends and RSVPs to make sure they're coming. Make your reminder stand out by including any updates or specific details that have unfolded as the screening draws near.

The day of:

- Have a media representative from your organization or planning group on hand to answer questions. Have a press release with you and ready for reporters and bloggers who attend. After the event, be ready to send out an updated version with some highlights, images and a list of key people or speakers who attended.
- Make sure you have background information on the speakers, interesting visuals, and other things needed to make your event easier to share.

This guide was created by Working Films for ScreeningHQ

Working Films is a nonprofit organization, with offices in the US and UK, that leverages the power of storytelling through documentary film to advance struggles for social, economic, and environmental justice, human and civil rights.

Content contributed by:

Kristin Henry, khenry@workingfilms.org
Senior Social Media Strategist

Molly Murphy, mmurphy@workingfilms.org
Associate Director



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