



HOW TO HOST A COMMUNITY SCREENING

First Steps:

- If not in a theater or cinema space, be sure that good projection or a large TV monitor is provided. Test a DVD a day or so before the event to be sure all is working well: projection and audio.
- Identify a host or facilitator for the audience discussion or small panel of “experts”. In opening welcome invite your audiences to stay for the discussion afterwards.
- Identify some actions for your audience that support local efforts to fight hunger. Community partners can likely provide suggestions for action steps.

Developing Partnerships

Confirm your partners, including community leaders and organizations, detailing their role and participation. A partnership with local organizations will focus your event, split the workload and increase the number and diversity of attendees. Also, your community partners can be vital agents to get word out about the event, include them in your marketing and promotion plans.

Planning the Agenda for the Event

Although the agenda for most viewings probably shouldn't be very long, a lot can be said in a few minutes, and a well-planned agenda gives you the opportunity to let others know about struggles in their very own community that previously they may only have been casually aware of, and learn how they can become involved to make positive change.

Who will speak first and for how long? Will there be a panel of “experts?” Who will they be, and will they represent a diversity of opinions/interests? Who is going to ask audience members to support the local struggle? This type of call to action changes the typically passive experience of just watching media into an interactive event in which your audience members are encouraged to take immediate direct actions. Strategic consideration of what happens when the lights come up may be your most crucial decision.

Suggested Agenda

Start on time (no later than 10 minutes from posted time)

Post a screening time: then give latecomers time to get there.

Brief introduction to the film (5-10 minutes)

Introduce the film and make a brief introduction of local partners. Introduce special guests. If the group is small enough, ask the audience to make very brief individual introductions. Ask everyone to stay for the discussion, tell them an ending time (“Please stay after the film is over, we are planning a 30 minute discussion.”)

View THE HUNGER SEASON

Serve the MEALY MEAL: see related instructions for serving the mealy meal.

Discussion and Wrap up (15 minutes – 1 hour)



Have a good facilitator or panel of “experts” ready to help the audience discuss the film. Try to keep the group on schedule for wrapping up. If folks want to stay past the official discussion period, remind them that it’s time to close and encourage them to keep talking in smaller groups or suggest that the group hold a follow-up meeting

Getting the Word Out to your audience through membership and general community mass mailings, flyer postings, community calendar postings, newsletters, newspapers and radio public service announcements. Organize press relations, including preparing a press release and securing contacts in the press.

Decide what types of press you want to contact to advertise the screening and highlight the local / state issue. Consider all reporters, not just entertainment or film/video reviewers. Options include health reporters, city beat reporters, lifestyle reporters, political reporters and columnists, and of course film/arts reporters. Another option is to ask for a meeting with your local editorial board to explain the local connection.

Presenting Your Group at the Event

If you’ve invited more than the regular members of your group, chances are you have people in attendance who will want to know more about your group – what you stand for, your accomplishments, and your most important goals. Be sure to have information on hand – either to pass out, or on the sign-in table with the registration sheet. Some information you might include are copies of news stories that mention your group, letters you’ve sent to public officials, or fact sheets about local issues.

Facilitating Discussion

Make sure that everyone understands that the purpose of the event is to explore the issues of hunger as exposed in the film and increase understanding, not to settle the conflicts or come to complete agreement.