Want to reach your audiences year-round? Try Earth Month to gain wider appeal

Earth Month offers RYH trainers one more opportunity to talk about living meaningful lives that are easier on the environment. Our partner project's web site, The Way We Live, includes a variety of free activities in the Educator Resources database to talk about these issues throughout the year. Trainers could try these ideas.

**Introduce the life of products** to help audiences connect our use of "stuff" year-round and natural resources. Tools include a video on the life of a cell phone (Life Pscycle-ology - 5:30 min.) and UNI's Life of a Hamburger lesson plan (grades 3-adults). Other cool resources for grades 6 through adults: This Is Your Life Cycle (4:18 min.) about resources that make up a product, and Secret Life of Paper (5 min.). A PBS video, Electronic Gadgets, is great for grades K-8.

**Landfill tours** - PreK-adult audiences. Contact the landfill and/or solid waste educator in your part of Iowa. Your county auditor's office may be able to connect you to the appropriate staff if you can't find them on your own.

**72 hours** - Upper elementary through high school. Students collect their trash for 72 consecutive hours and think about what they could reduce or reuse.

**Bag It! DVD**
- Available for streaming on Amazon or itunes, or check out from your AEA.

How I use RYH resources to meet my audience's needs
Andrea Bixler, professor of biology, Clarke University, says:

Last December, Clarke University hosted a make-a-mix, or gifts-in-jars, activity for nearly 40 students, faculty, staff, and community members. This idea came from a RYH webinar I participated in a few years ago. I like re-using a jar for the gift, and then re-using it again after the gift is gone. And I really like a small, “homemade” gift that can be turned into something more (cookies or soup) to be shared. We received funds from a REAP CEP grant to pay for the ingredients, and had lots of participants! Everyone seemed to think it was great fun.

**RYH Trainers:** How could you transfer this idea to your community?

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**Participants loved The Gift of Nothing & changed holiday behaviors, attitudes**

Last winter, RYH staff partnered with two trainers to give away 84 copies of *The Gift of Nothing*. We went to library story hours, community concerts, and holiday festivals. We are exploring new ways for RYH trainers to reach new audiences. Almost half of the book recipients completed a post-survey and said they “loved The Gift of Nothing”! Some read it many times to pre-schoolers and adults. So what? Sixty-eight percent said they talked with others about the book and the 5-minute assessment. Forty-five percent said they shifted some of their attitudes away from holiday frenzy. Later this year, RYH staff and some of our partners will reach new audiences at library story hours and other similar venues-including Farmers Markets. We’ll be sure to share with you what we learn.

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**New strategies to increase audience readership, engagement**

**[RECLAIM your Holidays]**

RYH trainers know lots of strategies for getting an audience to their many events. We've recently found two resources to improve our promotional materials.

**Headline Analyzer** - This free tool will help you appeal to the emotional, intellectual and spiritual sides of people. Headlines for brochures, flyers, and other promotional materials can help you engage various audiences. The tool analyzes headlines to determine the Emotional Marketing Value (EMV) score. For example, for this article, our first headline was Ways to better engage your audience. It got a 50% EMV
score. But... Ways to increase audience engagement hit the 80% mark! See if this tool helps you.

We're also using the Hemingway writing/editing tool that highlights long sentences and common errors. Copy and paste your text into the editor. It will provide feedback on ease of reading and some grammar elements.

Finally, a few other good practices to engage an audience: ask people to sign up to attend (make a commitment), encourage them to bring a friend, and choose a familiar location for the program.

Thanks for your participation in Reclaim Your Holidays year-round!

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