Changing Littering Behavior with Community Based Social Marketing

Everette Bradford
Community Outreach Liaison
Trash Free Potomac Watershed Initiative

Address the trash problem with a watershed-wide approach that seeks to find solutions to the root cause of litter

**Potomac Watershed Trash Summit:**
Stakeholder engagement and Action Planning

**Potomac Watershed Trash Treaty:**
Regional collaboration and political support

**Potomac River Watershed Cleanup:**
Public engagement and awareness
Public Education

Send a **Powerful, Unified, and Repetitive Message** on Litter Prevention to the Public

**Regional Litter Prevention Campaign**

- Regional collaboration and steering campaign
- Hired communication firm, marketing firm, and social research firm to develop an effective campaign message
- Taglines, logo, and outreach tools created for use jurisdictions and communities
- Four images
Research for Campaign

- Watershed-wide Telephone Survey (2008)
  - 1,004 interviews, randomly sampled.
- Focus Groups among Active Litterers
- Psychological Interviews
- In-Depth Citywide Telephone Survey- balanced across all wards, genders, income levels, education attainment, & ethnicities (2010)
- Survey of D.C. Businesses (Fall 2010)
Research Findings in 2010

- People litter to keep their personal space clean. But their personal space is a very narrow zone.
- They see their behavior having little impact.
- Evidence that there is a more complicated picture of gratification for many litterers.
- People strongly connect with the health implications of litter.
- Litterers are less likely to connect to messages about the water.
Litter Prevention Campaign

Piece by piece litter adds up and makes the places we go to every day unsafe and unhealthy.

Take Control.
Take care of your trash.

Clean Land. Safe Water. Healthy Lives
Community Toolkit

Planning and Outreach:
- Community Planning Document
- Letter to Elected Official
- Media Talking Points

Advertisements and Visuals:
- Posters
- Flyers
- Decals and Bumper Stickers

Education and Community Engagement Tools:
- Back Pack Document
- Community Trash Information Sheet
- Art Showcase
Lessons Learned From Pilot Community

Deanwood, Ward 7, District of Columbia

1. Understand current activities in the community
2. Meet people where they are
3. Listen to the issues of the community
4. Hire a local resident for outreach
5. Establish central location for residents to get involved.
6. Create engaging displays and utilize large visuals
7. Provide citizens with ‘Ways To Get Involved’.
Getting Started in a Community

- Develop a community goal
- Assess the situation
- Find Key Allies
- Plan Litter Prevention Campaign Implementation
- Create a timeline for the project
Activities in Forest Heights

- Work with the town’s afterschool enrichment program
- Business engagement
- Outreach with churches
- Partnership with schools
- Cleanups
- Forest Heights Day
- Cleanup with Katie Able Foundation and UCAP
Action Items for Community Members

- Post one litter prevention poster in your favorite place around town
- Participate in community clean-up events
- Share information with your neighbor
- Support current or rally for proposed reusable bag incentive legislation
- Use your reusable bag when you shop
- Visit the Alice Ferguson Foundations webpage: www.fergusonfoundation.org
- Properly contain you trash...
- Cleanup after your dog/cat
- Eat Trash Free at work/school
Trash Free Forest Heights Elementary School

Works to educate and empower students, faculty, and staff to reduce their school’s waste footprint.

How is Forest Heights ES Trash Free?

- Trash Free Schools Pledge Signed
- Developing an action plan
- Green Team established
- Completed a school-wide Earth Day Cleanup
- Submitted a report card
- Begun Schoolyards as a Classroom
Beyond Forest Heights

Expanded Trash Free Communities to nearby towns and neighborhoods

- Glassmanor/ Oxon Hill
- Capitol Heights
- Branch Avenue (Hillcrest-Marlow Heights)
- Fairmont Heights (currently being recruited)
New Strategies

- Link litter prevention to community health and wellness initiatives

- Increase social capital

- Increase level of stakeholder engagement

- Increase use of social media as engagement platform
Evaluation

- **Social Science Research**
  - Pre-evaluation survey
  - Post-evaluation survey

- **Behavioral Analysis**
  - Visual observation of people's littering behavior
  - Observational analysis via video monitoring

- **Visual survey of the community**
Next Steps

1. Increase campaign support
2. Increase campaign visibility
3. Evaluate litter prevention campaigns
4. Reach more volunteers
5. Recruit more Trash Free Schools
Questions?

Everette Bradford  
Community Outreach Liaison  
Alice Ferguson Foundation  
[Email Link]  
301-752-1305
7th Annual Potomac Watershed Trash Summit

Thank you to our sponsors: