



Macalester College 2022 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study

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Focus of Case study:

The Fix It All Free For All is an event put on by students that promotes sustainable practices, builds community, and diverts items from landfills.

Detailed description of campaign or effort:

Student employees of the Macalester College Sustainability Office hosted a “Fix It All Free For All” (FIAFFA) event during the spring semester 2022. We originally planned to host the FIAFFA in late March, and so began our planning in early February, but because of unseasonably cold spring weather and a resurgence in COVID cases on campus, we had to delay the event until April. Our FIAFFA offered “fix it all” services, such as bike repair, small electronics repair, sewing/mending projects, and arts and crafts projects with reused/repurposed materials. In addition, we held a clothing swap. Attendees could bring gently used items and/or browse (and take from) several tables full of seasonally-appropriate second-hand apparel and accessories from our campus Free Swap. We partnered with a student buying club, MacShare, which held their weekly zero-waste sale of bulk produce and other goods (e.g., lentils, oats, olive oil) in conjunction with the FIAFFA. Sustainability Office student employees staffed the event and were ready to share sustainability and zero waste tips and tricks with attendees. They encouraged people to linger, chat, and learn by offering free zero-waste snacks, upcycled arts and crafts, and free kombucha made by students and passed out in mason jars.

The event welcomed the whole community – students, faculty, staff, and local residents - and was free to attend. We had well over 200 visitors to the spring 2022 FIAFFA, including a number of community members who stopped by – to get a bike fixed, to check out the clothing swap, and to participate in the arts and crafts while drinking a kombucha. We advertised the FIAFFA using Facebook events, social media posts, online community forums, flyers, and chalk on sidewalks around campus.

Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- Begin planning approximately 2 months prior to event
- Create a budget. Our costs were low (under \$200) and covered snacks, four dozen mason jars, printing costs for flyers, and small thank you gifts for the volunteer fixers and crafters (gift cards to a local coffee shop). Our campus paid the hourly wages of the Sustainability Office student employees who planned and ran the event.
- Pick a spot for the event- we've found that high traffic places on campus help result in a better attended event, and outdoor events are more likely to bring in community members from outside of campus. When it comes to assigning a date and time think about students' schedules – students are less likely to spend time at an event during mid-terms and finals, but during other times of the semester they welcome the opportunity to relax at an event like this.
- If you plan to hold the event indoors, be sure to have a COVID back-up plan. And if you plan to hold the event outdoors, have a weather contingency plan.
- Decide what components you'd like to include in your event. Our FIAFFA included: clothing repair, small electronic repair (with a local community fix-it club), bike repair (hosted by our campus bike club), sewing and mending (hosted by our campus Idea Lab), a clothing swap (with free clothes and accessories from our campus Free Swap), upcycled arts and crafts projects, a bulk buying event for produce and other food items, and free kombucha in reusable mason jars. You might consider having music – a speaker, or a DJ, or even live musicians from campus.
- Reserve event space as well as tables and chairs.
- Reach out at least one month in advance to on-campus and off-campus partners to recruit volunteer help. We used multiple sources to find volunteers including:
 - Facebook community groups
 - Student organizations (bike club, sewing club, etc.)
 - Other fix-it-clinics in your area
- Once your volunteers are lined up, set up a schedule to send reminder emails and information as you get closer to the event
- Acquire supplies. We worked with our campus Facilities for tables and chairs, with our campus Idea Lab for sewing machines and sewing supplies, and with our Sustainability Office tool kits and local community fix-it club for tools.

Resources and stakeholders involved

Our budget for the event was approximately \$200, which came from the Macalester Sustainability Office. Costs included approximately \$25 for printing, \$75 for zero waste snacks, \$40 for mason jars (some were reused), and three coffee gift cards for volunteers (\$20/each).

In-kind resources included:

- Kombucha made by the students of MacShare
- Bike stands, bike parts, tools and labor provided by student group MacBike
- Sewing machines, sewing expertise, and a student guiding the use of machines and giving advice on mending provided by our campus Idea Lab
- Our space, tables, and chairs were provided by our campus reservations and facilities departments. Facilities custodians dropped the tables and chairs off for us before the event and picked them up again afterward.
- A community member with lots of fix-it experience volunteered for the fix-it portion of the event. He brought his own tables, tools, and a few demonstration projects.
- The Sustainability Office covered the residual costs for the event, which included student staff time for planning and running the FIAFFA, and then cleaning up the space after the event was done. The Sustainability Office also provided tools from their tool collection.

Describe the Results of this campaign component

Our event attracted at least 200 attendees from our campus and the community. Most of the attendees were students, but a number of community members also stopped by. A reporter for the campus newspaper did attend the event, and though she was unable to post a story before the end of the school year, she promised to cover any FIAFFAs we hold next year.

Specific measurable impact figures:

- We had more than 200 attendees stop by the event
- Attendees took 77 pounds of gently used clothing and accessories
- We gave away 42 small mason jars (16 oz) of kombucha
- We fixed 7 bikes
- We completed 4 sewing/mending repairs
- MacShare sold \$400 worth of zero-waste bulk food items (vegetables, fruit, olive oil, lentils, etc.)

What would you do differently in the future?

We would do more advertising and outreach in the nearby community. Because our event was located in the middle of campus and in a high-foot-traffic area, we had many student attendees, but only approximately 10 people from the surrounding community came to campus for the event. Thus, when we do this event again, we will expand our off-campus advertising and outreach through the local Buy Nothing Facebook Page, an ad in the neighborhood newspaper, emails from our community liaison, and posters in local businesses.

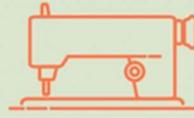
We also would like to add live music or a DJ to our next event, to make the event more inviting for people who just happen to be walking by.

What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

One of the things that made our event a success was the fact that we partnered with several student organizations, and did our best to align the timing of our event with their calendars. In particular, our collaboration with MacShare, a campus bulk buying club for fresh food, meant that our event automatically had a good audience because MacShare members came to buy their weekly produce and then stayed to check out our clothing swap and fix-it offerings. Our part of the event also helped MacShare gain new customers, because we brought in new people who, after checking out the fix-it-all and clothing swap offerings, made bulk food purchases for the first time. All of our campus partners advertised the event and recruited their members and fans to stop by.

Photos and Graphics:

*Fix it All
Free for All!*



Join the Sustainability Office for:

- free clothing and bike repair
- free used clothing and home goods
- free snacks and beverages

*featuring
affordable
produce
from
Macshare!*



Bulk produce and goods for sale





Bikes being repaired



Free Clothing and Items



Crafts and Kombucha

