



# Event Planning Guide

# **a** PLACE AT THE TABLE



Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

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Kristi Jacobson, co-director of ***A Place at the Table***, a Magnolia Pictures release. Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures.



Lori Silverbush, co-director of ***A Place at the Table***, a Magnolia Pictures release. Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures.

## Introduction

This guide will help you plan a community event using the film ***A Place at the Table*** to spark dialogue about hunger and obesity in the United States and inspire actions and collaborations to make healthy affordable food available for all families. The guide serves as a step-by-step manual on planning and executing a thoughtful and effective event.

### ABOUT THE FILM

Fifty million people in the United States—including one in five children—suffer from hunger and do not get enough to eat on a regular basis to be healthy and active. In ***A Place at the Table***, directors Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush follow three families struggling with food insecurity: Barbie, a single mother who grew up in poverty and is trying to provide a better life for her two kids; Rosie, a fifth-grader who often depends on friends and neighbors to feed her and has trouble concentrating in school; and Tremonica, a second-grader who suffers from asthma, obesity and related health issues, which are exacerbated by the poor quality of the food her hard-working mother can afford.

Ultimately, ***A Place at the Table*** shows us how hunger and obesity pose serious economic, social and cultural implications for our nation and how food access issues could be solved once and for all if the American public decides—as we have in the past—that making healthy food available and affordable is in all of our best interests.

### ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

In conjunction with the 2013 theatrical release of ***A Place at the Table***, Participant Media, working with Active Voice and several nonprofit organizations working to end hunger and obesity launched the *Take Your Place* Social Action Campaign. This effort brings together everyday Americans and a consortium of leading nonprofit organizations, experts, and companies who are concerned about the high level of food insecurity in our country. The campaign's centerpiece is a first-of-its-kind National Action Center, powered by Share Our Strength, that provides national and local actions to engage people in solutions. Through this geo-targeted hub, the public can call (855-48TABLE [488-2253]), click ([takepart.com/table](http://takepart.com/table)) or text (FOOD to 77177) to access ways to drive systemic change around food insecurity and impact the interconnected issues of hunger, poverty and obesity in the city, county or state where they live.

***A Place at the Table*** is a Participant Media presentation, released to theaters, On Demand and DVD in North America by Magnolia Pictures and available for nontheatrical screenings through ro\*co films.

[www.takepart.com/table](http://www.takepart.com/table)

## USING FILM TO SPARK DIALOGUE

Film can be a very useful tool for bringing people together, inspiring solutions to problems, and sparking new collaborations. Films—especially those that feature complex and fascinating characters—are able to reach people on an immediate and emotional level, opening them up to new ideas and possibilities. Character-driven films, such as ***A Place at the Table***, provide a common text from which to start a conversation and put a human face on social, cultural and civic issues. In addition, films can be used to:

- Heighten the visibility of your organization
- Raise awareness of an issue
- Attract new allies, members and supporters to your organization
- Spark networking, especially with other groups in the community and nearby towns
- Provide a platform for community members to share thoughts, ideas and concerns



To go deeper into the issues, check out the official companion book to ***A Place at the Table***.

By providing intimate perspectives of people grappling with hunger every day, ***A Place at the Table*** opens up a new opportunity for dialogue. The personal stories it tells bring to life the human implications of current policy, data and research.

After viewing ***A Place at the Table***, audiences are likely to feel a range of emotions, from anger to concern to hope. A well-planned screening of this film has the power to leverage that emotional power and inspire collective action. When it comes to social change, film can't do it all, but it can set the stage—laying out the issues in a way that people can hear and building interest in potential solutions.

How can you use ***A Place at the Table*** to spark dialogue in your community? Read on to find out!



Leslie Nichols in ***A Place at the Table***, a Magnolia Pictures release. Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures.

# Getting Started with Your Event

## 1. HOLD A BRAINTRUST PLANNING MEETING

We recommend kicking off your event planning process with a “braintrust” planning meeting at least four to six weeks prior to when you hope to host your event. This will allow ample time to develop your plan and goals, reserve a venue, recruit partner organizations, confirm speakers, set the agenda and finalize other arrangements.

The braintrust planning meeting is a chance to invite a small group of local stakeholders and potential partners (community leaders, health care practitioners, policymakers, etc.) to view the film and brainstorm how it can be used to advance local efforts to prevent and reduce hunger and obesity.

The following items in this section are all topics to discuss at your braintrust planning meeting, but if you do not have the time or capacity to hold one, still be sure to go through these steps with your event planning team.

## 2. DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Figuring out your objectives is a key step in planning a successful event. Think about what you’d like to get out of the event and what outcomes are most realistic. In addition to watching an entertaining film, your event will allow your community to reflect together on how the stories in the film are relevant locally. We hope an event like this can illuminate the connection between hunger and obesity, raise the visibility of community-based organizations working on these issues, and bring about greater support for efforts to eliminate these systemic issues.

As the event organizer, consider the longer-term goals of your work and how this screening event can help you achieve those goals. Identify how you’d like your community to change for the better, then think about how this film screening can support that change.

The objectives you might consider include the following (these are not mutually exclusive):

- Improve communication/increase awareness about the connection between hunger and obesity, and possible solutions.
- Strengthen collaborations or create a network with local organizations focused on hunger, obesity, food access and other relevant community issues.
- Increase public support and action around local initiatives to address hunger and obesity.
- Generate support from local leadership around hunger, obesity and food access programs and initiatives.

### 3. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCES

Keeping your target audiences in mind will be helpful in framing your event and strategizing publicity and outreach. These are questions to consider:

- Which audiences do you need to reach in order to meet your objectives?
- Which audiences can you access directly (e.g., your current constituents) and how can you build upon those?
- Which new audiences can you engage to broaden your reach, strengthen your work, and build new allies?

Don't be afraid to aim high! Contacting influential leaders and decision-makers in your community can be a great opportunity to attract their attention and get them more interested in the work you are doing.

### 4. RECRUIT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

After you have determined your objectives and target audiences, you'll be ready to consider partner organizations that can help you get the most out of your event. **A Place at the Table** raises themes that are relevant to many community institutions and organizations, and you can partner with them to get the word out and build toward your objectives.

It's essential to invite other organizations and influential individuals to partner with you on your event, both to make the event as successful as possible and to ensure positive, sustained change in your community. Moreover, the planning process is an excellent opportunity for relationship building. The more partners you have on board, the broader the support and sense of community you'll be able to cultivate. We strongly suggest inviting representatives from some of these groups to be involved early on, rather than simply attending the event itself. Such partners can help widen your reach while making valuable contributions to your planning. Partners can get involved in a range of ways depending on their interest and capacity. At the very least, they can help spread the word about the event on their listservs or websites. And some partners might be able to get more actively involved, contributing ideas, time, resources and panelists for the event. In some instances, event-based partnerships pave the way for longer-term collaborations that will benefit your mutual efforts.

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#### TIP Reaching out to groups you've never worked with before:

- **Offer background and context.** Direct them to the **A Place at the Table** website ([takepart.com/table](http://takepart.com/table)). Include a brief description of the film so they'll immediately know what it's about.
  - **Make your pitch relevant.** Highlight elements of the film that are most relevant to their interests. For example, a community health organization will appreciate that the film makes connections between hunger and health issues and a youth-serving organization will want to know that two of the main subjects in the film are children.
  - **Highlight the partner benefits.** Let groups know that getting involved in your event can be a good opportunity for them to raise their own visibility and reach new audiences.
  - **Remember that groups have different capacities, so involvement will vary.** Some will simply send your email blast to their listserv; others may assist with logistical planning or contribute funds. Be mindful of what your partners are capable of and make sure you're not asking them for too much (or too little!) as you plan your event.
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## Types of Organizations to Consider

In addition to tapping into organizations directly involved in food access and health issues, we encourage you to think outside the box, about other groups and individuals who can play an influential role in the health of your community. For example, city zoning and transportation agencies make decisions that can determine where a grocery store opens or whether a neighborhood has safe sidewalks or reliable public transit to reach that store. Youth development organizations may provide after-school services to at-risk children in your community who could benefit from attending your event. It's the less obvious partners that will help you reach new potential supporters and bring your messages to new audiences. Consider the following:

- Food policy councils
- Food banks, food co-ops, pantries
- Local farms, farmers associations, farmers markets
- Supermarkets and food retailers
- Local government, including health, planning, police, transportation, economic development agencies, and parks and recreation
- Community health agencies
- School districts
- Universities/colleges, medical schools, public health programs
- Faith-based organizations
- Community foundations and other funders/investors
- Social enterprise
- Boys and Girls clubs, YMCAs, Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions clubs
- PTAs, other parent organizations
- Libraries
- Media/film centers, local public media stations

If you hold a braintrust planning meeting, invite potential partners and make it clear you want their input in planning the event so they feel more invested in its success.

## Corporate Sponsors

The subject matter of this film lends itself well to corporate sponsorship, especially by local restaurants and grocery stores. Panera Bread supported the national release of the film, as it is a company committed to fighting food insecurity. Consider healthy food restaurants and grocery stores that could sponsor a portion of your event by providing food and/or publicity.

## 5. LOCATE AND CONFIRM YOUR VENUE

Where you hold the event depends on your budget, the expected size of your audience, and the impression you want to give. There are various things to consider when picking the right venue for your community screening.

- **Size and capacity.** You'll first have to identify a space that can accommodate your anticipated number of audience members. In most cases, having the screening in a community center, local school auditorium, or chapel is more effective than having it in a conventional movie theater, where time and space are often more limited and travel distances may be further.
- **Accessibility.** Next, you'll want to consider if the venue is in a location that the general audience can easily access. Is it an inclusive community-oriented space? Is it convenient, that is, centrally located in town? Is there parking available? Is it close to public transportation?
- **A/V equipment.** Does the space have suitable screening and audio equipment available? This includes a screen (or white wall), a projector, a laptop or DVD player, microphones, speakers, and all of the right cords that connect them. If not, additional planning and arrangements will be necessary.
- **Layout.** Is the space big enough for mingling or does it have a reception area? This is not essential, but can be helpful in facilitating interaction and conversation.
- **Other considerations.** Check if the space has access for people with disabilities, heating/air conditioning, comfortable chairs, child-care accommodations and so on.



Rosie Casey in *A Place at the Table*, a Magnolia Pictures release.  
Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures.



## Framing and Formatting Your Event

### WHAT KIND OF CONVERSATION DO YOU WANT?

Think about the problems, issues and concerns in your town or, conversely, the positive developments you see. Could this event be a productive and safe platform to discuss a pressing issue in your community? **The film makes a particularly strong case for the connection between hunger and obesity, so we recommend you keep this in mind as part of the overarching frame and use it as a lead-in to discuss local issues.** Refer to the *Take Your Place* Community Action Guide (available at [takepart.com/table](http://takepart.com/table)) to get ideas for additional discussion topics around:

- The relationship between hunger, poverty and obesity
- Food access: cost, transportation and other limitations
- Hunger and health
- Food assistance in America
- The role of schools

### PLANNING THE RUNDOWN

Your screening event should contain the following basic elements, with some customization according to your needs.

Activity	Time Frame	Purpose/Details
Pre-Screening Reception (optional)	1 hour	Builds excitement for the screening event, gives attendees a chance to meet.
Film Introduction (official start time)	5 minutes	Gives context to the event. Details and talking points for the introduction are on the next page.
<b><i>A Place at the Table</i></b> Film Screening	1.5 hours	This is the centerpiece of your event!
Post-Screening Discussion	30 minutes	Feature your designated panelists and speakers, have a great facilitated conversation, but also be respectful of people's attention spans and backsides.
Audience Q&A	15–20 minutes	Allow time for audience members to ask questions about, and respond to, what they've seen and heard.
Post-Screening Reception (optional)	1 hour	People may want to gather for a meal or at a nearby bar or linger in the space to discuss further thoughts and ideas about the film.

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**TIP Appoint an Emcee**

Successful events often have a charismatic emcee to move the program along. Invite a significant leader or local personality to introduce the film—or of course, the lead organizer can do it. If you have an emcee, either make sure they can give context to the broader campaign or designate a different person to talk about this during the introduction. The emcee could also be the moderator of the post-screening discussion, but doesn't have to be.

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**Opening Remarks**

In five minutes or less, the guests should be welcomed and integrated as core components of the event. Their presence is important for communicating the message of the film beyond the walls of the screening room.

- Introduce your organization and why the event is important to your community.
- Encourage people to stick around for the discussion afterward.
- Thank any significant partners, supporters and so on.

**Post-Screening Panel Discussion**

Panelists can help put the film in context by providing background information about obesity and how it's linked to hunger or by connecting the film's themes to what's happening in your community. Plan for about 30 minutes for discussion and about 15–20 minutes for audience Q&A.

**The Panelists**

- Be sure to present a range of perspectives, based on what you identified as the frame of your event. Possible panelists might include: a public health official, a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) alumnus, a community leader or activist, a farmer or community gardener, a community member and/or a school leader. Your community partners can serve as great sources for potential panelists.
- Aim for no more than four panelists. With too many speakers, the conversation gets diffused.
- If possible, allow for the panelists to preview the film before the event so that they have an opportunity to prepare remarks.
- Give your panelists an idea of who will be in the audience so they can tailor the discussion to the audience's interests. For example, if you anticipate a general audience, ask panelists to tone down any specific jargon.

**The Moderator**

- Find an experienced moderator for the event (could be your emcee) or at least someone who is well versed in local food issues and is comfortable speaking in public.
- The moderator's responsibility is to keep the conversation going and ensure that all points are addressed in the time you have scheduled for discussion.
- The moderator should set the stage with relevant statistics or anecdotes about what's happening in your community as a way to localize the story even more.
- The moderator should ask the panelists to introduce themselves, their organization and how their work relates to what was just seen in the film.
- The moderator might consider prompting the panelists with an opening question such as: "What jumped out at you in the film?" Ideally, the panelists will reference specific scenes from the film as they make their points.

### The Content

- The post-screening discussion is an opportunity to showcase examples of success stories—either from your community or a similar town—in which people and/or organizations have taken proactive steps to address hunger and obesity. Your event can be an opportunity to build support for efforts that significantly improve access to healthy food.

### Audience Q&A

- Ask audience members to keep their questions short so that many voices may be heard.
- Decide whether you'll have microphones to pass around or if audience members have to come to microphones set up in the aisles.
- While it is unlikely, be prepared for negative comments from audience members. For example, there may be audience members who disagree with some of the perspectives on the panel. A skilled moderator can help ensure a civil, productive conversation in which many perspectives are heard.

## Action Steps and Follow-Up

The conversation can continue beyond your event! We hope your event leads to additional activities and conversations that encourage dialogue and community.

As part of your community conversation, clearly convey a set of realistic, tangible goals that your organization and partners intend to accomplish with the active support and participation of community members. Offer feasible ways for audience members to get directly involved, including the following:

- Go to [takepart.com/table](http://takepart.com/table) to join our campaign and through our National Action Center find ways in your community to bring healthy food to local schools, fresh produce to corner stores and so on.
- If you are food insecure, join our speakers' bureau and make your voice heard.
- If you're part of a group that meets regularly, such as a book club or a faith group, bring these themes into your regular meetings and brainstorm solutions together.
- Text FOOD to 77177 for mobile updates on policies, actions and developments about hunger and obesity in the United States.
- Check out the SNAP Alumni Gallery at [www.takepart.com/table](http://www.takepart.com/table) and submit your story at [snap@snapalumni.org](mailto:snap@snapalumni.org).

Also provide your audience with resources that address dynamics specific to your community. These are some informational resources to consider:

- Fact sheets on food insecurity and obesity rates in your city/state/region
- Information about nearby sources of affordable healthy food
- A flyer highlighting upcoming events and actions led by you and/or your partner organizations



### Additional Activities: Pre-Reception, Post-Reception, Raffles, and More

Consider extra activities that can make your event more fun and engaging:

- **Pre-Reception.** A pre-screening reception can help build buzz for the film screening and gives you a cushion for guest arrivals so you can start the film on time.
- **Post-Reception.** A post-screening meet-and-greet provides opportunities for networking and continued discussion.
- **Free Food.** Refreshments are always a good idea, especially if they are healthy! Ask a local grocery store or restaurant to donate to the event; many have programs set up for charitable giving to nonprofit organizations. Be aware that they typically need a full month in advance to process a donation.
- **Raffle.** To add incentive for participation, hold a raffle with relevant prizes, such as a grocery store gift certificate, a family gym membership or free child care for a week. Similar to food donations, advance notice is key in securing donated items from local businesses and stores.
- **SNAP Video Booth.** One of the major components of the *Take Your Place* Social Action Campaign is the SNAP Alumni Gallery, an online mosaic of personal stories from people around the country who were once, but no longer are, on food stamps. Consider setting up a booth or a corner with video or audio recording devices at your event and invite people to submit their SNAP stories for inclusion on [www.takepart.com/table](http://www.takepart.com/table).
- **Graphic Display.** If your venue permits, consider profiling compelling graphics from the film that demonstrate some of the data behind the issues. Create a poster board display, project images on the walls, or cue them up on television or computer screens around the venue.



Learn more about SNAP Alumni at [www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table/snap-alumni](http://www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table/snap-alumni)

## Promoting and Publicizing Your Event

### TEMPLATES AND MATERIALS

Go to [bit.ly/11W6t3o](https://bit.ly/11W6t3o) to access a range of customizable materials intended to help with your event planning and outreach.

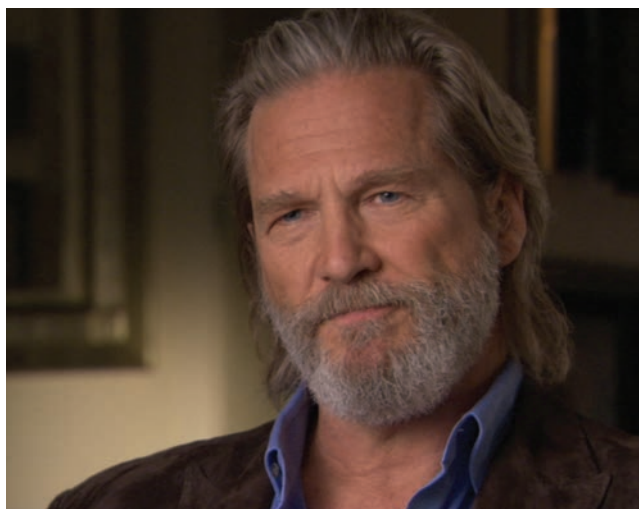
These materials include:

- **Take Your Place** Community Action Guide
- Event flyer template
- Press release template
- Email blast template
- Event planning checklist
- Campaign and film logos/images
- Sign-up sheets
- Photography tips
- Photo release notices
- Braintrust email template

There are different ways to promote an event, each with a different function. Read through the categories outlined below, and pick a few tactics based on what you think will be most successful in your community.

### FLYER DISTRIBUTION

- Use our flyer template (found at [bit.ly/11W6t3o](https://bit.ly/11W6t3o)) for laying out the details of your specific event.
- Make copies (in color if your budget permits) and hand them out at events and meetings that occur prior to your community screening event (church services, city council meetings, club meetings, PTA meetings, etc.).
- Go to businesses near the venue to post your flyer. Find public areas with high foot traffic—such as grocery stores, community centers, shopping malls, schools, churches, parks, libraries, nearby universities—to get as many eyes on the flyers as possible.
- Consider sending the flyers to people's home addresses or find some volunteers to do a door-to-door flyer drop-off.



Jeff Bridges in *A Place at the Table*, a Magnolia Pictures release. Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures.

## WEB

Announce the event on your website. And leading up to the event, keep it on your homepage! If appropriate/possible, create a section on your website with event information, a link to the **A Place at the Table** movie trailer, and links to Active Voice and Participant Media. Also consider paying to post web banners on local blogs or websites. If your organization has a blog, Facebook page, or Twitter account, post information about the event in these places as well (see Social Media section on page 14). Relevant online discussion forums are another venue for publicizing your event on the Internet.

## EMAIL BLASTS

Email all of your contacts about this upcoming event. There are up to three email blasts you could send out, listed below. For each, encourage people to forward the emails to the contacts in their networks.

1. The first email blast announces the event and provides details on the date, location, etc. (sent out as soon as possible)
2. The second email is a reminder and provides any new specific details or special features/speakers/activities, etc. (sent a few days before the event)
3. After the event, share key takeaways from the discussion as well as specific call-to-action prompts. The last email should share information about what this activity meant for the community and how to continue contributing.

## PARTNER CROSS-PROMOTION

Keep your partner organizations and groups in the loop with your promotional materials and flyers so that they can promote the event widely as well. Ask each group director to send out an email blast, using the provided templates. Make sure you give them a good amount of lead time to promote the event. Pass on any tips from this guide as well!

## LOCAL PRESS

Spend some time thinking about what your target audience listens to, watches and reads because that's where you're most likely to get the best coverage. Food access issues have been making major headlines recently, and you could take advantage of this coverage by casting a wide net to local news publications and outlets. Make a clear connection between your event and current news topics. Pitch the uniqueness and importance of this screening and community discussion, especially given (for example) your community's prevalence of obesity, hunger and health issues related to food and food access.

If you or one of your partner organizations has a communications point person who can take the lead on contacting press, involve that person right away. If your organization has less experience with media outreach, the following is a basic timeline with tips for generating newspaper, radio and television interest.

## Press Release

Go to [bit.ly/11W6t3o](https://bit.ly/11W6t3o) to access a customizable local press release template for your event. Be sure to emphasize any local hooks (e.g., community initiatives to increase access to healthy foods in schools and/or stores, campaigns to get junk food out of school cafeterias) and highlight all partner organizations and prominent panelists.

### Basic timeline for media outreach:

- A month before the event, check submission deadlines for calendar listings for your city's daily and weekly publications. Newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines, chambers of commerce, tourism organizations and even area TV and radio stations often have community calendars that are free advertising for events like this.
- Two weeks before your event, forward the press release to all local and state newspapers, as well as to online community websites.
- Add your event to local community calendars and websites that allow user-submitted events.
- Ten days before your event, issue the press release to a wide range of mainstream media, as well as alternative media, specialty publications, online publications and local bloggers. Target—through the release and a follow-up email or phone call—reporters who cover topics related to health, food, agriculture or social/environmental justice.
- In addition to sending your press release to broadcast outlets, call local television and radio programs, especially local news and public affairs programs, a week prior to the event. Contact:
  - o Local TV news: assignment editor
  - o Public affairs programs: producer
  - o Talk radio: producer or host
- Find specific relevant reporters or editors, and contact them a week prior to the event. Let them know about your event and be prepared to provide contact and other information on local experts and advocates who can be available for interviews. Follow up with these media sources several days before the event and encourage them to attend.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

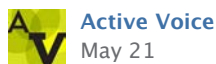
If your community is well connected on social networks like Facebook and Twitter, these networks can be very powerful promotion tools. Facebook events are great for getting information out to your online community, especially younger audiences. If your organization does not have a Facebook page, this could be a reason to start one. For those who are active on social media, here are some tips:

- **Get connected on Facebook and Twitter.** “Like” *A Place at the Table*, Active Voice, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and TakePart.com (the digital division of Participant Media) on Facebook and “Follow” them on Twitter.
  - *A Place at the Table*, the film – Tweet @PlaceAtTheTable; facebook.com/aPlaceAtTheTableMovie
  - Active Voice – Tweet @active\_voice; facebook.com/activevoices
  - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – Tweet @RWJF\_ChldObesity; facebook.com/RobertWoodJohnsonFoundation
  - TakePart.com – Tweet @TakePart; facebook.com/takepart
- **Create a Facebook event and post about the event on your Facebook page.** After you create the event page, preferably under your official Facebook community page (if you have one), you should aim to use this tool as a platform for sharing relevant information beyond the film, starting discussions and continuing to raise awareness of the issues you’ll discuss in the post-screening discussion.

### Sample Facebook Posts



50 million Americans don’t have a place at our nation’s table. See a special free screening of [A PLACE AT THE TABLE](#) on [date] at [location], and take your place in the fight to end hunger and obesity. [include link to more information on your community screening event]



America has an eating disorder: 50 million people don’t always have enough to eat, yet many are struggling with obesity. How is this possible? Come to [location] on [date] to see a free screening of [A PLACE AT THE TABLE](#) and discuss solutions.



We all have something to bring to the table to end hunger and obesity in America. See [A PLACE AT THE TABLE](#) on [date] at [location], hosted by [list host organizations].

Be sure to mention if refreshments and child care will be provided. At the end of each post, share an image from the film, a link to your Facebook event and/or a link to the host organization’s website.



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**TIP** Designate a social media captain to live tweet during your event.

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## Twitter Recommendations

- Tweet once a day in the two weeks leading up to the event (if possible). Tweets must be short, concise and simple. Use the event hashtag **#TakeYourPlace**.
- Tag @PlaceAtTheTable and @TakePart as much as possible, for wider visibility.
- Tag local organizations you're working with, or want to work with.
- As a promotional tactic, identify local tweeters who may have a wide reach (radio personalities, civic leaders, etc.) and tag them in your posts, to encourage them to retweet.

## Sample Tweets



**Active Voice** @active\_voice  
**#TakeYourPlace** in the fight to end hunger & obesity in America.  
 @PlaceAtTheTable screening on [date] at [location and time]  
 @TakePart @active\_voice (insert Facebook event link)  
 Expand



**Active Voice** @active\_voice  
 See @PlaceAtTheTable on [date] and **#TakeYourPlace** in fixing America's eating disorder **#50millionhungry** @TakePart @active\_voice  
 Expand



**Active Voice** @active\_voice  
 Special screening of @PlaceAtTheTable on [date]—join us for [food, activities, etc] and a discussion on how to **#TakeYourPlace** @TakePart @active\_voice  
 Expand

As with a Facebook page, if you do not have a Twitter account, this is an excellent time to create one, even if you don't plan to use it afterward. Plus, you may be surprised at what you use it for. Also check out **A Place at the Table's** Facebook page for an archive of videos, images and stats you can use as part of your social media promotion.

## Keeping Social Media Buzz Alive After Your Event

After your event, post event photos on your website and Facebook page to show off what a successful event you put on. Use social media to thank the participants, sponsors and speakers for contributing. With Twitter, don't forget to use the hashtag **#TakeYourPlace**

## Important Details

### ROUNDING UP RSVPS

Gathering RSVPs is a good idea, especially if your venue has limited seating. But don't put all your faith in the RSVP list—there will always be no-shows (could be up to a 30 percent drop-off), and also, people who did not RSVP will likely show up. Tracking ahead of time just gives you an indicator of what to expect. Here are some tips to help you through this process:

- In your flyers and ads promoting the screening, request that people call or email ahead of time to reserve a seat.
- Be sure to centralize information so you have an accurate headcount at all times.
- Set the RSVP deadline for a few days before the actual event. If you get fewer responses than expected, you will still have enough time to reach out to more people, and if there are more than expected, you can notify people in advance that they may not be guaranteed a seat.
- If your event is at capacity, send out a reminder email to confirmed attendees the day before the event. Let them know you will only hold their seat until 15 minutes before the event starts.
- Facebook Events and Eventbrite ([www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)) are useful resources for RSVP tracking online.
- If your numbers are close to reaching capacity at the time of the event, add anyone who shows up without an RSVP to the end of the list and let in as many as can be accommodated just before the screening starts.

If you don't have the capacity to collect RSVPs, don't worry. Simply advertise that the event has limited seating and that attendees will be seated on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Technical Logistics

Conduct a complete technical run-through at least two days before your event to make sure all the equipment is in working order. Test all of your equipment (including screen, speakers, microphone, projector, laptop/DVD player, etc.) *at the venue* where the film will be screened, and make sure there are no connection, sound or picture issues. Watch the DVD all the way through to ensure it doesn't have any scratches or other issues.

## Planning Checklist

<b>Preliminary prep</b> <i>at least 6–8 weeks prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold a braintrust planning meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit partners and/or co-sponsors. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine your general objectives and target audiences.
<b>Initial planning</b> <i>6 weeks prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Book the venue and determine the date of your event. <input type="checkbox"/> Refine objectives for the event. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify roles for partner organizations and secure commitments.
<b>Logistical planning</b> <i>4 weeks prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft the event agenda (and vet with partners if applicable). <input type="checkbox"/> Determine speakers, panelists, performers, and the moderator. <input type="checkbox"/> Create promotional materials: a flyer, email blasts, and/or a press release. <input type="checkbox"/> Request food and raffle donations from local businesses. <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for a translator to attend if you expect audience members with limited English proficiency.
<b>Promotion</b> <i>3–4 weeks prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Get the word out electronically (Facebook, Twitter, etc). Include contact information, your website address, and RSVP information as applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact community calendars and online event sites about your event. <input type="checkbox"/> Post flyers in high-traffic areas.
<b>Continued planning</b> <i>2 weeks prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Send out your press release. <input type="checkbox"/> Check all of your technical equipment and make adjustments as necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm food for the reception (if applicable). <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm all details with event staff (caterer, venue, IT, etc.) and finalize the agenda.
<b>Media outreach</b> <i>10 days prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story. Remind them what makes your event unique and important for the community.
<b>Final logistics</b> <i>several days prior to event</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Test all of your equipment with the DVD you'll be using <i>at the venue</i> where the film will be screened. <input type="checkbox"/> Send a reminder email blast. <input type="checkbox"/> Make copies of handouts (with relevant facts, action steps, etc.) to distribute at the event.
<b>At the event itself</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Before the event starts, huddle with your local partners and panelists to get everyone on the same page regarding your introductions and post-screening discussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Set up any tables or display materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Assign one or two people to greet people as they arrive and to distribute programs, materials and so on. <input type="checkbox"/> Assign a timekeeper to keep the event on track. <input type="checkbox"/> Check in with your photographer to make sure he/she understands the event's agenda. <input type="checkbox"/> If you collected RSVPs, have an alphabetically ordered guest list handy to keep track of who comes and how many unexpected people show up.
<b>After your screening</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Send a follow-up email to attendees and invite them to future meetings and events.

### Good Luck!

With the right planning and partnerships, your event is sure to be a success. We believe that convening the community around a compelling film to address an urgent problem like hunger and obesity can further the impact of your efforts and greatly increase visibility. Hunger in America is entirely preventable, and the committed work of organizations like yours is key to reversing the obesity epidemic.

# Acknowledgments

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Active Voice tackles social issues through the creative use of film. We believe that real progress requires real connection and that film has a unique power to bring people together in meaningful ways. Every day Active Voice helps filmmakers, funders, and communities start the conversations and relationships that lead to lasting, measurable change. Since our inception in 2001, Active Voice has influenced local, regional and national dialogue on issues including immigration, criminal justice, health care and education. [www.activevoice.net](http://www.activevoice.net)



Participant is a global entertainment company founded in 2004 by Jeff Skoll to focus on feature films, television, publishing and digital content that inspire social change. Participant's more than 40 films include *Good Night, and Good Luck*, *Syriana*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Food, Inc.*, *Waiting for "Superman"*, *The Help*, *Contagion* and *Lincoln*. Participant's Social Action campaigns and digital network TakePart.com continue the conversation and connect audiences to a wealth of content and actions. Its new millennial television network Pivot (pivot.tv), launching this summer in 40 million-plus homes, is TV for The New Greatest Generation. [www.participantmedia.com](http://www.participantmedia.com)



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