

Community RX

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH JUSTICE

TABLE TALKS

One of the greatest memories of the African American experience is of time spent in the kitchen. The “kitchen of the past” can be likened to our current family room. The kitchen is where families gather around the table to not only share meals, but also to share events of the day, catch up with family, and connect generations with stories. T

These familial stories shared today stem from the West African tradition of the Mande people of keeping the past alive through a griot, the community’s storyteller. The griot was considered a historian, praise singer, poet, interpreter, adviser, and more.

Today, “the table” is extended beyond remembering the past, to a forward-looking vision of inclusivity, planning, and community organizing.

What are Table Talks?

Table Talks are casual gatherings where moms, dads, grandparents, and others in our community learn about air pollution and climate, and how these issues affect African Americans, their families, and communities.

At *Table Talks*, participants share stories, make connections, and take action. The purpose of a *Table Talk* is to organize, motivate, and activate volunteers. *Table Talks* can be used to engage and educate the community about local, state, regional, or federal issues, as well as organize around issues of environmental health justice.

Table Talks are a key component of CommunityRX, Moms Clean Air Force’s environmental health justice campaign.

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Table Talk Goals

1. Bring like-minded members of the African-American community together to hear about opportunities to get involved with Moms Clean Air Force.
2. Engage in discussions about air pollution, climate change, and other environmental health concerns in the African-American community.
3. Build and solidify relationships in the African-American community.
4. Take meaningful action on our issues.
5. Inspire volunteers to commit to getting involved.

Materials Needed to Host a Table Talk

- Folders (Moms Clean Air Force and/or Community Rx Fact Sheets)
- Sign-In Sheets
- Pens
- T-shirts
- Snacks
- Name Tags
- Thank you cards

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Before the Table Talk

1. Contact Shakeila James (sjames@momscleanairforce.org) with Moms Clean Air Force; we would love to help you create a successful event.
2. Find a host location for your event (i.e. – a volunteer’s house, a local coffee shop, or the local library).
3. Confirm the date, time, location, and logistics with your host location.
4. Invite (and confirm) a few local organizations/groups to join as partners in the event.
5. Invite your local network (via email, Facebook, phone calls, in-person conversations, and Twitter).
6. Make sure attendees RSVP via Facebook event, registration page, or contacting the organizer.

Engaging Attendees/Participants

1. Confirmation process: Call, email, text message, and tag your attendees via Facebook to remind them about the event.
2. If you are on social media, use it to promote the event and create excitement. Take pictures and short videos while you are preparing your materials, and post them.
3. Make sure to invite local community groups, local organizations, faith-based institutions, and local parenting groups.

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During the Table Talk

1. Show up early to set up.
2. Ensure that there are enough chairs for everyone you expect to attend. Greet each person as they arrive and give them a name tag.
3. Introduce yourself to the group. Briefly state why you are involved with Moms Clean Air Force, share your personal story, and invite a few attendees to share theirs (5-7 mins).
4. Give an overview of Moms Clean Air Force.
5. Discuss urgent air pollution issues.
6. Take pictures during the event.
7. Thank the host and everyone who attended.
8. Let everyone know that you will be following up with them to remind them of upcoming events.
9. Take a final picture with the group and post it on social media.
10. Consider making short videos of the discussion or of the attendees talking about why they are there and why they care about clean air so that you can share on social media.

After the Table Talk

1. Check in with us and let us know how it went! Contact Victoria Rachmaninoff at vrachmaninoff@momscleanairforce.org and let her know how many people attended and what actions you've planned as a result of the Table Talk!
2. Thank attendees for their participation via social media.
3. Follow-up with the attendees to remind them of their commitment to take part in future actions.
4. Post pictures of the event and let other members know that they can attend upcoming events, etc.