



## Sustainability Plan:

The Mind-Full Project's most effective practice is to use the entire school year to raise donations through recycling bins and community drives and prep and supply kits. Mind-Full is intended to spread as a program – I would love to see it go as far as possible and be modified in different ways that make sense for the community the program serves.

### There are four major components to the program:

1.) Initial **contacts and outreach**. Create a letter that describes the program and its aim. Copy the content into an email body and adjust as necessary.

- Create a prospecting list of schools, charities, therapists that you would like to participate from. I recommend Excel, but you can also use Word or PowerPoint. Just track email dates and responses. I recommend tracking the dates and comments of conversations or tagging them in email.

2.) Recycling **drives** – It is recommended to recycle once a year or if needed, once a semester. Recycling in the community is very successful if done through Next Door to the community at large. Facebook is another option. There are other methods to get the word out. I suggest experimenting.

- Be ready to pick up materials at the donors' locations for Next Door and Facebook. Do not give out your address if you post on your own drive. Encourage donors to message you and monitor daily.
- Another option is to set up several recycling bins at convenient locations and advertise them in the post. **Be very specific and realistic about the supplies you need.** If you ask



for items you do not use, you can quickly have gaps and material that will remain unused. If you get material that does not work, don't worry, there are projects you can create around them or donate them to charity. There are many charities collecting gently used art and craft supplies.

- **Recycling in the schools:** Recycling in the schools can be successful but be prepared to need to do both types of drives (to the community and to the schools). It is suggested to use art rooms for supplies. However, make sure you speak to the art teacher about the types of supplies they use. Also speak to teachers about creating student incentives for donating. Bonus points, a break, a snack, volunteer points are ideas that come to mind. Advertise the drives, use signs (school approved), and spread the word creatively. Does the school have a news program or announcements? Can clubs advertise on social media?

3.) **Kit prep and packing:** The most time-consuming part of assembling kits is preparation. My focus is always on not wasting materials. I generally create art material boxes and put generic kits together. I have found this method to be most effective for schools and charities. It also depends on how many guided activities you create and how many magazines and books you collect. I suggest running workshops for each prep activity for the kits. I worked with club leadership of 3 clubs to get volunteer hours approved and used Sign Up Genius to schedule my workshops. If you do this, it is recommended that you have a sign-up sheet to record who actually attends, so they can get credit and you have something to track their time if they lose their own sheet.

- My kits had two guided activities for K-3. One involved a head cut out for an “about me” collage, the other required green leaves large enough to be written on. I also created a template of a side profile on card stock for tracing on a poster for older elementary – high school ages. I also wanted to supply K-8 kits with flower and shape cut outs for collages because I had so much colored paper. **That counts as one group activity if you do not have a cutting machine.** I used a Cricut machine to create those shapes because I didn't have time otherwise.



- Cutting magazines and children's books out for words, images and letters. This is an activity that takes the most time. If you have the year, I suggest two exclusive cutting sessions @ 2 hrs each semester. I had cutting sessions with club volunteers. We did two sessions – one was just magazine cutting, the other was magazine cutting and supplies prep. This was done in a short time and we still needed more.
- It's worthwhile to educate volunteers and share magazine cut examples. Words and phrases can be found anywhere in magazines but the most successful are advertisements. Be creative and learn to recognize words anywhere in ads and headers. I recommend not going too small with words. Especially when preparing for younger students. When cutting people out of magazines, be mindful of the importance of inclusion and diversity.

**Packaging:** Packaging supplies for kits requires workshop organizers to be prepared. Bring a container of only the supplies you intend to use. Have a list of the number of items you need broken into smaller containers or bags (ex: I want 8 sandwich bags half full of pom poms). If you need more magazine cuts, set a group to work. If you can find creative packaging instead of bags, that's even better!

**Containers:** Feel free to be creative with containers. I found re-usable plastic containers for \$1.50 per container. A school or center that already has a container or has already been supplied needs to replenish its stock. My kits were stored in reusable cloth bags. So, in other words, encourage them to recycle containers for all supplies.

My solution to cut down on waste was to stock collage supplies in containers. I put together neutral kits with glue sticks, poster board and colored paper. This way I didn't have to pay attention to age or preference when supplying collage medium core supplies. My directions included with the material containers ask the creator to give back anything they do not use or need. There was a large plastic bag holding the kit together. However, my directions suggest collecting that bag so it can be re-used when giving the kit out.



#### 4.) Maintenance and promotion of the website –

- **Maintenance:** the website will need to be updated with updated posts as the project moves from year to year. This will include updated photos and posts about each segment or milestone of the project. Clubs may also do expressive art. For example, Tri-M or a music honor society may want to improve the music section. An athletic club or a school volunteer or sport may help with the movement page
- **Promotion:** social media is used through clubs to advertise recycling drives. Promotion can be done by posting on social media, website posts, and advertising recycling drives.
- Cost plan – how will you host the website if you have one – what is the cost, how will it be funded?

#### A sample step-by-step may work like this:

##### Planning

- Set up a planning discussion to determine what you will need from each of the 4 major components of the program.
- Set up a supplies plan and cost – use Excel to do this.
- Set up a team of committed members who will run some of the major portions of the program.



- Use a digital calendar you can share with team members to map out major milestones and determine availability.
- Create a target list of people you will reach out to for receiving kits
- Create a letter explaining the program or modify the original letter to explain the program's sustainability. Use this letter in the body of the email you will send to. Tip: Create one for schools, one for charities/crisis centers, and one for therapists. They need to be slightly different.
- Create a spreadsheet or table to record when you sent emails, if you received answers, when you followed up, and what the response was. This is a must if more than one person emails. Tag emails so they can be checked.
- Create a list of schools, charities and therapists that need or want kits, those who want re-stocking (what you are re-stocking and the quantity). I recommend a spreadsheet for this.
- Make a master list of items needed in Excel.



## Recycling

- Set up a planning meeting to determine what you need and how you will run recycling drives.
- Take inventory of what you have collected material – do you need boxes or containers for recycling? How will you gather the information and what will you use.
- Where will you place the bins? Do you need to call or write emails to ask for permission?
- Make signs for the recycling bins both to advertise the drive and to place on or above the bins. Signs should say what you are doing, who it benefits, when your deadline is and you need to be specific about what you want to collect.
- Use social media, school announcements and teacher incentives to entice students to gather and bring in materials. Set up in art rooms where you will get better supplies.
- If you plan a community drive, Next Door & Facebook are the most effective posts. Add supply lists along with Who, What, Why and When addressed. *Tips: Do not give out your address unless it is public space, or you have bins in easy to access community locations. Be flexible and be willing to pick up at their locations – if you do this go in groups or with an adult. Do not go into anyone's homes. Picking up at a porch or curb is the safe solution.*



- Allow time but keep the momentum alive. Keep checking and driving people.

### **Collection and sorting**

- When you are ready to collect from bins or drive, plan a place to store material. It will be lots of bags, boxes and if you are lucky, large plastic bins. It will be everywhere.
- Sort material you have collected into neat item piles. For example, a bin may hold all kinds of craft items useful for elementary – middle school collages. A corner or box may be made entirely of scrapbook paper or patterned paper. Magazines and books need to be in one box. It helps if you have a crew.

### **Packaging & cutting**

- Create several workshops or group work sessions after school to prep kits. Make sure you plan them on a calendar and speak with the administration to get a room booked and a teacher willing to stay after school.
- Work with club leadership to allow volunteers and teammates to earn club points or volunteer hours for their time.
- Use Sign Up Genius and schedule the number of sessions you have planned (it's probably smarter to do them monthly if you have an entire school year to work with because if you plan too far out with volunteers, they tend to forget).



- Use a sign-in sheet for teammates who show up on the scheduled date to get them points.
- Be sure to plan your workshops/sessions in advance. Bring just the items you need completed with you.

Magazine cutting: This is the portion you need the most supplies for. If you are cutting magazines, stack them in several locations. I recommend keeping the cut items in categories so that you can supply each kit container with a variety of things. I had mine broken into people, animals, misc., and had words/phrases in one sandwich bag and letters in another. Although I had to sort things a little, it kept things reasonably organized. **TIP:** bring in a sample of what you want.

Sorting supplies into bags: Bring a list of what you need along with the bags and the amount (half full, full, quarter full). How many bags or small containers of craft supplies do you need? Be very specific. I recommend 2 of these workshops. One for sorting craft supplies and extra items for collages, the other for pattern paper and magazine cut out organization into different groups. I did not have the time to run the second workshop. Instead, I had to prepare this portion in advance of my last workshop on kit creation and container packing.

### **Final Delivery Packing**

- Kit creation and container packing: This is an assembly line activity that needs to be organized in advance. I suggest creating a list with very specific directions on what goes into art material boxes and kits. I broke mine into elementary, middle and high school age groups. I also suggest having a container packing and kit team. The sorting workshop helps you create the items you want to put into containers. Now you can have a container packing group. I would start with elementary schools and work your way to high school. The reason behind this is because it keeps mistakes from happening. Or, different people can work on different kits in different locations in the room.





Regardless, you need separation, and clear instructions for groups preparing to pack your kits.

- The kit creation team will work like an assembly line, placing items into bags. They should know how many they create per school or charity. Have them pack the total quantity into cloth shopping bags or whatever you decide to use.

### **Delivery time!**

This is the most satisfying part of the project. Be sure to take pictures when you meet with your charity or school. However, there are logistics to consider. Keep communicating with your contact. Decide if they will come by the school to pick it up, or if you will deliver it to them. Coordinate a time that works for everyone.

### **Closing thoughts:**

This plan outlines the Mind-Full Project and how I ran the program (and in less than a semester you can add schools and re-stock the schools I supplied). If you are in my school system, you can simplify my program and only curate magazines for other age groups. In addition, you can curate guided activities for elementary schools. You can create "fresh" guided activities that are simple and require less effort.

You also do not need poster board for collage materials. This program outline can be done anywhere on any community level in any town or city in the world. Collages are fluid and the materials are flexible. In fact, the sky is the limit! Be creative. There is a lot of information out there about collage art.



**I only ask for this:**

- Find and supply learning centers and charities that focus on children's wellness. This can be anything you see in your community.
- Recycle! It is important to make your kits from re-usable materials, as well as supply them in materials that can be re-used in your community.
- Keep it low cost. You can do it.
- Try to encourage the centers you supply, especially schools, to recycle to restock their own kits on basic supplies. The goal is for schools to become self-sustaining from materials they would otherwise throw away (colored paper and art room overages). Plus, if they collect their own materials, they can help you find magazines for their kits. It's helpful to re-stock on some supplies, but the goal is to grow your list to more schools and charities and to re-stock things school counselors do not have time to do (such as magazine cut outs).
- Spread the message. I would love to see what you do in your community!

#ProjectMind-full or email me!