

**START
YOUR OWN**



A GUIDE FOR KIDS



**"THERE IS A PLACE
FOR KIDS IN THE
CLIMATE MOVEMENT"**



The First Rule of Climate Club brings a group of kids together to find project-based ways to address climate change at the community level. As we follow the class-turned-club through obstacles and successes, one thing is clear: there is a place for kids in the climate movement.

This is a step-by-step guide designed to help you organize a climate club chapter in your school, neighborhood, or community. I'm going to share a framework for bringing more climate cape-wearers together, because the more people who join the club, the more impact we'll have. Some of these ideas will need to be adjusted, based on your age, but as long as you are working on climate solutions, you're on your way.

WELCOME TO CLIMATE CLUB!

-Carrie Firestone

CARRIE FIRESTONE, AUTHOR OF
THE FIRST RULE OF CLIMATE CLUB



STEP 1

RECRUIT OTHER KIDS



I guarantee there are other kids in your community who care about our environment as much as you do. You just need to find them. Work with a trusted adult to set a meeting time and find a location. Public libraries are great locations. Sometimes you need to fill out an event form, so call ahead. Sunday afternoons or weekday evenings are good times. If you're hosting the club at school, you'll need to find a staff advisor to help you and an after-school classroom location.

- Ask if you can **set a regular meeting date** at your chosen location.
- **Make a flyer and hang it around school and share graphics on social media.** Make sure to include date, time, and location. Set an age limit (keep it within 2-3 years of your age).
- **Encourage friends and neighbors to share the flyer on social media.**
- **Ask your school or town if they would be willing to send an email** about the club to everyone on their list.
- Before the first meeting, **set an agenda** and think about what materials you need: name tags, smart board, pens/pencils, etc.



**YOU'RE INVITED TO A MEETING
OF THE NEW STUDENT-RUN
NORTH END CLIMATE CLUB**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22 AT 4 P.M.
NORTH END LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

COME TALK ABOUT CLIMATE-CHANGE
SOLUTIONS!

STEP 2



THE FIRST MEETING



The reality is you could have a lot of kids show up at your first meeting or no kids. If a lot of people show up, make sure you're ready to play teacher and keep everyone focused. If nobody shows up, **DON'T BE DISCOURAGED!** There are millions of people mobilizing to address climate change, and you'll find your "people." In the meantime, you can still come up with a project and invite others to participate!

- The first meeting agenda should **include time to get to know each other** and talk about a shared vision. You could begin with introductions and "Why did you decide to come?" statements.
- **Ask people if they've done any environmental work in the past** and what part of the climate movement they're most passionate about.
- **Work together to create a "shared vision"** for your school or community, a portrait of what your school or community would look like if you could do whatever you wanted without any roadblocks.
- **Turn your vision into a narrative (story) or visual (vision board or even a mural).** Share your vision with your community.
- **Thank everyone for coming,** gather names and emails or phone numbers, and send people home with an assignment for the next meeting. This assignment could be researching a specific topic or brainstorming project ideas.
- **Decide how often you will meet and if you will bring refreshments.**
- **Ask members to invite friends to the next meeting.**

STEP 3



THE SECOND MEETING

GIVE A RECAP of the last meeting if there are new members. Talk about your shared vision and discuss how to take pieces of that vision to create manageable projects. You can use project examples from *The First Rule of Climate Club*:

CREATE



CREATING A VEGAN COOKBOOK

that uses locally sourced food and educates people about how meat contributes to climate change. Once the book is finished, host a potluck party using your collected recipes.

ORGANIZE AN EVENT

like a slow fashion show or an electric vehicle car show.

ORGANIZE



CAMPAIGN



DESIGN A CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY

about a topic such as car idling, food waste, or making homes more efficient.

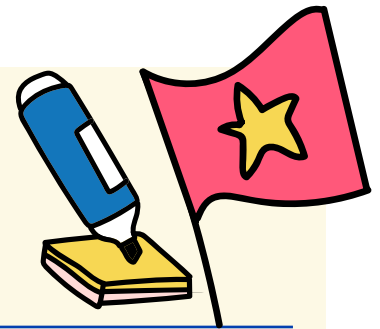
- **Ask members to go around the room suggesting project ideas.**
- If there's more than one idea, **vote on the first project you'll tackle as a club.** Consider choosing the least complicated project and working your way up to more challenging projects after a success.
- Once you settle on a project idea, **divide tasks.**

STEP 4

BUILD YOUR TEAM

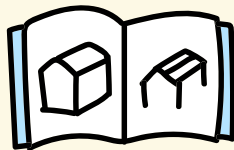
If you have one or two members of your club, you'll have to wear several hats. If you have more members, consider inviting people to think about what they're good at and what they enjoy. That will help them decide their roles. Here are some examples of club roles:

LEADER This person sets the agenda, helps keep everyone on task, and runs meetings, with the help of other members. If you started the club, you will probably be the leader, but if the club continues, you can consider electing new leaders after each project.



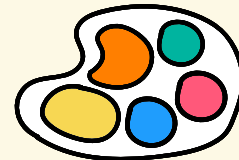
SECRETARY

This member writes down everything that happens at meetings and shares the "minutes" with other members.



RESEARCH PERSON

These are the science-loving people who help educate the club. Research the topic of your project and share information in bullet points with the team so everyone understands the science behind the initiative.



GRAPHICS PERSON

This artsy member knows how to make flyers, design posters, and more. One graphic designer in the group can save you a lot of money and help make your projects look professional.



TREASURER

The treasurer will work with your adult advisor if your club decides to raise money for your projects.



WORKER BEES Every club needs worker bee members who make checklists, think of every detail, and do things like event setup and cleanup, distributing information, community outreach, planning refreshments, and rallying people to participate in projects.

STEP 5



FUNDING PROJECTS

Often, projects require very little money to get off the ground. If you need money to help fund your project, consider a crowdfunding campaign or reach out to local non-profits to ask if they would be willing to partner with you. Service clubs like Rotary or Lions Clubs may be willing to fund your project. Sometimes an individual or business will support kid-driven initiatives. If you're doing an event, consider charging a small admission fee to help cover future projects.

BONUS: Research local non-profit organizations that are connected with your project topic and encourage your community to donate. For example, if you're working on food waste, donate to a local organization that delivers fresh produce to families in "food desert" communities. Or if you're working on fast fashion, donate items to a thrift shop that funds local non-profits.

STEP 6

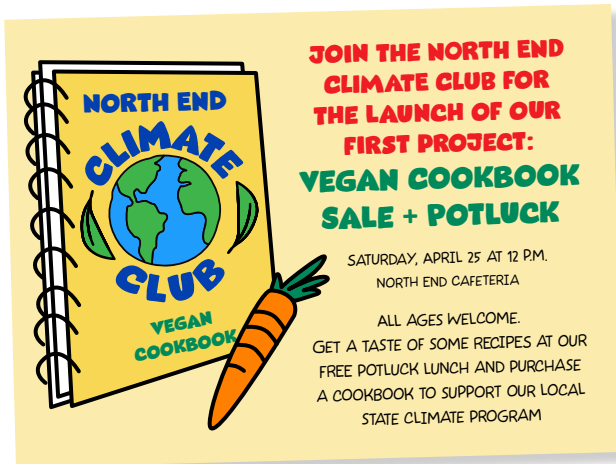
THE NEXT MEETING



WORK TOGETHER ON THE PROJECT. Continue to try to recruit new members. Troubleshoot roadblocks and adjust the plan if needed. For example, a student in our community wanted to paint a rainbow crosswalk for Pride Month. The town wouldn't let her do this because they don't allow signs or symbols on town property. The student designed a Pride sign, sold it to hundreds of private citizens for their front lawns, and donated proceeds from the sign to school equity clubs.

STEP 7

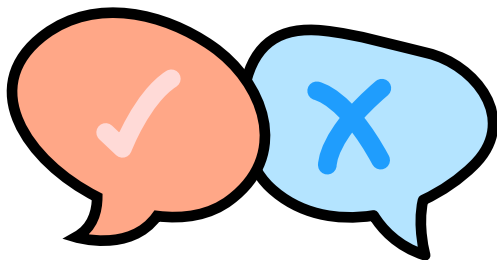
LAUNCH THE FIRST PROJECT



HOST YOUR EVENT, release your cookbook, or do a coordinated blast alerting the community that your initiative has started. If you're doing an education campaign, be sure to have a way to measure success such as a before and after survey to help you understand how effective your campaign was in your school.

STEP 8

DEBRIEF MEETING



After the event or initiative, meet to make a list of what worked and what didn't work. Think about your roles and decide if you would like to take on a different role when you start the next project.

- **Review your community vision.** Did your first project help your group get closer to realizing that vision?
- **Take time to think about next steps.** Are you ready to start a new project? Do you need time to revisit your vision? Research climate work others are doing? Talk to other climate clubs? Expand your work beyond your current community?

STEP 9

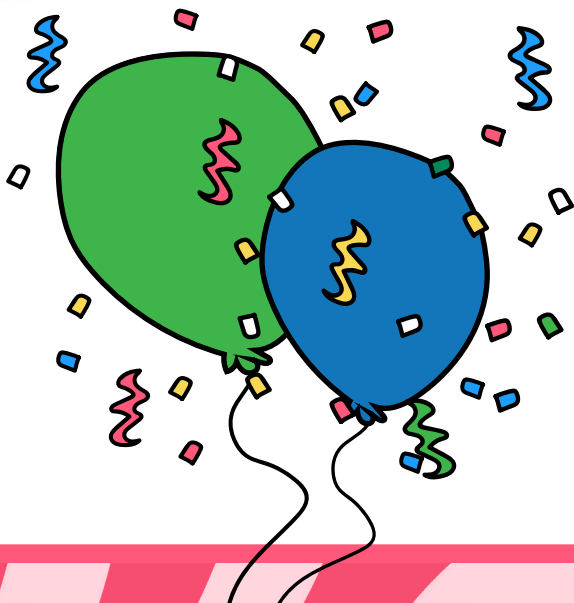
TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Bringing your community together to reach your vision project by project is a powerful way to address climate change. But you can multiply your power by urging lawmakers to pass earth-friendly laws. Choose an issue your town or legislature is already debating. Write informed, research-based letters in favor or opposed to the proposed law. Encourage others to write letters as well.



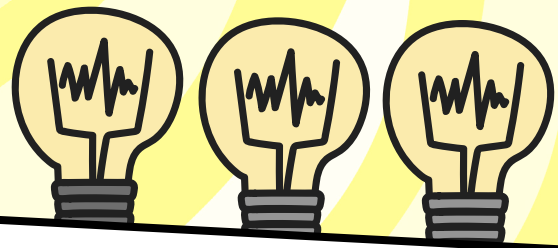
STEP 10

CELEBRATE!



After you have a next-steps plan, **TAKE A BREAK TO CELEBRATE** your hard work. Take a hike, have a picnic, host a movie night, or organize a dance party with club members, and volunteers. Celebrating successes helps the club bond, and it's important to balance the work with joy!

BONUS

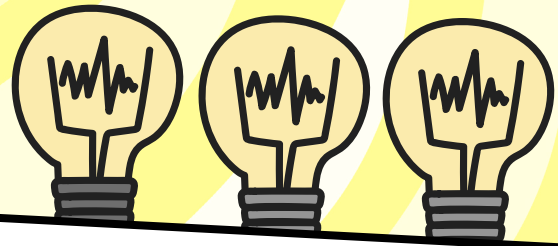


SOME CLIMATE CLUB PROJECT IDEAS

Here are some project ideas to get your climate club started!

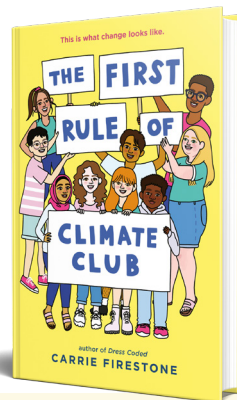
- **Collect meatless recipes from members of your community.** Encourage the recipes to include locally-sourced food. Put together a cookbook with recipes and facts about how meat contributes to climate change.
- **Learn about pollinators, native plants, and invasive plants and how vibrant native gardens and healthy biodiversity can contribute to a climate-friendly community.** Organize a community cleanup and invasive plant pull initiative. Then replace the invasive plants with native plants for our pollinators.
- **Create a display about fast fashion and the impact the fashion industry has on our planet.** Organize a clothing exchange, thrifted clothing closet at school, or a slow fashion show.
- **Research food waste and study how much food your school or community wastes.** Share information about how food waste contributes to climate change and how composting is a powerful food waste reduction tool.
- **Organize an electric vehicle show.** Organizations like cleancities.energy.gov will help you secure a wide range of vehicles. Share facts about EVs and use the event to call attention to need for EV charger access in your community.
- **Start a leaf raking project.** Rake leaves for members of the community and communicate how leaf blower emissions contribute to climate change.
- **Team up with organizations to set up a walk or bike to school day, week, or month.** Recruit adults to lead young children from their neighborhoods to school. Teach the public about the impact of buses and car and bus idling and the importance of creating walkable and bikeable communities.
- **Hold a school or community zero-waste campout.** Encourage community members to turn off/unplug everything in their houses and camp out. Talk about how much energy we use in our homes and how to reduce energy use.

CONT.



SOME CLIMATE CLUB PROJECT IDEAS

- **Organize a series of “no-emissions” community gatherings**, like star-gazing evenings, educational hikes (invite local experts to teach about birds, plants, mushrooms, etc.), sledding or ice skating parties, tree planting, town field days or sports tournaments, and pop-up picnics.
- **Work with school or town officials to design, plan, and create a permanent mural that illustrates your vision for a more sustainable, earth-friendly community.**
- **Plan a read-a-thon.** Gather people together in a park, library, or school gym to read. Ask the community to pledge money per page and use the money for future club projects.
- **Do the same with a dance-a-thon.**
- **Design an “anti-idling” campaign that educates the community about how car and bus idling contributes to climate change.** Ask if you can visit classrooms in your district to teach other kids about idling and ask them to urge their parents and bus drivers to stop idling in school pick-up lines. Have a “no idling” poster-making event.
- **Compose a climate “anthem.”** Bring writers, musicians, and performers together to produce the anthem. Launch your song at a concert, then share it all over social media.
- **Host a series of educational forums at your school or local library.** Invite experts from non-profit organizations or universities to speak about various issues on a panel. Prepare questions in advance and leave time for audience questions. Topics might include: *How to make your home more energy efficient*, *Facts about solar panels*, and *How to compost at home*.



For more ideas and resources and to connect with other climate club chapters, visit my website at WWW.CARRIEFIRESTONEBOOKS.COM