

## Soliciting Support

Some ECO<sub>2</sub>school events already have prizes and incentives built into them. There is, however, always room for more. The leadership team can decide how much effort you want to put into acquiring additional items as incentives. It is always nice to have a local touch and no one knows better than you what the local hot spots are.

Don't be afraid to ask. Some businesses will say no, in fact only about one in five say yes. It is not personal, its business. That is ok. Your job is to ask.

### Simple Steps:

As daunting as asking for help may seem there is a simple formula for getting all the free support you need.

- **Be on the lookout:** Think about who you know and how they might help you. Classmates or parents may have jobs at local businesses.
- **Be Prepared:** Before you go into a business know what you are asking for, how much, when and especially why. Anticipate any questions an owner or manager might have and prepare your answer. Have a letter that you can leave that includes the best way to contact you. Have a tax ID number ready.
- **Be Respectful:** How you present yourself is very important. When you call on a business ask to speak to the manager. Wait for them to finish with paying customers. Make sure it is a good time to talk. Working in a team of two is ok but larger groups are distracting.
- **Dress professionally:** What is appropriate for school or hanging out with friends it not appropriate for approaching businesses. For boys this means no sagging or hats, and please wears a clean shirt. Wear pants or shorts without rips or stains. For girls, no bra straps showing, no spaghetti or strapless tops or belly shirts. Shorts or skirts should be longer than the tips of your fingers if you let your arm hang down.
- **Follow Process:** Businesses often have protocol to follow when you ask for a donation. If you need to fill out a form, return it quickly. Find out what the next steps are and follow through.
- **Follow up:** This is **SUPER** important. Owners and managers are busy people. After you make initial contact, wait a day or two, and then call back. Leave a message with your phone number. Every time you call leave your phone number even if you think they already have it. Find out if an appointment is recommended and make one.
- **Make it Easy:** Whether you are coordinating to pick up items or making an appointment remember they are busy and helping you out. Being flexible and independent makes it easy to say yes.
- **Say THANK YOU;** most businesses will want a letter verifying their donation for their tax purposes but adding a hand written thank you note addressed to the owner or manager is a personal touch that is not soon forgotten.
- **Acknowledge your sponsors** at your table or event. This can be a paper with their logo or including it on your posters. A quick shout out at the beginning or end of the event goes a long way. Let your donor know what you are going to do to and do it.