

# community **RESILIENCE** challenge



SAVE  
water

GROW  
food

CONSERVE  
energy

REDUCE  
waste

BUILD  
community

## Community Toolkit

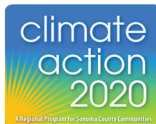
*A guide to help you make the  
most of the Challenge*

daily acts

*because every choice matters*



*because every choice matters*



**[www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org)**  
**[thechallenge@dailyacts.org](mailto:thechallenge@dailyacts.org)**



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# WELCOME!

I am so thankful this toolkit is in your hands. Because together with thousands of inspired and engaged citizens and groups, we are going to knock the socks off of our neighborhoods and communities with the most crazily inspiring sustainability extravaganza yet. Whether you're interested in organizing a Community Resilience Challenge project for your neighborhood, school, workplace, home, or otherwise, our hope is that you'll find everything that you need in this toolkit to activate yourself and those around you in making our communities more resilient this spring.

No matter where you live, YOU can bring the Challenge to your community. This year's impact stands to be bigger and bolder than ever. All we need is you to be your most inspired, creative, encouraging and courageous self!

Amidst the confluence of crises, citizens and leaders everywhere are waking up and they're ready to take meaningful action; action that transforms self, home, neighborhood and community; action that connects us to nature and each other in powerful, practical and regenerative ways; action that strengthens our relationships, our organizations, our alliances and our movement.

To get started, read through this toolkit and visit our website ([www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org)) and you'll have everything you need to make your plan of action.

We're committed to you and to continuing to catalyze and enrich our communities, local economies and ecosystems to grow them more rich and resilient. Join us!

In community,



Trathen Heckman  
Executive Director

# THE CHALLENGE IS A CALL TO ACTION

In March, April & May; thousands of people across Sonoma County and beyond will rise to the challenge of creating more healthy, just and resilient lives, homes, neighborhoods and communities. The Community Resilience Challenge (the Challenge) is continuing year after year of inspiring and mobilizing individuals, schools, organizations, municipalities and businesses to take practical actions that Save Water, Grow Food, Conserve Energy, Reduce Waste and Build Community.



**Save Water**



**Conserve Energy**



**Build Community**



**Grow Food**



**Reduce Waste**

As part of the Challenge we'll measure our collective impact based on the number of actions registered. Building on the successes of 628 gardens registered in 2010 to 2015's incredible 8,363 local actions, Daily Acts and our partner organizations plan to continue to deepen and spread our shared impact. Our goal is to inspire pledges for local actions across Sonoma County while we increase our collaboration with regional and national partners to grow this critically important movement.



## WHY RESILIENCE?

In short, when faced with adversity, resilience is the ability to adapt and spring back, be it a person, a community, an economy or an ecosystem. Given the urgency of California's worst drought on record and a growing confluence of social and environmental challenges, now is the time to act. Communities are at risk of running out of water, farms have had water allocations cut off and ten times the normal number of wildfires were recorded in California in 2015. But together we can adapt and spring forward, by catalyzing significant action towards becoming more food, water and energy independent. We can build our communities stronger, healthier, more beautiful and resilient through the Challenge!

## WHEN IS THE CHALLENGE?

Every year, the Community Resilience Challenge takes place in the spring from March through May. The majority of activities will occur in April & May. If you want to undertake a project but can't complete it over the Challenge weekend, that's fine! All we need is for you to register your project by May 31st to have it counted in our tally. We harness the natural rhythm of robust spring activity to tell the story of our community united in resilience!



# HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

To measure our success, we'll tally the total number of actions pledged, but we'll also be digging deeper to quantify the significance of people's actions in relation to each action area such as gallons of water saved, amount of energy conserved, etc.

While the annual Challenge and its outcomes alone are inspiring, our dream is that the Challenge becomes a positive catalyst that will transform participants' relationship to water, food, energy, waste and community throughout the year!

## ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit was created just for YOU so that you can engage with Daily Acts in creating more resilient communities at this pivotal moment for our people and planet. The need for increased awareness and community-based, local solutions has never been greater.

After reading this toolkit you'll be ready to:

1. Decide your level of involvement beyond individual actions (get on over to register your individual actions at [www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org) if you haven't yet!);
2. Create your plan of action; and
3. Get started!

We hope you'll join in us in achieving the most successful Challenge ever.

# BECOME A CATALYST FOR RESILIENCE

During the Community Resilience Challenge, many individuals and groups will come together to make the Challenge a success by becoming Resilience Catalysts. If you're inspired and want to make a bigger impact beyond your home, or if your organization, workplace or municipality are already planning projects this Spring that will fit with the Challenge action areas (Save Water, Grow Food, Conserve Energy, Reduce Waste and Build Community) and you want to help coordinate these activities, then we want to hear from you!

When you take on the role of Resilience Catalyst (or organizer, in other terms), you become a critically important part of making the Challenge a success by inspiring your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, school, municipality and/or community organization to be an action-oriented solutioneer for a more vibrant and resilient future.

To support you in your organizing role, Daily Acts will provide you with information, materials and advice to help you make an impact through the Challenge. First, all you have to do is decide how you want to be involved.

## **1. Organize a Community Project**

Engage and mobilize your community, workplace, school, or friends to implement a community project that supports the Challenge goals of saving water, growing food, conserving energy, reducing waste and/or building community. Projects that have been implemented in the past include planting a community garden, installing solar arrays, sheet mulching a neighbor's lawn, planting fruit trees, installing drip irrigation at a school, upcycling and hosting a neighborhood potluck.



To ensure your project's success, you may want to develop an action plan and pull together a small organizing team (many hands make light work!). Please make sure to register your project no later than May 31th at [www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org) (and take before and after pictures and let us know how your project went).

Daily Acts can provide you with planning support via our website and this toolkit, as well as with outreach materials (posters, fliers, and web). However, building materials (soil, lumber, plants, etc.), coordination of volunteers and anything else you'll need to make your project a success, will be up to you. We'll be getting materials donated from local businesses as incentives for participation in the Challenge, so check our website to get a list of these incentives and join our email list to get updates.

## **2. Get the Word Out**

Make some ripples by distributing Challenge outreach materials, making announcements at community gatherings, tabling at events, and generally getting the word out. With our posters, fliers and other materials in hand, you can help get people registered on our website and in-person. With your help we can easily reach our goal of registering actions while inspiring groups regionally and nationally to kick it up a notch!




### 3. Tell the Challenge Story

Are you a writer, photographer, or videographer, or do you want to be? If so, we want to hear from you. We need folks at sites throughout Sonoma County during the month of May – and especially during mid to late May - to capture the amazing stories that manifest. If you're interested in traveling to sites and submitting write-ups, photos and videos for the Challenge, please contact us.

### 4. Got Other Ideas?

If you have other great ideas on how to get involved, please let us know. Whether it's hosting a house party to get people registered, offering your graphic design skills or mentoring other organizers on project management, there's room for everyone at the table!

For more information or to get registered as a Resilience Catalyst, please email us at [thechallenge@dailyacts.org](mailto:thechallenge@dailyacts.org).



“ **The Challenge was wonderful  
- it really got me thinking  
outside the box and doing  
things I didn't normally do.** ”  
*- Angel, Challenge participant*

# RESILIENCE ACTION PROJECT IDEAS

Here is a list of different actions that you might choose to implement in your home, neighborhood, business, school, church, or in collaboration with a local nonprofit.

The following are just suggestions. Feel free to develop your own plan of action based on one or more of our five action areas.

## **Save Water**

- Install drip irrigation
- Plant native, drought-tolerant plants
- Install a greywater system
- Install rainwater-harvesting barrels
- Sheet mulch a lawn
- Retain water with mulch and earthworks (think swales)
- Conduct a DIY water audit for you and your neighbors
- Distribute water-saving reminders for others to use (i.e. “water is precious”)

## **Grow Food**

- Start or join a school/community garden
- Plant or expand an edible garden
- Start a compost pile and/or worm bin for your neighborhood or school
- Plant a food forest throughout your neighborhood
- Host a plant or seed swap in your neighborhood
- Endorse the Sonoma County Food Action Plan and get others to do so by going to [www.sonomacofsa.org](http://www.sonomacofsa.org)

## **Conserve Energy**

- Replace all incandescent with fluorescent or LED bulbs or hand out free bulbs to others
- Organize or join a carpool
- Get people in your neighborhood to sign up for a community supported agriculture box (CSA) or become a drop site
- Perform a DIY energy audit for yourself and your neighbors
- Distribute energy conservation reminders for others to use (i.e. “unplug me”)
- Sign up for Clean Power at [www.sonomacleanpower.org](http://www.sonomacleanpower.org)

## **Reduce Waste**

- Go reusable (water bottle, cups, food containers, shopping bags, diapers, hankie, batteries, etc.)
- Buy in bulk and avoid individually wrapped items
- Start a compost or worm bin
- Plan a weekly menu to avoid food waste (and save money!)
- Buy thrift, “lightly used”, or consignment more often (upcycle!) and donate/trade your used goods

## **Build Community**

- Work to get others to move their money to a local bank or credit union
- Organize a clean-up day in your community
- Organize a neighborhood potluck
- Get your workplace or school to join the Community Resilience Challenge
- Start a ‘Garden Wheel’ in your neighborhood to share knowledge and bounty

# RESILIENCE ORGANIZING TIPS

## Ready ... Set ... Act!

So you're in. You've decided to take the plunge and to get involved in the Community Resilience Challenge in a bigger way. Fantastic! If you've decided to be a Resilience Catalyst by helping with outreach, capturing stories or other activities, all you have to do is email us at [thechallenge@dailyacts.org](mailto:thechallenge@dailyacts.org) and we'll plug you in.

If you're going to organize a community project that others can participate in, keep reading.

### RESILIENCE IS OUR FUTURE

We chose resilience in our name as it speaks to our ability as a community to adapt in the face of adversity.

With a future of diminishing resources, we can create abundance.

Instead of fear, we choose to find solutions, to collaborate and to act. Through the Challenge we can

help achieve community-wide resilience that will help us adapt to our planet's changing climate no matter where you call home.



# RESILIENCE CATALYST CHECKLIST

We're so thrilled that you're interested in planning a community project for others. The first step is to register your project by going to the Daily Acts website – [dailyacts.org](http://dailyacts.org). Next, review the checklist below and get started planning your project.

- ☐ **Create your vision.** Come up with your own fabulous community project that you'll implement this spring. Will you plant a community garden? Create a composting system at your school? Set up a CSA drop site? Host a potluck or community party? Refer to the list of Action Ideas in this toolkit for suggestions. Then, decide what motivates you and start developing the list of items that you'll need to get it done.
  
- ☐ **Build your team.** We can't solve drought, climate change, a lack of local food or community disconnectedness alone. Besides, organizing is WAY more fun with others. Build a team that you can work with from start to finish. If you don't have a solid vision yet, get others involved. It will only increase their commitment to seeing the

“The Challenge went really well....the idea that there was a community of others working toward this goal helped me along.”

- John, Challenge participant



“I fully support and want to be part of this inspirational, viral effort to help people shift their habits to live more conscientiously and sustainably.”

- Janeen, Challenge participant

- plan through to the finish line. Your potential team might include folks in your neighborhood, workplace, church, community garden or school. The more people you involve, the less it will be and the bigger ripple you'll make!
- ☐ **Define your project.** Next, you'll need to create a plan for the project. Get creative and have fun! This is the time for all hands on deck. Set your timeline and the who, the when, the what and the how.
- ☐ **Work out logistics.** Secure a location, determine the time and date, and plan out the program schedule. Envision the end result you're dreaming of and work backwards to figure out the steps you need to make it a reality.
- ☐ **Set goals.** Once you have a plan, set some achievable goals. Setting metrics for success is important to feel good about what you're doing. Success may mean getting 10 volunteers for a park cleanup or 100 volunteers to install a garden. Set your goals, and then work to meet and exceed them.

- ☐ **Broaden your team.** Reach out to neighbors, friends of friends, co-workers and others. Help will come from the ripest fruit on the tree as well as from the least expected branch.
- ☐ **Fundraise.** You might need to raise some funds to actualize your plan. Daily Acts will supply a list of incentives provided by local businesses that are supporting the Challenge, but you might need to secure funding to purchase additional materials. What about hosting a fundraising dinner, selling expensive chocolate, or just simply asking for cash from the planning team to support your vision? Get your team involved and set a realistic fundraising goal given the amount of time that you have.
- ☐ **Start your outreach engine.** This is when you're ready to tell everyone you know about your project! Daily Acts will be doing outreach to local and regional media, municipalities, community groups, churches and businesses. Let us know if you're planning to reach out to more than just your friends and family so that we can help promote your project. Challenge outreach materials are available online for you to download and share, or contact us to pick up posters, fliers, or postcards for distribution. Also be sure to use social media to share information about your project, to help spread the word and to mobilize volunteers.

- ☐ **Recruit and organize volunteers.** Beyond your organizing team you might need additional volunteers. Start thinking about how many you'll need and line them up. Can someone on your team be the point person for volunteers? Don't make yourself the point person for everything happening on your project unless you need 10 volunteers or less.
- ☐ **Collaborative documentation.** How will you communicate as a team? Will you use Google Docs, Facebook Groups or some other document sharing application like Dropbox? Get organized with your documents and information so that others can access it on the fly but make sure that they can't delete it on the fly too!
- ☐ **Documenting your project.** Be sure to take before and after pictures and to document your successes and challenges. Identify a point person on your team who'll be in charge of photos, videos and/or writing it all down. Decide how you'll share your success with Daily Acts and within your team (Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, PhotoRocket, Cluster, etc.).

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“**The Challenge has motivated me to think about my daily routine and how I can change/improve my actions to benefit my community.**”

*- Lauralee, Challenge participant*

“My 15-month old son and I delivered sunflowers to the neighbors on our block in a red wagon and talked about the Challenge with them. My family also planted a big garden and are now eating the fruits.”

- *Beth, Challenge participant*

- ☐ **Organize a successful project.** Make sure your project stays on schedule and be prepared for any problems that may arise (rain, or otherwise). Organize snacks and refreshments; you don't want anyone to get dehydrated. Speaking of which, send out a list of items for your volunteers and other collaborators to bring on the big day (work gloves, sun hats, close-toed shoes, sunblock, water bottle, snacks, sunglasses, etc.).
- ☐ **Celebrate!** How will you celebrate completion of the project? With a potluck? With cupcakes? Determine the best way to celebrate with the people who made the plan a reality. Make sure to also seek feedback from your team and project participants to find out what worked well and how you can improve for next time. That's right! Your NEXT project. Now that you've got the resilience-catalyzing bug, what will your next project be?

# WHAT DAILY ACTS PROVIDES

In addition to major kudos and gratitude, Daily Acts provides Resilience Catalysts with the following:

**Resources:** We've created this toolkit and have updated our website with additional resources to assist you in engaging your community through the Challenge.

**Outreach and Publicity Materials:** Daily Acts provides posters, postcards, fliers, registration forms and a press kit that you can use to publicize and promote your project. We'll also use social media to share updates, photos and quotes and we'll be sending out regular email updates to keep the enthusiasm flowing! Send us your fun stories, inspirational ideas and photos and we'll share them with our captive audience.

**Business Outreach and Sponsorship:** Daily Acts is reaching out to local businesses for sponsorship and donation of materials. We'll provide a list of incentives (seedlings, soil, etc.) to everyone via our website.

**Media Publicity:** Our team will handle major media outreach and will be sending out our press kit far and wide. If you're willing to be a spokesperson for your project, let us know.

**Website and Registration:** We'll provide a central hub for Challenge registration on our website at [www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org) and will leverage our website to share information and resources.

**Public Agency Outreach:** Daily Acts is contacting cities, towns and other public agencies within Sonoma County to secure their support for the Challenge. If you have connections and/or ideas to share, please email us at [thechallenge@dailyacts.org](mailto:thechallenge@dailyacts.org).



## **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CHALLENGE**

In 2010, Daily Acts was inspired by the Santa Monica 100 Garden Challenge, 350.org and Portland's Village Building Convergence and the first 350 Garden Challenge for Sonoma County was launched. The first year we had a goal of creating 350 gardens in a single weekend. The 350 Garden Challenge (as it was initially called) was an overwhelming success and resulted in hundreds of individuals and over 40 partner organizations registering the planting, expansion or revival of 628 gardens. In 2011, the Challenge was expanded to include home actions and a whopping 1,044 home and garden actions were registered. That year the Challenge was replicated locally by the Marin Garden Challenge, the Victory Garden Foundation and nationally through Transition U.S.

In 2012 and 2013 the number of actions grew exponentially (2,300 and 3,558 actions respectively) and other groups such as Sustainable Contra Costa successfully replicated the Challenge in other communities. In 2014, we registered 7,058 actions and changed the name to the Community Resilience Challenge to more accurately reflect the spirit of the event. In 2015, an amazing 8,363 actions were pledged. In addition, the Challenge was replicated on a regional and national level in collaboration with our partner organizations.

We expect this year to take us to a completely new level and with your help, we will!

**[www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org)**

## ABOUT DAILY ACTS

Daily Acts was formed in 2002 with the simple belief that through the power of our daily actions, we each hold the potential to create a more healthy, just, reverent and resilient future. The organization started with *Ripples Journal*, a publication that sought to catalyze more inspired, engaged and sustainable living. Since that time, powered by a passionate community of supporters and partners, Daily Acts has grown into an award-winning organization and a significant force for community transformation. Daily Acts creates collaborative programming to engage municipalities, nonprofits, businesses, schools and citizens in creating a more rich and resilient future. Learn more about us by visiting our website at [www.dailyacts.org](http://www.dailyacts.org).



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