



5 Ways to Launch, Grow and Spread IDEAS

Leading international service-learning expert, Cathryn Berger Kaye, was recently asked by a student, "What is more important, to be a follower or a leader?" The answer is that both are equally essential because there are only two ways to change the world-- the first is to *find an idea that has already been launched and spread it wider* and the second is to *launch an idea of your own*. Either way, you are a leader and a follower; the two identities are inseparable. Initiative is what makes you a leader, and allowing yourself to be responsive to the needs and ideas around you makes you a follower.

1. Develop a plan for a business and fund it. It can be run long term or short term, as long as it makes the world better for others in a way that matters to you. Use the RandomKid site to raise the funds to launch your enterprise. Report the results to your supporters through your page. In one example, a random youth is raising the funds for interior window insulation (clear 3M sheets that you cut and apply to windows) and plans to place the product in the homes of senior citizens in his area to keep their heating and cooling bills down and reduce carbon emissions. Another youth funded bendable art supplies (tubes, sticks, etc.), and provides hospitalized youth with creation kits to give them opportunities to build expressive sculptures and reduce stress.

2. Plan an event and spread the idea. One group of youth are planning parties to benefit the training and supplying of service dogs to our military personnel who return home struggling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Service dogs have shown the ability to reduce PTSD symptoms and help these service men and women heal. Each party has an animal theme and is organized by one of the members of the group. That member invites kids from outside the group to attend, and to make a donation to their cause. The parties range from sleepovers, to art parties, to sports parties, to movie parties, and more. At each party, the organizer spends a brief portion of the time talking about why they are having the event, and invites the attendees to plan their own party to benefit the cause. Each party idea is posted on the RandomKid site for others to replicate around the world, and funds are reported/raised through the site.

3. Brand a product and sell it. We have hundreds of thousands of products you can brand. We can provide upfront funds and ship them to you to sell to benefit your project. We have lots of examples of this: One group designed house-shaped key chains that they are selling to refurbish homes in the US gulf post-Katrina (there is still a need almost 6 years later); several groups are selling a reusable water bottle that can be rolled up and put in your pocket to benefit safe water solutions in the world; another group branded an LED solar powered key chain to benefit the purchase of solar lights for Africa; and another group branded their own seed packages with herbs for all-season indoor kitchen gardens. The RandomKid site can be used to promote sales, educate others about your cause, and show your supporters how the funds are being used.

4. Educate/demonstrate something that matters. On your project page you can educate the world. You can invite youth to create sub-pages where they can post videos or share text that provide valuable information. For example, you can create a how-to library for easy ways to live a greener life. Each project posted demonstrates one thing we can do, how to do it, and the savings to our earth and to the individual. Another thing you can do is post interviews of local veterans of war, and tell the stories of your community's heroes. Who are they? What makes them a hero to you? What did you learn from them? Your page becomes a center for learning and exploring.

5. Rally and count collections. Invite people to join in collections that benefit others.

Depending on what you choose to collect, each sub-project posted can report the number of items that group collected, whether it is used eye-glasses, cell phones, cans of food, blankets, coats, petition signatures, etc. As the lead project, you can tally the total of collections reported and post on the main project page, along with updates. One group we worked with had us brand pedometers for them, and then the youth asked people to sponsor them for every mile they ran before and after school up to 26.2 miles. The goal was to run a marathon in 3 weeks. Two goals were accomplished-- the youth gained fitness for themselves, and the funds they raised were used to correct Club Foot for youth in the world (it costs \$260 per procedure). The connection was simple: One ran so the other could run one day, too. Each sub-project can post the number of miles ran.

Have questions? Contact us at: InternationalSchools@randomkid.org