



Other Ways to Use *The Mystery of Love*: Hosting a Kickoff Event

What is a kickoff event?

A kickoff event is a public screening hosted by your organization (or coalition of organizations) to publicly announce the broadcast of *The Mystery of Love* and your organization's involvement with the project. A kickoff event is a great way to raise your group's visibility and, if applicable, get community members involved in your activities. Depending on your organization's mission and goals, you might choose to screen the entire film or segments of it.

Why is the broadcast important when hosting a kickoff event?

The Mystery of Love broadcast is scheduled for December 13, 2006, from 9-11pm EST (check local listings as local dates and times might vary). If your organization plans on holding a kickoff event, it is important to know if and when your local public television station will be airing the film so that you can plan your event with that in mind. To find out about the broadcast in your community, contact Leah Lamb at leah@activevoice.net or 415-553-2841.

- **If there is a broadcast scheduled**, hold your event at least a week prior. This way you can frame your event as a sneak preview screening and create more interest in the community. Further, your public television station will be more likely to participate, because a sneak preview generates buzz and boosts viewers' interest in the broadcast. Also, it's exciting for the community when a local public television station is involved in an event. (See below, working with your public television station.)
- **If there is NO broadcast scheduled**, you can be relatively flexible in choosing the date of your event. However, there is a likelihood that your public television station may decide to broadcast the film if it knows you are doing an event. For this reason it is always a good idea to notify your public television station about your plans.
- **If your event is happening after broadcast**, your local public television station will be much less likely to get involved, but it is still a good idea to let them know of your plans.

Working with your public television station*

Local public television stations vary from city to city. Some are large with resources, and others are small, with more limited capacity. Regardless of your local station's capacity, however, it is always good to have the station involved. A station's involvement could range from getting the word out to its membership, to participating on a panel, to contributing some time for event planning. Although some stations may help by announcing your event on the air, this is not common, so don't assume it!

* Unless noted otherwise, Active Voice will make the initial contact with the station and advise you on how to work with the staff.



Planning your event

Before you hold a screening, you must consider three things:

1) Who is your target audience?

Your approach to choosing your target audience will lay the foundation for your event planning. Do you hope to cast a wide net and reach the community-at-large? Or do you want to keep things focused and reach out to a specific sector or group (e.g., youth, service providers or communities of faith)? Carefully defining your target audience will help you refine your objectives and frame your event.

2) What are your objectives for showing the film to this group?

Think about what you'd like to get out of the event, how you'd like to engage your audience, and what is realistic. Here are a few suggested event objectives:

- Raise awareness about the film and *The Mystery of Love* Project.
- Generate community interest in your organization's work and recruit new participants for your sustained dialogue.
- Heighten your organization's visibility in the community.
- Motivate participants to acknowledge the importance of love in their everyday actions.
- Inspire local programs (e.g., additional dialogue circles or community projects).
- Help local leaders and funders understand the role of love in their community decision-making.

3) How will you frame the event so that your objectives will be met?

Will you choose to focus on one particular issue, or a range of issues? You may simply choose to do a screening with brief comments before and after, but it is best that you engage the audience in a way that enhances your work either directly or indirectly.

Here are some suggestions:

- Panel Discussion: Follow the screening with a panel discussion featuring a range of community-based organizations discussing why love is important in their work.
- Community Dialogue: Have the audience break out into small groups to hold a dialogue on love (remember that this should be a facilitated event!).
- Action Steps: Offer audience members suggestions on how to put love into action.
- Meet and Greet: Plan a reception with refreshments to allow opportunities for networking, either before or after the screening.
- Exhibit Hall: Provide opportunities for local partners to display information about their organizations and relevant programs/services they provide.
- Keynote Speaker: Invite a local leader to speak of the role of love in the community.



- Community Art Gallery: Display art from children in the community, depicting their interpretations of love.
- Poetry Readings: Follow the screening with an open mike reading of love poems from community members.
- Performances: Invite a local choir, playhouse or dance troupe to perform a piece dedicated to love.

Planning Checklist

Once you have defined your target audience, objectives, and framing, begin planning the event. The checklist below is meant for large-scale screenings, but many of the points can be adapted for small screenings as well.

Preliminary planning – 6 weeks prior

- Book the venue and date for your screening.
- Recruit local organizational partners to help broaden your reach.
- Determine speakers, panelists, and moderator (if applicable).

Logistical planning – 3-4 weeks prior

- Create a flyer to publicize your screening (template provided by Active Voice).
- Create an email blast to publicize your event electronically (template provided by Active Voice).
- Contact press. Check out the media section of your community activities kit for more information.
- Confirm the appropriate format for your screening (VHS or DVD).
- Secure food for reception (if applicable).
- Draft agenda and vet with partners.

Final planning – 1 week prior

- Important:** test screen your format version of the film in advance of the event to make sure there aren't any glitches.
- Finalize agenda.
- Make copies of handouts: information about the film, literature from your organization, and, if possible, copies of *The Mystery of Love* Discussion Guide.

At the event itself

- If applicable, announce the broadcast and encourage participants to spread the word.
- Don't forget to make a funding pitch for your organization!
- Have a timekeeper so that panelists/speakers remain within their assigned speaking time.
- At the conclusion of your program, ask participants to sign up to receive updates from your organization.



More *Mystery of Love* Activities

The Mystery of Love Project is committed to spurring a national dialogue on love, and we encourage creative ideas on incorporating the film into multiple settings. In addition to providing ideas on how to leverage the film, this section provides suggestions for additional activities that can enhance your sustained dialogue or be incorporated into your longer-term work.

Film is always a powerful tool in engaging audiences because it puts a human face and a personal story to issues that may seem abstract or hard to grasp. Keeping this in mind, think about ways *The Mystery of Love* can be used to engage audiences:

- As a discussion tool to encourage an honest, thoughtful dialogue about the many different kinds of love in our lives.
- As an educational tool to prompt students to recognize the presence of love in their own lives, in history, in literature, in the arts, and in society.
- As a professional development tool to get staff members to understand the importance of love when interacting with colleagues and clients, and how love defines the work of the organization.
- As an organizing tool to bring together people in your community, organization, faith group, or social club, and engage in action-oriented dialogue about how to address community problems through a lens of love.

Suggested Activities

- **“Reading into Love” Book Club**
Love can be a great discussion theme for a book club that meets regularly. You might choose nonfiction books that explicitly cover the different kinds of love (check out the Suggested Reading section for ideas), or you might select a series of bestsellers and encourage participants to “look for love” as they read. The first meeting can comprise a screening of *The Mystery of Love* followed by a brief discussion about the many different kinds of love in our lives. (Always feel free to screen specific segments from the documentary, instead of the entire program.) Subsequent meetings can focus on love-centered discussions of the reading material. Remember to keep the DVD and discussion guide on-hand so you can refer to specific segments that might be relevant to your discussion!
- **“The Lens of Love” Film Series**
Love has always been a theme covered in the movies, and film can be a fun way to explore different interpretations and representation of love in our lives. You could organize a group to meet once or twice a month over a set amount of time to watch movies and discuss the topic of love. First begin with a screening of *The Mystery of Love*, followed by a discussion using our discussion guide. Then pick additional feature films and pull out love-related themes for discussion. Choose a series of classic films, or choose films from different time periods to review the



changing depictions of love in film. You may also go on regular outings to the movie theater and analyze newly released films through a “lens of love”. Continue to use our discussion guide to reflect on the films you watch.

- **“Experts on Love” Lecture Series**

The commentaries from *The Mystery of Love* demonstrate the breadth of scholarly examination that has gone into the topic of love. Identify experts in your own city or town who can help enlighten members of your community around the many different kinds of love. A local college or university is a great place to start. Check out faculty in departments of Psychology, Sociology, English, Anthropology, Biology, and Art History. Local artists, spiritual leaders, and mentors can also be a great resource. Each lecture of your series can begin with a screening of one of the segments from *The Mystery of Love* followed by live commentary from a local expert. Engage the audience by holding a Q&A afterwards, and having a local library or bookstore provide suggestions for additional reading.

- **“The Language of Love” Community Forum**

Love is universal, but interpretations of different kinds of love vary from culture to culture. Engage your community in a cross-cultural examination of love, where people from all different countries come and discuss how love is expressed in their language and culture. You might be surprised to learn that some languages have different words for different kinds of love, or that the word for “love” can only be used in certain contexts. This conversation can occur as a small group dialogue, or you can engage the larger community by putting together a public event, complete with presentations, music performances, and community art.