The Master Composter program
an organics diversion tool
Green Action Centre

What is the Master Composter program?

Why invest in a MC program?

GA’s experience

What’s required?

Challenges

Measuring / Impact

Maureen

Questions?
Manitoban non-profit hub for greener living.

We encourage practical green solutions for homeowners, workplaces, schools and communities.

Focus is on waste reduction and sustainable transportation.
What is the Master Composter Program?

• Train-the-trainer composting course and volunteer program
• Promotes and enables composting in communities
• 30 hours of required volunteer work
• Network of passionate individuals
  – Events, tours, newsletter
  – Sharing resources
Other Master Composter Programs

• Most are coordinated by municipal governments
  – BC (Okanagan, Comox, Columbia Shuswap regions), Edmonton, New York City, San Diego

• Some by non-profits
  – Green Action Centre
  – Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council

• Program flexibility
  – Master Gardener vs Master Composter
Why invest in a MC program?

- Increase organics diversion
  - Low-carbon foot print (backyard/community) composting
- Great return on investment for municipalities
- Helps to normalize composting
- Creates community
GA’s experience

- Program established in 2004
- Overall program funded by Province
- MC courses funded by various grants communities, City of Winnipeg (and Province)
- 10 courses in Winnipeg
- 5 courses in other Manitoban towns, cities
- High demand, minimal advertising
## Evolution of our program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course details</th>
<th>High cost course</th>
<th>Low cost course</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course length</td>
<td>30 hours (in Winnipeg) 18 hours (outside Winnipeg)</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost for participants</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies for participants</td>
<td>Training manual, compost aerator, pail, compost, book</td>
<td>Training manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Lunches and snacks</td>
<td>Snacks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s required for a successful course?

• Application and reference forms
• Training manual
• Guest speakers
• Food
• Suitable classroom
• Hands-on learning, tours and group discussions
• Access to active compost bins
• Annual course
What’s required for successful program?

• Coordinate and deliver course with paid staff
• Show appreciation and provide rewards
• Have frequent volunteer opportunities available
• Provide tools (power points, publications and props)
• Develop networking opportunities
  – Events/additional training/tours
Type of volunteer activities

- Help friends, neighbours with composting
- Start workplace, school, community composting
- Staff booth at community events (ex. compost bin sale)
- Deliver presentations
- Write articles
- Etc.
**What is tracked by MCs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th># of hours</th>
<th># of people reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Program statistics (10 year period)

- Over 180 MCs trained since 2004
- 68 MCs are considered active volunteers
- Over 6000 volunteer hours recorded
- Average of 34 hours volunteered per MC
- 47% of MCs complete their required hours
Measuring impact of a Master Composter

- One household can divert 0.45 tonnes/year when composting
- Cost of collection and processing is $150$/tonne

- Yearly cost of training and coordinating one MC is $450.
- If a MC completes its 30 hours by training 10 households to successfully compost....

- Municipal savings is about $700/yr
- In 10 years, savings of $7000 if those households continue composting
Challenges

- Lack of studies on the impact of Master Composter Programs to justify funding
- Funding cuts
- Some never volunteer
- Volunteers not reporting their hours
- Seasonal limitations
Exceptional volunteer: Maureen

• Class of 2007
• Volunteered over 250 hours
• Started composting program at workplace and church
• Wrote articles, delivered presentations, staffed booths,
  ... you name it!
Conclusion: MC program is ...

- A cost-effective, low-carbon footprint
- An excellent approach to organics diversion
- Flexible, can be adapted as needed
- Establishes a network of dedicated and passionate individuals
Questions?

Thank you!