

Third Actor Plans Social Media “Flash Mob”

By Patty Werner

When Third Act Colorado (TACO) began developing our plans for Sun Day, I was specifically looking for an environmental justice issue on which to focus. It was easy to find. In our own Cancer Alley north of Denver, the Suncor oil refineries have been poisoning the South Platte River and residents of Commerce City for decades.

I contacted Amy Brooks of GreenFaith and Ean Tafoya of Green Latinos and asked if they might be interested in a simple idea. Could we find some EV owners to carry climate activists, photographers, and social media users to a pre-determined location near the refineries on the weekend of September 21 for a “flash mob” photo opportunity and a couple of short speeches about Suncor? There would be no need for permits or expense, because we would be in and out in less than a half-hour. They loved the idea.

A fellow Third Actor who is working on a 2026 Ballot Initiative called “Just Compensation for the Victims of Suncor” is eager to join us and spread the word through his many connections. Green Latinos offered environmental justice advocates to speak and to table at our Sun Day Events. GreenFaith said they could reach other faith communities across Colorado and share our events and photos through social media.

I also connected with the Green Team of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Denver, whose members include the president of New Energy Colorado. Their church has recently completed a full energy renovation resulting in a nearly net-zero building. They have just come on board for Sun Day.

We have started meeting weekly to gather new partners. We are planning an art build in August to create our signs, slogans and banners. Ideas and possibilities are growing faster than we can keep up.

GreenFaith realized that the “flash mob” idea could be applied to other sites across the country. They have a staff person living in Louisiana’s Cancer Alley who is specifically dedicated to racial and environmental justice issues in the Gulf region. They are looking at conducting similar EV flashmobs for environmental justice in the deep South.

We realized that EV owners could bring more attention to our Sun Day events by flying giant yellow Sun Day flags on our highways and streets throughout the week prior to Sun Day. In addition to our stop at Suncor, we are planning to visit some climate-friendly congregations and solar businesses that support the Sun Day vision.

Our recently retired chief meteorologist from Denver Channel 7 News, Mike Nelson, has volunteered to speak at our TACO General Meeting on September 11, as well as our flagship Sun Day event in Denver on

September 21. He is working on a super-grid project to develop a high-voltage, underground,



transmission wire system to deliver electricity generated by renewable energy to the whole nation. We hope to connect Mike with Bill McKibben when Bill comes to Colorado for his book tour.

Finding solutions for the climate crisis is something we can only do with combined effort, and faith communities connected with Third Act Faith are perfectly situated to have a major impact.

About Patty Werner

In her First Act, Patty Werner was a student at University of Vermont, Cornell University, and University of Colorado Boulder. Her Second Act involved teaching for 20 years, including two years as an English teacher in Eastern Europe. After a Third Act as a wife and mother of two, Patty is busy in her Fourth Act as an environmental activist, helping to launch TACO and being involved with Third Act Faith and Educators.