Landing the Meeting: Three Sample Request Letters

*These examples have been adapted from Kathleen Bennett’s examples in “The Art of the Ask.” These materials are copyrighted, and have been uploaded to Google Docs with special permission from Kathleen Bennett.*

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## Email Example (Personal) *Geared towards someone you know, who is familiar with Canopy*

Dear NAME,

*(Personal greeting and comments)* I hope you are enjoying your new job! It has been way too long since we’ve been able to meet for lunch. *(Your connection to Canopy)* As you know, I joined the Canopy board last year. It’s been a lot of fun, and we have some exciting projects in the works.

*(Introduce the case)* The biggest news is that Canopy has a chance to plant trees and expand education programs into new areas of the Mid-Peninsula. Following successful school tree plantings in East Palo Alto, the school districts in Redwood City and Mountain View have invited Canopy to participate in master facilities planning and to plant trees at low-income schools in their districts. Additionally, the school district in East Palo Alto has invited Canopy back to continue and expand programs there.

These invitations give Canopy a pivotal opportunity to grow the urban forest in new areas of the Mid-Peninsula, and bring the life-giving benefits of trees to the communities that need them the most.

To make this vision a reality, Canopy has launched *Growing the Canopy*, a campaign to raise $600,000 in individual gifts. This support will enable Canopy to:

* Plant 1,000 new trees, providing greenery where people need it the most
* Steward each young trees for 5 years to ensure they grow to their full potential;
* Expand education programs, engaging youth as stewards and leaders in their communities.

*(Invitation)* I would love to invite you to lunch or coffee sometime soon to discuss this new project further.  Is there a day in the coming weeks that works best for you?  Please let me know.

Thank you so much!

YOUR NAME

Phone number

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***Note:*** *In any follow-up email, ask if you can send them the campaign materials. Mail or email them the donor packet to review. Also bring a copy with you to the meeting, of course!*

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## Letter Example 1 (Personal) *Geared towards someone you know, who is familiar with Canopy*

Dear NAME,

*(Personal greeting and comments)* I hope this letter finds Bill and your girls well and happy. I’m sure you are finding as I am that time flies; Jane will be leaving for college in the fall. I remember when our kids were toddlers at nursery school together!

*(Introduce the case)* Since we are both friends of Canopy, I’m eager to share with you some exciting news: Canopy has been invited to plant trees and expand our education programs into new areas of East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Mountain View. School Districts in each of these cities are in the midst of master facilities planning. They have invited Canopy to participate, and to plant trees at low-income schools in their districts.

These invitations open the door to profound urban greening and hands-on nature education where they are needed the most. You probably know the critical role of trees in improving public health and environmental quality. I also learned recently that trees and greenery on school campuses actually improves student academic performance. **We believe that every child deserves access to trees and nature, and the life-giving benefits they bring.**

Since its founding 19 years ago, Canopy has planted nearly 4,000 trees in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and east Menlo Park. We have achieved an unprecedented 96% survival rate by giving young trees the care they need to mature and thrive. We have served as educators and advocates, helping thousands of students and residents to understand, steward and cherish trees.

Now we are poised to grow the Mid-Peninsula urban forest in areas where it is sorely needed. Expanding our programs into these new communities will cost about $1.2 million. Canopy’s current funding sources cover half of that. To close the gap, Canopy has launched *Growing the Canopy,* a campaign to raise the remaining $600,000 and enable us to:

* Plant 1,000 new trees where children need them the most;
* Steward each young trees for 5 years to ensure they grow to their full potential;
* Engage hundreds of children and teens as stewards of trees and nature in their community.

*(Invitation)* Would you consider joining me in support of *Growing the Canopy*? I will follow-up with a phone call in a few days to answer any questions and talk to you more about this campaign. I hope you will partner with us to promote kids’ access to nature, enhance our region’s quality of life, and grow healthy trees and healthy communities throughout the Mid-Peninsula.

Warm regards,

YOUR NAME

Phone number

Email

## Letter Template 2 (General) *Geared towards a person you do not know personally*

Dear NAME,

Good News!  Because of Canopy’s long-standing expertise in planting urban trees, engaging communities, and educating children, **Canopy has been invited to expand our work in low-income schools and neighborhoods in East Palo Alto, and extend our tree planting into schools in Redwood City and Mountain View.**

Planting trees creates greener communities, counteracts climate change, and even improves kids’ academic performance in schools transformed from bare ground into lush green campuses.

Since our founding 19 years ago, Canopy has brought the life-giving benefits of trees to thousands of residents in Palo Alto and nearby communities. We have planted nearly 4,000 trees in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and east Menlo Park. We have achieved an unprecedented 96% tree survival rate by giving young trees the care they need to mature and thrive. We have served as educators and advocates, teaching thousands of students and residents to understand, steward and cherish trees.

Now we are poised to grow the Mid-Peninsula urban forest in schools and neighborhoods where people most need trees. To accept the invitations from East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Mountain View to plant trees and teach kids, we will need  $1.2 million. Our current funding covers about half. To close the gap, Canopy is launching a $600,000 campaign called *Growing the Canopy* so that we can:

* Plant 1,000 new trees where children need them the most.
* Care for 2,000 young trees for 5 years to ensure they grow to their full potential.
* Engage hundreds of children and teens as stewards of trees and nature in their community.

Canopy envisions a day when every resident of the Mid-Peninsula can step outside to walk, play, and thrive under the shade of healthy trees. We invite you to join us as we make this vision a reality. I will follow up with a phone call in the next few days to talk to you more about this important campaign.

Warm regards,

YOUR NAME

Phone number

email