



Preventing Homelessness, Ending Hunger

CANSTRUCTION[®] MADISON Tips for Teams

MOM will periodically update these tips. Please submit your ideas for additions to canstructionmadison@momhelps.org.

1. **Think outside the can!** Look outside the can to find colors that pop! It's easy to spot awesome colors on the front of cans. But don't overlook the back, top and bottom. You'll be surprised what you'll find!
2. **Have fun!** Sure, the purpose of the event is very serious – to collect food and raise funds to prevent homelessness and end hunger in our community. But use this opportunity to let your creative juices flow, to build something with a team of old friends (and new ones) and to show off your undiscovered CANSTRUCTING talents.
3. **Be creative!** We choose each year's theme hoping to inspire each of our teams to dream up unique and innovative ideas. So far, we've succeeded! Sometimes it helps to see what other teams have done. We suggest Googling "Canstruction images" and checking out some of the beautiful and really creative structures built in the past by teams from the around the world. If you still need more inspiration after looking at other teams' structures, then give us a call and we'll brainstorm together.
4. **Ask for help!** We want this event to be a positive experience for everyone involved. If you're unsure about anything, need some guidance or just want to chat about your ideas, call us!
5. **Go beyond the can!** Yes, the cans (and other can-like food items) are the most important part of every structure. But don't forget you can use other materials besides cans to help give your structure...well, structure! Here are some ideas:
 - a. Cardboard or foam core placed between the layers of cans will create a stable structure. Cardboard can be purchased from uline.com or other sources.
 - b. Fishing line is great for holding canned goods together. Technically, you can use tape, but we don't encourage that because tape tends to tear the labels off the cans during DeCanstruction. That's a problem because all food is destined for our food pantry, and "mystery" cans aren't the nicest product to offer to our clients.

6. **Plan ahead!** Think about your team's project from beginning to end.
 - a. What will the design be? Try using software like the free personal version of [SketchUp](#) to create a 3D model of your design.
 - b. Develop a plan for managing all your building materials – both food and non-food items – before and after build day. Volunteers will DeCanstruct the structures, but your team will need to claim any non-food items that you'd like to use again. Who will pick up those items, and when?
 - c. Consider a pre-build of your structure before the actual build out. Think of the pre-build as being like a dress rehearsal for a play. Would you put on a play without having a dress rehearsal? Maybe, but the show would probably run more smoothly if you took the time to make sure the costumes fit, the staging works and everyone knows their lines.

7. **Be a savvy shopper!** Once you know what items you want to include in your structure, watch for sales at local grocery stores and stock up. If you're collecting cans at your workplace, let your co-workers know about the sale, too – or just ask them for a donation and let your team members do the bargain hunting.

Finally, for teams that are interested in awards...

8. **Strategize!** Going for People's Choice? Reach out to the people to encourage them to vote for you! Hoping to win the "Most Cans" award? Try filling the space inside your structure with cans (and boxes) to maximize the number of items. Got your sights on the coveted Most Nutritious Meals Award? Maximize the number of "Superior" nutritional value meals by evenly distributing the weight of the cans in your structure among the four food groups. This works because the "Superior" nutritional value earns a weight of 10 compared to "Good" (5) and "Fair" (1) nutritional values.