



FAQ About The Free Pass Project (Download PDF of FAQs)

"What is this public art project?"

The Free Pass Project is an interactive, person to person, community art exercise. You give, receive, find or leave a handmade Free Pass token, and use it as a way to extend understanding, compassion, temporary respite or resolution for yourself, someone you know, or a complete stranger.

The second part is working towards gathering people's stories and instances of how, why or where a free pass. Get one, pass it on and share your story... through this website, the Facebook page, ([facebook/myfreepass](https://facebook.com/myfreepass)) or to Free Pass,

Posting might include a picture or story of where you randomly left, or who you gave a Free Pass to. Or you may be a recipient, or finder of a Free Pass token. On the back of each token is a tracking number. Hopefully, overtime, we'll be able to connect multiple stories and travels involved with a token.

By documenting a community narrative we may come to find the sort of stresses and generosity we share. We can also learn about unique challenges for people and keep learning. As this develops I hope there is interactivity via Twitter and the website where participants can positively engage with a complete stranger in compassion, humor and creative participation in community.

Many, many, Free Pass stories are not documented. People have kept Free Passes, or choose not to publicly share the meaning and exchange of a Free Pass token. That is perfect, too.

"What is up with Free Pass tokens?"

Free Pass tokens are handmade/assembled as part of the art, and goodwill of this art. Each one is slightly unique as a little, funky, treasure to share and pass from one person to the next.

The base object is a repurposed, vintage, poker chip. They are called 'Harvite' or 'Stackwell' chips. Paper is applied with a water soluble adhesive, and an outer coating for longevity as tokens are in circulation. Free Pass tokens do not harm the environment - reusing plastic is a good thing.

Do they survive in the wash? No. Check your pockets and take good care of your Free Pass token. Free Pass tokens are...free, of course! If you'd like to contribute to the ongoing development and administration of this community art, that is welcome and appreciated.

"Where do I get Free Pass tokens?"

Currently, if you are in Rhode Island, you can follow the Facebook page (facebook.com/myfreepass), Twitter ([@FreePassStory](https://twitter.com/FreePassStory)) for leads where token jars have been placed.

You can also contact the Free Pass project about getting some Free Pass tokens for you to initiate this creative goodwill and understanding in your community.

If you live outside of Rhode Island, contact me through the site or the Facebook page. (www.facebook.com/myfreepass) I'd love to get some more Free Pass tokens out there.

"Why would I do this?"

In short, because it makes you and someone else feel a little better about their day. (Trust me!) A free pass token is simply an object to prompt and spark the opportunity to communicate about a small shared experience. These connections of understanding are small moments, that over the long term build a positive community.

For example, if you're in line at the store texting or chatting that you forgot to get apples, you are missing out on a moment to notice the people around you, and how they're doing. There might be a stressed out parent with a tired toddler, or a cashier who just dealt with a crabby customer, or you yourself might have some small foible. Step out of your comfort zone, and hand them a free pass. More personally you might ask your partner, a friend or your boss for a free pass from an interaction or expectation - have a free pass token on hand and extend it for your own need.

This is a really, really good article on the benefits of 'unstucking' ourselves from the small risk of connection. It is a helpful 90 second read for some context of this public art.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/26/opinion/sunday/hello-stranger.html>

Even randomly dropping a free pass token in a shop, or on the street, makes two people feel better. You've engaged in a small adventure and something out of the ordinary in your day. The same will be true for the person who finds it. The smallest event can distract someone from a worry.

"How do I go about this?"

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to free pass. Be brave. Trust the reward of something that might feel like a social risk.

During the course of the Project participants to date have made 'free pass' a verb. So things like, "I free passed a waiter", or "I went free passing today" have shown up on the Facebook page.
www.facebook.com/myfreepass.

Frequently a free pass opportunity just starts with a simple question, or statement, and you take it from there. You might ask someone generally if they have heard the expression, or have the understanding, of the phrase, 'free pass'. Most people recognize it as an opportunity for grace and respite. You are then able to simply say, and offer, an actual object as a free pass! The score card and feedback to date is 90% positive in that two people have been 'seen'/acknowledged through creative engagement.

In my own randomly 'free passing' of approximately 40 strangers only two people have absolutely showed no interest. Some don't 'get' the concept, but still say, 'thanks for my free pass', some just have curiosity and wander away, and others lock right in and simply beam.

Other people keep a free pass token or two in their pocket. When a situation arises they hand over a free pass. This has happened with a distracted waiter, in gratitude to a friend for support, and in a boyfriend dispute to set aside until later. Some folks simply keep them in their pocket or on a desk for their own personal reminder they are doing the best they can.

For your own mindfulness, curiosity and engagement, you can observe a person who finds and picks up a random token drop you just did. PASS IT ON!

You can also contact me through the page with any question or comment about the Free Pass Project.

"Why is the Free Pass Project called a project?"

The original, and still true, reason is that all of us are collaborators on this creative, community, adventure. It is an active and fluid, potentially long term, social practice experiment. For folks who are participating, it is your art project.

Also, there are many avenues and ways to collaborate, now, and in the future. Media clips and images can be uploaded or sent to the page. Some photos to date are on the Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/myfreepass

"Where did the Free Pass Project start?"

I am the lead artist, and am based in New England. The entire idea of this as a community art project, and the first draft launch, happened in about a week in January of 2014. During the early part of the year hundreds of Free Pass tokens were sent out, for free, of course. They are in at least 14 states, to date.

Lots of documentation and information are on the Facebook page. Take some time to scroll through Posts to Page, and the page feed, to see what has happened so far.

As the lead artist I am still involved in making Free Pass tokens, distributing them, participating as a 'free passer', and the social media participation. I'm also working on collaborations with community organizations and other artists. And, of course, always researching and seeking funding for this art!

I hope you have fun, and keep in touch.

Rachel