



Gatherings to Galas

Using Special Events to Raise Money...or not?

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Berkshire Natural Resources Council

- Founded in 1967
- Serves Berkshire County (32 towns)
- 50 reserves, 60+ miles of trails
- 29,915 acres conserved



Conserving and caring for Berkshire lands, waters, and wildlife, and connecting people with nature for a more vibrant, shared future.

Today's Plan

- Why do special events?
- What aren't they good for?
- What kinds of events?
- How do you plan them?
- The bottom line

A little about you:

- What role do you play in your org? ED? Development? Program? Other?
- How many paid staff do you have?
- How many have dedicated development staff? (more than 1?)
- How many have volunteers or board members who are interested in events?
- Does your organization do galas already?

From Executive Director Happy Hour

- "I hate fundraising events with the passion of a thousand burning suns."
- "If everyone's time is being donated, it's much easier to get money out of it."
- "The best fundraiser I have been to yet was an adult education organization raising money for a new kitchen and attendees got to take mini classes like bartending, knife skills, tapas, etc. Directly connected to the work."

NECC's
7th annual
**Chef &
Farmer
Brunch**



When Considering an Event

- Why are you doing it?
- How will you measure success?
- What's the opportunity cost?
- Who is in charge of making it happen? Who is helping? Who is the decisionmaker?
- What will the experience be like for the attendees?
- What kind of event works for us?
- Are you in a "gala" kind of community?

Clarifying your "why"

- Donor engagement (vs raising money)
- Engage board members and volunteers, train in fundraising
- Visibility
- Publicity
- Growing your donor base
- Thank people with a party
- Announce or celebrate a campaign, building, new trail, acquisition or program
- Honor someone
- Bring supporters together to create energy and excitement

Kinds of events...

- Walks
- Educational programs
- House parties
- "A-thon" Events
- Concerts
- Trail or road race
- Movie Screenings
- ... or Galas (benefit, celebration, party...)

"The best event is one someone else plans for you, and you just show up!"

But in case you don't have that opportunity...

What Do You Need?

- Ideally, volunteers who want to help, and/or take charge of the event.
- Funds available to underwrite expenses – a donor, underwriter, business sponsors, or existing reserve funds (if it's a big event)
- A clear idea of who you want to attend
- A master task list and timeline
- A budget

The Basics of Any Event

- Timing - enough time to plan, time of year, other events in your community
- Who will get sponsors? What can you offer them?
- Location (Is it accessible? Does it have bathroom facilities? Does it have sufficient parking?)
- Food and drink (who's procuring? Who's serving?)
- Ticket prices? Free? Comps?
- Paying for speakers or honorees' expenses?

And for a Gala...

- Host committee
- Tables
- Auction – silent and/or live? soliciting items, staging them, auctioneer? Attendants? Collecting the money. Distribution of items afterwards.
- Paddle raise
- Entertainment (live musicians? A deejay? dancing?) What works for your crowd?

All of the above can be mediocre as long as you succeed at the last one:
follow-up with attendees.

Are we ready for a Gala?

...Or should we start smaller?

- Look at revenue and expenses,
- How many people might come,
- What's the likely net
- vs how much work goes into it.

Are there other ways you can accomplish the goals you've established without throwing a huge event?

Estimating Revenue..

- Sponsorships
- Tables
- Individual tickets (account for comps and freebies)
- Auction
- Paddle raise
- Sales (bar, swag)
- Vendors (food trucks)

Expenses

- Staff time
- Consultants – event planner, auctioneer, marketing
- Design, printing and postage
- Caterer – food, servers
- Music
- Rentals / Venue
- Parking attendant or van?
- Party supplies
- Décor (flowers)
- Photographer...

Sample Income and Expense Budget

Revenue	Each	#	Total	# of attendees	Expense	Amt	staff time:	hourly	x hours	total	
				155	Total Guests						
Sponsorships				124	x80% (likely attendance)	Sponsor benefits	\$ 1,000	Assistant:	\$ 25	\$ 500	\$12,500
Underwriter	\$ 5,000	1	\$ 5,000		Staff time/fringe	see box	Dev dir	\$ 65	\$ 500	\$32,500	
Supporter	\$ 2,000	3	\$ 6,000		Event planner	\$ 2,500	another person	\$ 30	\$ 250	\$ 7,500	
Sponsor	\$ 500	5	\$ 2,500		Musicians	\$ 1,400	Total staff time			\$52,500	
Ticket sales (individual)					Professional auctioneer	\$ 2,000	fringe @.3			\$15,750	
Gold	\$ 250	10	\$ 2,500	10	Photographer	\$ 750	TOTAL for budget			\$68,250	
Silver	\$ 150	10	\$ 1,500	10	Venue Rental*	\$ 2,500	Assumes avg 10 hours a week for a year				
Bronze	\$ 100	80	\$ 8,000	80	Supplies/Equip /decor	\$2,000					
Tables (10 people each)					Food / service	\$12,400	\$100 pp x likely attendance				
Regular	\$ 1,500	2	\$ 3,000	20	Volunteer Expenses	\$500					
Platinum	\$ 2,500	2	\$ 5,000	20	Rentals (tents etc)	\$13,850	*Venue rental could include cost of cleaning or building costs; if not, include those in the budget				
[Comp Tickets for sponsors, others]				15	Postage and Shipping	\$400					
					Printing	\$1,000					
Silent Auction			\$ 2,500		Advertising	\$600					
Paddle Raise			\$ 40,000	*Not including board gifts	Other event costs	\$1,000					
Merch			\$ 75		Graphic Design/signs	\$500					
Beer/wine sales			\$ -	depending on event	Insurance/permits	\$800					
Program advertising			\$ 1,200	Can create separate sheets	Transportation (van)	\$500					
Vendors			\$ 5,000	to calc these in detail	Online transaction fees	\$750					
Other			\$ -		Total Expenses	\$ 44,450					
TOTAL REVENUE			\$ 82,275		Net Revenue	\$37,825	n/i staff time				

A word about auctions and paddle-raises

Live auctions are boring!

Silent auctions give people something to do during cocktail hour, but ...

The right items at the right prices for your people

Why do a paddle-raise?

- It's fast and fun
- It's democratic
- You can add some theater to it



Dos and Don'ts – a highly personal list

DO

- Make your event as mission-centric as you can.
- Make it fun!
- Use your best speaker (even if it's not your ED or board chair)
- Tell stories (but not too many)
- Capture the names and contact information of attendees
- Make a plan for following up with attendees

Dos and Don'ts

DON'T

- Just talk to each other
- Hire somebody's cousin who has done an auction before to be the auctioneer – hire a professional
- Show the video AFTER the auction!
- Plan a program that speaks only to the insiders
- Have a program longer than 30-40 minutes (20 if they're standing)

What makes an event a success?

A fun party is great, but:

- Did people leave feeling more connected to and knowledgeable about your mission and your work?
- Did you leave knowing your donors better, with plans to follow up with them?
- Did people join? Give again later?

What does good follow-up look like?

- Thank you notes and calls
- Add to mailing list
- Invite on a walk
- Invitations to the next event
- Research new attendees for giving capacity and interests
 - Ask the person who brought them
 - Use a prospect research database like iWave or DonorSearch (consultants can do a one-time scan for you)
 - Leading to customized cultivation

Bottom Line:

Be real about ...

...how much work it is

...who's going to do it

...who's going to pay for it

...and the opportunity cost.

(But my board members won't do individual fundraising! They only want to throw parties!)

Then use the party as an opportunity to train them in fundraising.

NECC's 7th annual Chef & Farmer Brunch



Sunday, July 30
11am-2pm

at
Silo Ridge
Field Club
Amenia, NY

*Spectacular views,
live music, auction, meet
the farmer tent, and
more*

Tickets available at
www.neccmillerton.org

Honoring
The Harney Family
with the
NECC
Community
Service
Award

to benefit the
North East Community Center





Two Great Articles



**Ideas to Improve Your Fundraising
Events (and 7 Reasons Not to Do Them)**

**David Allen, Development for
Conservation**



The Correct Use of Special Events

Kim Klein, Nonprofit Quarterly

Questions / Discussion





Thank you!