



Online, Silent, and Live Auction/Gala/Parents' Night Out

Overall

- Team – surround yourself with people who have complementary skill sets. Listen to their ideas and always acknowledge and appreciate their time and energy
- Build a relationship with the front office and thank them often!
- Manage expenses – Create an event budget to manage expenses. Remember, every expense is money that could go to the PTO!
- Marketing - Remind people often, early, and on major milestones (Tickets on sale, ticket sale increase, online auction, live event night, etc)
- Details and logistics – confirm, communicate, and ask for help
- Who Do You Know –increase donations by being thoughtful of who is in the community and where people frequent (restaurants, stores, kid activities/classes, etc). Ask your community
- Theme – casual or formal – what is the tone? Western, Hawaiian, College, or No theme?
- Be Creative and flexible – listen to ideas and try different things
- Start Early – If you start early, you have more time to correct, review and execute
- Be welcoming and inclusive – no one wants to attend or participate if they feel it's a clique

By 8-10 Months Out

- Plan a brainstorming and planning meeting to discuss committee roles, theme, ideas for games and donations/packages
- Confirm Budget including vendors (Auctioneer, food, DJ, venue, software, etc.)
- Book a venue and date
 - Make sure to check school/district and PTO calendars
 - Friday nights might be easier and less expensive to book a venue, auctioneer, and other vendors
- Select and confirm Auction Software

- The right software can help track and manage donation requests so every year you have a history and a starting point
- Set up a donations email and Google Drive (or central online storage) for contracts, letters, W-9, Sponsors, etc.
- Draft, finalize/signed donation letter and donation form
 - Order duplicate donation forms so one copy acts as a receipt (CCSD Printing)
 - Print copies of donation letters
 - Set donation deadline around 3-4 weeks prior to your event
 - Confirm current number students, families, and any recognitions your school has received
 - Include a donation email to receive electronic donations
 - Create folder in the school office and confirm with office staff about receipt of donations
- Scan signed donation letter, donation form, and PTO W-9 which is often requested for online forms for email and online form requests
- Recruit a team of volunteers to help with donations/sponsorships, event logistics, graphic design, and data entry / software
 - Match peoples' skills to role. Someone who works in sales/recruiting is great to ask to help solicit donations or someone who is technical (accounting, finance, IT) are great people to ask to help with donation entry and software management
 - If working with a graphic designer, confirm what format to request sponsor logos
- Once the event is set up, add to PTO calendar and let your community know the date
- Set up any child care options for the event (Kids Party at an Athletic Club)

By 6+ Months Out

- Book any vendors you need for event (venue, auctioneer, DJ, etc)
 - Any contracts MUST be signed by your Principal so give them plenty of time
- Start requesting donations
 - Ask all Executive BOD to get at least XYZ donations
 - Ask Restaurant/Spirit Night Chair to email their contacts for donations
 - Ask other PTO or school vendors like after school care, clubs, or Run for Funds
 - Ask fellow parents if they mind taking forms/letters and requesting donations at places they frequent like restaurants, kid activities, or businesses
 - Send home a letter to families asking for donations, sponsorships, and participation in the event
 - Request donations from any Scientific Districts (Zoo, Denver Performing Arts, Symphony, etc)
 - Fill out <https://www.donationmatch.com/> in case you get a few items
 - Request early like Disney Land/Great Wolf Lodge, Sports Teams (college and professional), staycations and travel items
 - Fill out any form you can find online!
 - If you can't find a form, try emailing a request to the General Manager, Community Relations, Marketing, Catering contacts, or general information request
 - Google "donations request" or "donation form"
 - Look at websites of businesses in your area
 - Read online idea lists for donation ideas

- Visit in person local restaurants or businesses for donations
- If you explain that your community or you personally are a potential/current customer, this can increase your chances of receiving a donation
- Enter donations, logo, and take photos as they are received and then have someone else double check the entry in the system especially expiration dates, exceptions for redemption, and location
- Send out 'Save the Date' with event date, theme, and when tickets will go on sale (Postcards, flyers, email newsletter, PTO Facebook)

2-4+ Months Out

- Visit local businesses in person to ask for donations
- Revisit packages for event and gaps of items across the board
- Follow up, Follow up, Follow up to get more donations
- Enter in donation, logo and take photos as they arrive and have another person double check them
- Print Posters about Event post around school with Date, Venue, Ticket price, Requests for Sponsorship

1 Month+ Out

- Watch Ticket sales, and make sure your community knows auction is coming. PTO newsletters, PTO FB, Posters, bracelets on kids, and Flyers home. Remind everyone!!
- Highlight different donated items or group of items in PTO newsletter, and PTO Facebook
- Reach out to new families and new Kindergarten families explaining the event
- Donations
 - Do a final check of all physical items
 - Send follow ups for items that you were expecting that didn't come in by deadline
 - Make sure certificates are printed for donations that don't have an item
 - Put labels on all envelopes
 - Confirm which items are going in live/silent/online or being used for prizes at event
 - Determine if there is a need for any final donations to round out packages, prizes, etc.
- Have your Auction preview go Live as soon as you can so people can see online, silent and live plus people will notice mistakes.
- Draft and finalize event program and timeline including closing times for auction
- Finalize Sponsors/logos and print posters, table recognition, and programs
 - Recommend having donation deadline, and sponsor deadline the same date
- Finalize class baskets (purchase remaining items, assemble into baskets)
- Assemble other baskets of donated items that will be at the event
 - Great way to delegate! Ask creative parents to put together in their homes!
- Confirm and enter all teacher/staff experiences, class experiences, class art projects, parties, performance seats, and items donated by school (parking spots, pull fire alarm)
- Set meetings and/or confirm with vendors for the event Auctioneer, Event Management, and Venue related aspects
- Do a walk thru at the event site with all event vendors, figure out lay out of silent auction items, and finalize decorations

- Finalize any tear jerker video, slideshow, etc.
- Confirm Online Auction Item pick up

1 -2 Weeks Out

- Send out preview list of items in online, silent and live in backpacks
- Watch ticket sales, and send email from PTO reminding community to buy tickets the day before the ticket prices go up
- Tickets on sale, Online start /end, and Day of event, make posters for class doors/pickup line, send emails, post of FB& PTO website with these milestones
- Make sure you have printed anything you need for event (bid Sheets, bid numbers, programs, sponsor recognition, decorations, signs at event)
- Confirm final logistics, any vendors, your team and their roles

Live Auction Items

- 5-10 Live Items is a good goal including Paddle Raise and Heads & Tails. Live portion should be short and effective
- Professional Auctioneer can help guide you on item ideas and lead Heads & Tail, Paddle Raise etc
- Solicit items that have broad appeal and might not have a set value because it has an intangible value for your group
- Any items that have limited appeal (like 10% might have a need or want) to your group or have a set value, put in silent or online

Silent Auction Items

- Mixture of tangible items, travel, baskets, tickets, consignment memorabilia. Take in consideration your space and items
- Group and organize by tables using different colors for each table and group similar items
- Make sure flow forces people to walk through silent auction. Do not do a U or in corners
- Clipboards, pens, plastic stands make it feel organized and inviting

Online Auction Items

- People like and are in the habit of shopping online
- People donating like the exposure to the whole population of the school community
- Less logistics than an event
- Less costs than an event
- Great way to start an auction is online and then build every year

Ideas for Other Items

- Teacher Treasures- student wins an experience with a teacher
- Class Experiences- class can bring a stuffed animal, crazy socks, wear PJS, extra recess, watch a movie with the Principal, or whatever!
- Class Baskets- Can use Cheddar up to collect money from parents and then break it up K&1, 2&3, and 4&5. Popular themes are Lego, American Girl, Nerf
 - It can be an issue to ask for donated items like Legos because you could receive lots of smaller sets
 - Could create a wish a list on Amazon

- Consignment- memorabilia can help round out items at auction and something to be considered
- School Items- Parking spot, Principal for a day, Special Teacher for a Day, Parking Spot, Name on Marquee, Pull the Fire Alarm, etc
- Parties- Parent sponsored events and proceeds go to PTO like Poker Nights, Moms Night Out, Bike Pub Crawl, Grade level experiences, etc
 - Make sure they are within a few months of event, other wise complications with accounting and registration
- Games- Heads & Tails, Ring Toss, etc

Post Event

- Have a post event meeting to talk about went well, what didn't and ideas for next year
- Make sure to celebrate!
- Say thank you and recognize the volunteers