

FRAXA EVENT GUIDE

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Welcome!

Fund raising is simple in design and concept, but it is very hard work! It is planning, executing, and assessing. It is paying attention to detail. It is knowing your organization and what it needs. It is knowing who has the money, and how much they can give.

Types of Fundraisers

There are a wide variety of ways to raise funds; we will survey a few of our favorites to get you inspired. Choosing the fundraising activity that's right for you will depend on several factors. Consider: How much time do you have to dedicate to planning? How much effort are you willing to expend? How many volunteers are you able to recruit to assist you? How much money do you have to cover up-front costs?

The Gala

A well planned Gala is a lavish affair, providing guests with a memorable evening of great food, outstanding entertainment and an opportunity to mingle with old friends and make new acquaintances. A gala can generate a significant amount of revenue, but also requires a great deal of effort.

A gala has three main components: the cocktail hour, where guest meet and mingle, the dinner, where guest hear a speech and/or presentation by a knowledgeable individual, and lastly, the entertainment, typically a band, where guests can again mingle and dance.

A large gala requires significant dedication of time and energy. Hopefully you will have at least a couple of assistants on whom you can rely, as there are many details to consider, from decorations to seating assignments, from audio visual requirements to mailing of the invitations and tracking the RSVP's.

A Lunch

A smaller and less formal alternative to the Gala, a lunch is a great option if you have less time and/or resources to dedicate to planning. A lunch offers greater flexibility when it comes to venue, menu, a successful event can be put together in as little as 2-3 months. Venues for lunches include: hotel ballrooms, restaurants, private homes, country clubs and meeting halls, and virtually anywhere you can serve a meal to a large group.

Sports Tournament / Walks / Runs

From baseball to bowling, the possibilities are endless! Sporting events are an increasingly popular way to raise funds, and a great way to include the entire family in the festivities. An endless opportunity to get creative, your event can be a simple evening event at the local bowling alley, or a weekend extravaganza complete with a BBQ, awards ceremony and entertainment.

Sales Events (bake sales, yard sales, plant sales)

Get everyone involved in this event with the good old fashioned sale event! This is a great way to raise funds at a community fair or block party. Very informal, this type of event requires a high energy individual to generate excitement and enthusiasm. Promotion is key to the success of this event.

Retail partnership

More and more restaurants are offering not-for-profits and local clubs the opportunity to "host" event nights, with part of the evening proceeds going to the organization. Restaurants are generally eager to participate on "slow" nights, when your promotion will generate more business than they would typically receive. Everyone, from national restaurant chains to the local pizza parlor, is participating.

Letter Writing Campaign

The most successful donation request letters are sincere and heartfelt. They are upbeat and personal, they thank previous donors and instill a sense of urgency to react, and most importantly, they make the recipients feel needed and appreciated.

Key elements include:

1. Ensure your mailing list is up to date! Don't waste stamps on old addresses.
2. If at all possible, have volunteers hand address the envelopes. This personal touch goes a long way towards getting your letter read. It will stand out from the standard direct mail; people will notice.
3. Get to the point quickly; present a problem and the solution concisely. Engage and inform.
4. Use personal anecdotes, tell a story, and then reinforce with facts and statistics.
5. Make your appeal as specific as possible.
6. Assume some recipients have donated in the past, and thank them again.
7. If the letter writing campaign is an annual one, update recipients on last year's results.
8. Give the recipient a clear indication of how much you need to raise, and suggest contribution amounts.
9. Give them a deadline.

10. Include a PS, your entire letter may get skimmed, but most people will read the P.S., so summarize and repeat the urgent need.
11. Include a return, postage paid envelope
12. Follow up with a call or email.

More ideas:

Talent contest – with the popularity of American Idol, why not put a new twist on the old fashioned talent contest? Hold an event for talented members of your community. Charge a fee to attend and sell refreshments and concession items. Raffle off prizes; hold a 50/50 draw. Hand out ballots upon entry to the event and have plenty of pens on hand. Have attendees pick their choice for a winner and have volunteers gather up the ballots while attendees are still seated. Award the raffle items while the ballots are counted. At the close of the evening announce the winner.

Golf Tournament - Arrange for reduced greens fees to be paid by your organization and solicit donated prizes for winners, and "sell" sponsorship holes where sponsors can advertise, give product demos/giveaways. Arrange for volunteers to handle registration, watch holes, and act as referees regarding rules of play. Sell boxed lunches and have donated door prizes. Have a post-tournament reception where appetizers and drinks can be served, prizes awarded.

Auction – hold an auction. Whether it's a casual flea market, or a dressed affair, auctions are a great way to generate a buzz. An auction can be added on to any event, or held on its own. The options are endless; supports donate their time: lawn mowing for a month, babysitting services for an evening, a baked cake a week for a month, knitting lessons, piano lessons etc. or an item: tickets to a sporting event, a spa package, dinner at a restaurant, a weekend getaway at a local hotel. The key to the auction is to have an entertaining auctioneer! Someone well known in your community who can call personally on attendees, someone with a sense of fun, who can make even the simplest item worthy of a bidding war.

Wine Tasting - does your area have a local winery? Host an evening wine and cheese party where guests pay a fee to attend and are treated to local wines. Invite the vintner to showcase their collection. Auction off a personal tour of the winery.

Oscar Party – Host a red carpet affair, hold a contest to pick the Oscar winners, watch the event on a large screen TV, come dressed as your favorite star

Success Stories

Basketball Tournaments

*"Patrick's Pals" Team up to Support Fragile X Research
by Pamela Vershbow, Parent*

Sunday, June 1, is a day forever engraved on my memory. It is a day in which my son Patrick, my husband and I received more encouragement, love, support, and help than we ever dared to wish for. Some very good friends of ours came up the with idea ... a 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament to benefit Fragile X.

We sent out a package inviting people to join or sponsor the all-day tournament. We included an explanation of Fragile X Syndrome, its effect on Patrick and its effect on our lives. The mailing was sent to 1500 people - current friends, business associates, former classmates, and even childhood summer-camp-mates.

Once the idea was born it took on a life of its own, as our friends told their friends and our business associates told their business associates and so on!

The tournament was held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the gym of an elementary school. The gym was packed. When the day ended, we had raised more than \$27,000!!!

It was the most thrilling event that we have experienced since being diagnosed with Fragile X. It gave us hope ... hope that people will be more open and willing to give Patrick a chance, hope that people will be better able to see how wonderful Patrick is, hope that people might care enough to help us find a cure for Fragile X.

We want to share our day with everyone and hope that you might enjoy a similar experience. *Sincerely, Pamela and James Vershbow*

Patrick's Pals have now held six annual basketball tournaments ... each year has been more successful than the last.

Bowlathons

Chicago

The FRAXA Chicago chapter's June bowling/pizza/auction/raffle was spectacular. Jody Goldsmith writes:

We had the best fundraiser, not to mention bringing in over \$3,300 dollars! Over 100 people showed up that day. 20 bowling lanes were designated for

FRAXA as well as a private room. You should have seen how beautifully the auction room was decorated: tulle and flower swirled table cloths, jewelry displayed on black velvet, and a lolli-pop game overflowing with bright colored prizes for the winners, while ten tables glimmered with huge baskets of goodies wrapped in opalescent cellophane.

A great time was had by all, but the best part was watching the smiling faces of our children. For many it was the first time they had been to a bowling alley. Not only did they learn how to bowl, but each child, verbal or nonverbal, showed us all how to have a great day. One of the funniest moments in the afternoon was when Bev's son Adam, who has fragile X, sat up high on a swivel chair overlooking the lanes and said "Welcome to my office."

Indiana

Paula and Patrick Clift of Indiana, discovered just last fall that their son Matthew is affected with fragile X. In May they held a bowl-a-thon for FRAXA, raising over \$2300 and still counting. Paula writes "we came up with a list of people we knew well -- friends, coworkers, and family -- and sent everyone a letter describing fragile X and asking that they participate or donate... My husband and I also took a vacation day and went around to a lot of the local businesses and asked for door prizes. We came out with about 80! ... There are too many people to thank in this letter, because we were overwhelmed by the support we had from all!"

Fast Food Benefit Nights

Many restaurants like McDonalds are privately-owned so each owner might have slightly different policies. Simply go to or call convenient local restaurants and ask to speak to the manager or owner. Explain about fragile X, that it affects 1 in 4000 boys and 1 in 6000 girls, which means that it is one of the most common children's diseases. McDonalds is **definitely** child-oriented, so it appeals to them to help children. I told the managers how much my fragile X son Andy loves the restaurant and how comfortable he feels there (well... usually!). Then ask if they will do some kind of benefit night to raise awareness/funds for fragile X. You might suggest one night a month when they donate 5% of their sales to FRAXA, or another foundation, if you prefer. Or try one night and see how it goes.

One reason I did this is that our local McDonalds agreed to hand out a little fact sheet to everyone who used their drive-up window all week! Now that's raising some awareness!

If the managers agree, then you get to invite all your friends to join you that evening! We've done this for FRAXA and for our local school system special education program. We can send brochures, small fact sheets, etc. The restaurant's donation is tax-deductible, which means that, if you get enough friends to join you, they might actually make more money that night.

FRAXA's TaxID # is 04-3222167 in case they ask. Also, we will publicize their philanthropy in our newsletter if they want. Feel free to have them give us a call.

Retail Store Partnerships

Oregon

Karen and Greg Ripplinger, who have two children, Alex, 5 years old and Fragile X affected, and Zoey, age 20 months, have been busy raising money for Fragile X research.

It all began last December, when Karen and Greg participated in the Oregon Lottery's annual Holiday Scratch-it for Charity and came away with \$90 for the Fragile X Association of Oregon. The contest allowed representatives from various charities to scratch off as many lottery tickets as they could during a 5-minute period, and keep the proceeds.

Then, Karen attended a business seminar in San Francisco. She was inspired to speak about Fragile X before the 150 people in the audience, who spontaneously donated more than \$1200. Karen donated the money to FRAXA Research Foundation.

She and Greg own a women's clothing consignment boutique in Portland called The Silver Lining. She has been known to give a few over-the-counter seminars on Fragile X, and every third weekend she has a "Fragile X Dollar Day" sale on a specific sale-rack. "So far, we've made about \$800," she said, which was then donated to FRAXA. FRAXA will be the beneficiary of yet another fundraising project she inspired: a group of other resale boutique owners will be selling \$2 raffle tickets, proceeds to be donated. Winners receive a package of gift certificates for the 10 stores, worth \$200.

The Ripplinger family was featured recently in an article in the Oregonian newspaper, focusing on how they are coping with the challenge of Fragile X. "As a result of the article, I made \$150 for Fragile X. It just came; I didn't ask for it."

Karen says she feels a great need to focus energy on raising money for Fragile X research. "I hope that we can find a cure. I want to contribute as much as I can. If we don't do our part, we can't ask 'Why isn't there a cure?' I'm trying to do my part."

Texas

Randalls Supermarket shoppers in Houston and Austin, and Tom Thumb Supermarket shoppers in Dallas can benefit FRAXA when they purchase groceries, simply by giving the checkout clerk FRAXA's number: 3715. These stores then donate a portion of the profits to FRAXA to support fragile X

research in Texas.

If you live in Houston, Austin, or Dallas, please link your purchases with the 3715 FRAXA number.

Yard Sales

Every year, Fragile X families all over the country hold yard sales to benefit FRAXA. These yard sales come in all sizes, and every one contributes to raising awareness and funds for fragile X research.

In Arlington, Massachusetts, The Vershbow and Whitney families have fantastic yard sales. The Fourth Vershbow/Whitney yard sale raised a whopping \$5600! This yard sale was so well-attended that the resulting traffic jams required hiring police to manage the crush. Observing the line that formed an hour before the sale opened, the on-duty officer dialed up his wife on his cell phone and told her *"I haven't seen a crowd this big since the Filene's Basement Wedding Dress Sale!"*

Some hints for running a successful yard sale:

- Enlist help of family, friends, and neighbors; make this a team effort in which everyone is invested
- Put an ad in your local papers requesting donations of items for the sale; be sure to offer to pick up items and mention that proceeds will go to charity
- Provide information about fragile X at and before the sale; FRAXA can provide brochures and fact sheets
- Have fun! Use the sale as an opportunity to let others help you support a good cause.

The Project Plan

No matter the size of your event your first step should be to begin your project plan. It provides an opportunity for you to clearly communicate your goals and objectives, your resources, your milestones and perhaps most importantly, your message.

A well thought out project plan will be worth every minute you spend on it. It will center you, keep you focused, provide your project team with clarity and guidance. A project plan is an essential communication document that will clearly communicate your goals, your scope and your milestones to all your stakeholders.

Return On Investment – analyzing your success

Your event was a huge success; you deserve a big pat on the back for a job well-done. You made money; everyone had a great time, what else is there to know? Plenty!

The return on investment analysis is the only way to truly determine how successful your event was. Even if your event was a success beyond your wildest expectations there are bound to be things you would have done differently, things that you can improve on to make your next event even more spectacular.

There are three components to the ROI report.

1. Your costs vs. your profit
2. The value of people's time
3. Suggestions & constructive criticisms

1. Determining your net profit

You probably had a number in mind as a fundraising goal, did you meet it? Exceed it? Fall a little short?

Your net gain is the amount of money left over once you've paid your up front costs. Accurate record keeping should make this a relatively easy figure to obtain.

2. The Value of Volunteers

Even though you are using volunteer effort, it is useful to put a value on the committee's commitment in terms of "people-hours"

Did you have enough help? Were your human resources put to effective use? Did your volunteers feel appreciated?

In order to determine whether you had too little, too much, or just the right amount of help have volunteers keep track of the time they are putting into the effort by submitting weekly updates to you, or a committee member. At the end of the event add up the amount of volunteer hours and divide by the total profit. The amount you are left with should equal minimum wage or higher. If your volunteer expenditure is not worth minimum wage your human power was not put to best use. Reduce your work-force, or better utilize your resources next time in order to generate more profit.

In order to measure volunteer satisfaction, have them complete a short survey. Raffle off a prize to encourage responses. Structure the survey questions so they can be answered on a scale of 1-5 so that you can easily summarize results. Include a comment where volunteers can offer constructive criticism and suggestions. Sample questions include: How would you rate your volunteer experience in terms of personal satisfaction? Would you volunteer at another FRAXA fundraising event? Do you feel your efforts were appreciated by the fundraising coordinator/committee? Were your responsibilities/tasks communicated to you clearly? Do you feel you were over-utilized, under-utilized, appropriately utilized?

3. Suggestions & Constructive Criticisms

It's true that hindsight is 20/20. Post event "de-briefs" are a great opportunity to thank your volunteers, and a perfect opportunity to discuss opportunities for improvement for the next event. Prior to the meeting advise the team that the purpose of the meeting is to celebrate their success and to discuss ways to improve for your next event (i.e. criticism should be constructive). The meeting is an opportunity to discuss things that worked, and things that didn't work. The event coordinator should lead the discussion; someone else should take notes so the volunteers have the attendee's full-attention. Start the meeting off with some observations of your own, things you think worked, and others you feel didn't work as well. Start off offering constructive criticism of your own and you will give attendees a great jumping off point. This can also be a time of recognition for jobs well done.

When these 3 steps are completed you will have a 360 degree view of your projects success.

Publicity Tips

Know your audience

You have at least three audiences:

1. Media (those who will communicate your message)
2. Attendees (those who will participate in your event)
3. Sponsors (those who will contribute financially to your event)

Communicate your goal

Being able to communicate your goals accurately and concisely is essential. Set realistic goals and be specific about how much you want to raise, and then repeat, and keep repeating that message. Studies have shown that an individual needs to hear a message a minimum three times before they will take action.

Be Prepared

You never know when or where you will run in to a potential sponsor or media contact. Have information on hand to distribute to interested individuals whenever possible. Have business sized cards printed (you can do this inexpensively with kits available at your local home office store). Include your website address, event date, your contact information and your main message. Hand them out liberally.

WORD OF MOUTH

Make sure all volunteers can clearly articulate the FRAXA message and the specific reason money is being raised. Your volunteers are informal spokespeople and they should be actively encouraged to spread the word.

The Media Release

A media release is made up of the 5 "W"s, What, Where, Who, When, Why. Editorial rooms receive hundreds of media releases in a week, via fax, email and the wire. Typically junior editorial assistants review the releases, selecting the few that stand out and passing them along to the appropriate journalist. Time and effort is required to craft a media release that will get noticed, so don't rush it. A well-written media release that is picked up is substantial free publicity and well-worth the time it takes to get it right.

Media Lists

Identifying key media contacts and preparing a media release is the first step in your promotional campaign. It will take time to assemble a list of appropriate contacts, so assign someone to this task immediately. Include the names of all contacts who might conceivably be interested in your story. Make separate lists for Print, Video, Web-based and Radio media, they have different timelines and may even require slightly different releases. Don't assume the contacts you have made the year before are still current. Have someone re-confirm your contact information is correct well before you're ready to send out your release. Your media contact list should include the names (first last), company, email address, and telephone number at a minimum for each entry. Many larger media outlets will have one fax or email line dedicated to receiving media releases, but in smaller markets, if time permits, attempt to get the name of the journalist best suited to your story (lifestyle, health, event etc.) and then address each release appropriately.

Print vs. Video

The main difference between print and TV/radio journalists is that the print journalists are looking for a story, and TV/radio are looking for a show. Therefore, the media releases you send should differ slightly to emphasis what each one is looking for.

Print journalists will often run with a well written media release in its entirety (many times without even contacting you to let you know where and when it will run). Video and radio journalists want to capture action and excitement, so if your event can offer up a celebrity or an interesting visual you have a good shot at getting their attention – especially if it occurs on a slow news day. Don't expect a commitment to cover your event from a Video journalist, because they can not predict what will happen any given day, they are unable to make promises.

How to Write a Media Release

Your contact information should always appear clearly at the top of the page. Include a telephone and email address, and your website url if you have one.

Getting your headline right is essential; it's often the only thing that will be read. Your headline should be lively, engaging, and catchy. They should be no longer than one line, be easily read and focus on your main message. Typically headlines are written after the introduction and body of the release is complete, when you're "in a groove" and your creative juices are flowing.

Your first paragraph is vital, if the reader has continued after your headline this paragraph will certainly determine whether the editor reads any further. Concisely communicate your main point(s), but don't get into too much detail. Your introductory paragraph should run no more than 3-4 sentences.

Further sentences should flesh out your story, providing background, statistics, quotes, and anything you feel may be of compelling enough interest to motivate the journalist to follow-up for more information. Using bullet points works well here as they are intended to attract attention and quickly provide information. If you use bullet points, remember to list them in the order of their importance. Include no more than 6 bullet points, using one sentence for each; bold any stats or interesting facts.