



Semillas de Amor

Sharing Love, Instilling Values, and Creating New Futures

Event Guide

A “How To” on creating a successful event

Thank you for your interest in hosting a fundraising event for Semillas de Amor and, if you do host an event, a big **THANK YOU** for doing it! We know that a fundraising event is no easy task and that it takes much planning to be successful. It is our intention to help you as much as we can along the way in order for this to be as easy as possible and help you reach your goal!

To help you ensure that your fundraising event is a winner, here are ten major components that you could incorporate into your event plan. These are just suggestions and not always needed for every event.

1. Purpose:

Before doing anything else, you must decide what the purpose of your event is. Though the overarching purpose is to raise funds to support the children living in the home also consider what is your purpose, why you are taking this on? Do you have a child that was adopted from Semillas? Have you visited and have a special connection to the home? What was your experience? Do you have a passion for children? Do you want to change the world?

What is it that makes this special to you? This should be reflected in your messaging to the people that you invite and, when the going gets tough, remind you of why you are doing it.

2. Fundraising Goal:

You are going to want to set a fundraising goal. This goal should be a dollar amount that excites you! You should consider how much you want to raise and how much you think you can raise.

Aspects to think about when setting your fundraising goal:

- How many people do you think will be able to come to the event? What is the ticket price? If you are not selling tickets, guesstimate how much they will donate to come?
- If people are unable to come to the event, can you count on them donating anyhow to your online donation page? ([See How to Set Up an Event and Online Donation Page through Crowdrise](#))
- What is a dollar amount that would make you very proud to have raised?
- You are going to want to create a Leadership and Supporting Team for the event (See #4). Who is going to be on that team and how much do you think they will be able to help raise?

Please note: The amount you choose should be what you hope to net, that is, the amount you plan to raise after expenses are deducted.



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3. Budget:

To set yourself up for success, you should create a complete budget listing all of the expenses that will be required to hold the event. Depending on the size and type of event the budget could include just the cost of wine and cheese or - if it is a larger event - staff, invitations, space rental, catering, entertainment, transportation, security, utilities, and anything else that will be required to make the event a success. Your budget should take into account your fundraising goal, ensuring that you raise that amount above and beyond all expenses. Be sure to leave a little extra room in your budget for unforeseen costs – this is usually around 10% of the budget.

4. Leadership and Supporting Teams:

As we know and you know – you cannot do this alone nor should you! Creating a leadership and supporting team makes the event more successful and more fun!

Look into your community and identify family members, friends, and/or colleagues that may be interested in participating in helping you with inviting guests to the event, organizing, raising additional funds, and running the event the day of. Consider the strengths of the people you are asking – some may be able to only commit to sending the invitation to their community while others can send the invite and help with food, and others may be able to participate by putting on a puppet show!

Team #1 – The Leadership Team or Hosting Committee

Your leadership team is usually called the “Hosting Committee”. These people contribute substantially to the event and encourage others to do so as well. They are the people that have a large community they can invite, help with planning, raise additional funds, and help with partnerships (caterer, wine donations, food donations, etc.). This group can be composed of wealthy donors, business leaders, community leaders, or local celebrities. Think of people that have valuable connections. Their specific job is to get people to the event and support major donations.

Team #2 – The Supporting Team or Volunteers

Your supporting team are the people that make the event happen – the invaluable volunteers. They help with tracking the budget, communicating to the vendors/ partners, setting up and cleaning up the event, donating their specialized services, and are there the day of the event to make sure it runs smoothly (checking people in, pouring wine, telling stories about Semillas, asking for donations, etc.). Utilize them to help you with logistics. Think of people that are good project managers and have attention to detail. Think about people that may have valuable connections.



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5. Target Audience:

Who is the target audience for your event? Is this a general fundraiser where everyone will be invited? Or is this event geared towards a specific group like business people, parents, or young professionals? In short, you must decide whom you will invite to your event.

Once again, think of your network and community. You may be able to create something specialized (Soccer Parents Unite for Kids in Guatemala) or you may want to keep it general. Also think about your Hosting Committee's network.

What is the best strategy for you to hit your goal?

Create a simple spreadsheet of the people you want to invite and track if you have emailed them, called them, or confirmed them.

6. Set – Up and Planning:

Make sure you plan the event set-up well in advance and use your volunteers. Take some time to think about how the event is going to go – what are the activities? This will help you see what is needed.

For example:

- Where will it be? What is needed to set up the space?
- Will food be served? What time does it need to be ready?
- Will there be entertainment? Do they require any special equipment?
- What is the itinerary or agenda for the event?
- Where is the check in table?
- Who is doing what? Create a volunteer sheet that describes everyone's accountability.
- What time do we expect people to arrive?
- Will you be selling tickets at the door? If so, you will need a "cash drawer" for change, [credit card information sheets](#), or a computer with Internet access so people can purchase tickets online.
- What time should we have the "thank you for coming and please donate" speech?

While you probably won't need a full run-through of your event, it is essential that everyone who is working the event know, ahead of time, what their responsibilities are, where they should be during the event, and how the event is going to "flow."

Making a "Day of Event" plan will help things run smoothly.



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7. Marketing Your Event and Invitation Strategy:

Marketing your event is very important. The more people you tell the more likely you will reach your goal. You will need to convince your target audience that your event and Semillas de Amor are worthy of their time and money – both of which are very precious to people.

Items to consider:

Messaging – what can you say that will gain the attention of your audience and compel them to join the event or donate. We find that a personal story is the best way to get people engaged. Tell your audience specifically and succinctly why you are raising money for the home – what is your connection or why are you passionate about it?

Be Clear – make sure you have the date, time, location, cost of ticket, and where to purchase the ticket very clear on the invite and other marketing materials. People lose interest if they have to hunt for the information. Consider putting this information in bigger font or in bold.

Inviting Your Guests – People are very busy and only have moments at a time to read email and respond. Because of this it sometimes takes sending an email a couple times before you get a response. Here is a good invitation structure to put in place that allows you to reach out to your audience a couple times without exhausting them:

1. Save the Date – send this out about 5 – 6 weeks before your event. This is a simple communication that should have just the main details on it. For example:

Save the Date! We are hosting an event benefiting Semillas de Amor Children's Village in Guatemala. Mark your calendars now! To purchase tickets go to: www.xxxxxxxx.crowdrise.com (this is your Crowdrise link or, if you are not using Crowdrise, the link to the online ticket service you are using.)

Download the Save the Date Sample/ Template

2. Official Invite – this is the main invitation that has all the details you want to share with the invitees. This needs to be sent out 3 weeks before the event. Consider writing a personal email to your connections and attaching the graphic invitation.

Download the Official Invite Example/ Template

3. Event Reminder – this is just a final reminder to let people know that the event is right around the corner and people should buy their tickets now! This should be sent 1 week before the event. You can just use your Official Invite for this.





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8. Ticket Sales and Donations:

Once you market your event, there must be a way to purchase tickets, or accepting donations for the event. There are many different online services you can use to support the management of your ticket sales.

Though this is usually not used for selling tickets, we suggest you utilize Crowdrise. Crowdrise is a great way to get the word out, have people donate, sell tickets (behind the scenes) and is an easy way for the funds to go straight to us so you will not have to manage the process. It is extremely simple. You would just attach yourself to our Crowdrise page (<http://www.crowdrise.com/seedsoflove>). [Go here for a detailed "How To" document on Crowdrise.](#)

If you do not want to use Crowdrise, we also suggest Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.com). This site is specifically for selling tickets and does not usually take donations but you can let people know to donate by buying tickets and just let you know that they are unable to make it so you can plan accordingly.

9. Be Unique, Creative, and Have Fun!:

Above all make sure you have fun! One way of doing this is to put your best thinking forward. What will make your event unique to you and/or creative? This does not have to be something big or expensive. Have each guest leave with a heart shaped note written from your kids. Make friendship bracelets and give away. Create a photo booth with costumes for funny event photos. Have a funny hat contest. Have a card making station where attendees can write their personal message to the kids at Semillas. What would you love to do?

If you need help thinking creatively ask your loved ones or call me! (Colleen Schell 415.225.8639).

10. Thank You:

One of the most oft heard complaints from contributors to fundraising events is, "They never even said 'thank-you.'" Ditto for your event volunteers. Once we get your event attendee list and donator list we will definitely be sending email "thank you's" but please do not wait for us to do so. Make sure to send thank-you notes/ emails to everyone who is involved in your event, including contributors, volunteers, staff and vendors ([feel free to use our thank you email template](#)). People love to be recognized for the support they gave – it makes us feel appreciated and valued. Two things that we all need to thrive!

Thank you! So much!!! Call me if you need support!!
Colleen Schell – 415.225.8639

