

Special Events

G A L O R E !

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MONTHLY IDEAS FOR THOSE WHO PLAN, ORGANIZE AND MANAGE EVENTS OF ALL KINDS

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Generate Additional Revenue Through Program Book

Program books can be a great way to add profit to your special event's bottom line.

The primary purpose of such booklets is to provide key information to event attendees. A program book typically includes:

- The event's agenda.
- Descriptions of silent and/or live auction items with minimum bids.
- Information about how the funds raised will be used.
- Information about the charity and its programs.
- A list of volunteers responsible for planning the event.
- Names of donors and sponsors.

Program books may also include paid advertisements that can help underwrite the cost of producing the books and raise additional funds.

To secure program book ad income:

1. Develop a simple letter and ad form to send to your organization's vendors.
2. Assign a separate committee to call on businesses for ads.
3. Offer free event tickets for those who purchase ads at a higher level.
4. Give prizes to those volunteers selling ads based on dollars and/or number of ads generated.

MISSION-CENTERED EVENTS

Take Your Progressive Dinner to the Next Level

By Kerry Nenn

A common idea with myriad possibilities, a progressive dinner can be anything from just another social gathering to an impactful experience. With the right strategies, your event can be the latter.

The Main Street Association (Louisville, KY) continues to see success at its annual Main Street Progressive Dinner now in its 18th year and the organization's main fundraiser. Promoting the unique historic, cultural, educational and residential assets of the neighborhood, the Main Street Association incorporates its purpose right into the event. Robin Miller, executive director of the association, says this is a key strategy. "We keep our mission at the center of it. Everything we do goes with our brand — getting people excited about downtown living," she explains.

The Main Street progressive dinner offers guests the opportunity to get a sneak peek into newly opened or renovated locations. The live and silent auctions that take place as part of the event include items such as a downtown entertainment package or dinner downtown for a year. "The idea is to promote enjoyment of our brand all year long, not just at this event," says Miller. "We were thrilled this year to partner with Poe Companies to hold a raffle for a chance to win a year-long apartment lease at a riverside complex in the heart of this area." What better way to promote and generate excitement about living in the neighborhood than to actually offer a chance at that experience?

In addition to keeping every aspect of your event aligned with your mission, Miller offers these recommendations for creating a unique and successful progressive dinner:

Locations and transportation: Choose locations in close proximity to one another, so guests can walk between sites, but also offer transportation. Main Street's venues are sometimes within walking distance, but they also partner with the downtown trolley to provide transportation between venues. This adds to the historic ambiance of the event. For their four venues, they choose from the variety of cultural attractions, businesses and residences that are frequently popping up or being remodeled in the neighborhood. "We give our guests an opportunity to see something the general public might not get to see," explains Miller.

Planning and committees: "Start planning for the next year the second your event is done," advises Miller. "Get a great committee. We appoint a venue chair for each of the four venues, (who oversees the menu at the site) including appetizers, soup, dinner and dessert."

Thinking big: This year's raffle prize is worth over \$10,000. By offering a chance to live rent-free in an apartment by the river, Main Street's fundraising efforts reach beyond locals to those considering moving to the area, looking for a weekend getaway or looking for an executive suite. By selling a limited number of tickets (350 at \$100 each), the raffle is a great source of funds while maintaining good odds for participants.

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