

Annual Fundraising Events Generate Publicity

by Sandra Sims, Fundraising Coach
StepByStepFundraising.com

While many fundraising events may not be incredibly profitable the first time out, keen fundraisers can spot an event that has future potential. One of the advantages of hosting annual fundraising events is their ability to generate publicity for the cause and raise more money over time.

Publicity Grows Each Year

The Comics For Kids event benefiting Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio is an example of how publicity for an event grows each year. Because of increased participation and a record of past success, it becomes easier to gain media attention for the next year's event.

Unexpected Publicity

Sometimes publicity for an annual event happens by accident. The Williamsburg Symphonia League in Virginia holds a fundraiser where attendees pay \$25 for an appraisal of art or antiques, much like on popular TV shows such as "Antiques Roadshow."

Out of curiosity 72-year-old Joseph Bates brought a family heirloom, an 18th century landscape painting by British artist Richard Wilson. Much to everyone's surprise the painting was given a estimated value of \$100,000.

This unexpected treasure was a stroke of luck not only for the painting's owner, but also for the Symphonia League. It generated local press after the event including a [newspaper article](#) which brought increased attention to the organization itself.

The effect of this publicity is literally double. Next year the organization can capitalize on this attention by repeating the story in its press releases and advertising. First time attendance will likely increase because of those who'd like to be the next to discover treasures in their own attic.

New Publicity for Old Events

While holding an event annually is by most accounts a great strategy, after a few years the event may lose some of its appeal both to the audience and the media. Adding a new twist on an old event is a great way to stir up publicity.

The North Texas Rehabilitation Center in Wichita Falls has been hosting the popular Texas Ranch Roundup for 25 years. It's a rodeo style event where actual working cattle ranches compete for prizes and bragging rights.

In 2004 the organization was approached by a British filmmaker who wanted to utilize the event as part of the premise for a reality show. A group of Londoners left their usual jobs as bankers and lawyers and lived like cowboys on a Texas ranch for two weeks. The team of city slickers learned the tricks of the trade and then competed in the rodeo in events such as calf roping and barrel racing.

Since the participants were training for two weeks prior to the event this provided an even greater publicity opportunity. Newspaper articles and television spots were featured throughout those two weeks leading up to the rodeo. This provided a series of interesting articles for the newspaper which at the same time encouraged readers to purchase tickets to the show.

(As a side note it's unfortunate that the rehab clinic has not archived any of the press releases or newspaper stories on their website. Always post your press releases, articles and event photos online so the publicity will continue to work for you well after the event is over!)

Conclusion

In conclusion, holding fundraising events on an annual basis increases the possibility for publicity for both the event and the cause it represents. Capitalizing on unusual events and adding a new twist each year will help keep the publicity coming.

About the Author: Sandra Sims has been fundraising for various charities for over 10 years and is dedicated to helping non profits raise more for their causes. She is the author of several informative resources for non profit organizations including [The 5 Keys to Successful Fundraising](#), [The Beginner's Guide to Fundraising](#) and [Sample Fundraising Letters](#)

Contact Information:

Website: StepByStepFundraising.com

E-Mail: Sandra@stepbystepfundraising.com