



# Holding a Fundraiser or Event

*Produced by the AAZK Resource Committee*



*This guide is a resource for AAZK chapters as fundraising is an important part of running a chapter. Holding a successful fundraising event can make a big difference by raising money for a chapter as well as for a conservation organization. Tips and advice for organizing various types of fundraisers or events are outlined below. These tips are suggestions and not compulsory.*

## **Getting Started**

### **Purpose**

- Will it support a conservation project or chapter funds?
- Where will the funds go?
  - If funds will go to a conservation group, know what your funding will specifically support.
    - Example: Prusten Project; to purchase an additional sound monitor or Professional Development grants for local chapter members.
  - Make sure chapter members are well versed in what they are supporting.
  - When donating to another organization, it must be a 501c3 non-profit. Make sure you can access the organization's EIN number. You will need this number later for your chapter's re-charter or taxes

### **Goals**

- How much would you like to fundraise?
- Will you donate funds raised or profits after expenses?
- Will merchandise be sold?

### **Target Audience**

- Who would you like to attend your event?
  - Young professionals
  - Family groups, etc.
- How will you promote the event?
- How will the event be fun or attractive?
- Anyone can come to a fundraising event; don't limit your audience to zoo people – try to engage with multiple audiences over time.
- Create materials to educate attendees about your cause and how they can get involved.

### **Event Details**

- What are you proposed venues?
- What is your expected attendance compared to the venue capacities?
- What time of year do you plan on holding the event?
- What time frame of day?
  - Remember to consider after work hours, etc.

### **Contacting Venues**

- Clearly explain the date, timeframe, and purpose of the fundraiser.
- Mention your chapter's Federal Non-profit Tax ID



- Many events can be written off by vendors.
- Proprietors may, but are not required to, offer deals at the venue or donations of good and services.

## **Planning for a Larger Event**

A fundraiser can be small or can get big and more complex. For a big event, plan at least 4-6 months ahead.

### **Staffing**

- Form a committee (even if it ends up consisting of only 1 or 2 people).
- Organize how the event will run and create an event timetable.
- Designate volunteers or members to help with duties including registration, raffles, entertainment, and photographs.

### **Venue**

- Contact an event space for the best deal.
- If your event is on a weekend, you will probably realize greater public involvement.

### **Promote**

- Promote the cost of the event and what's included in the cost.
- Promote prizes, raffle items, or silent auction items to attract more people to your event.
- Promote your event in calendars, newsletters, fliers, social media, and any other avenues available to you.
- Educate people about your cause. Print information sheets about what funds raised will help do.
- Create a presentation about the beneficiary organization and present it to the chapter, volunteers, or other local community groups.

### **Donations/Prizes**

- Draft a donation request letter
- Solicit for donations or prizes; write letters or call local restaurants, movie theaters, and hotels to see if they could donate prizes for your event.
  - For Example: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the American Association of Zookeepers. We are having a \_\_\_\_\_ fund raiser where proceeds will go directly to support (insert benefiting organization). We are currently looking for donations to use as raffle items, would your business be interested in helping?"
- When soliciting for donations, remember that you are seeking donations for your AAZK chapter, not your home institution.
  - Do not wear work uniform when soliciting in person.
  - Be careful when using your work email.
- Make sure you are aware of any institutional restrictions or yearly limitations and respect the restrictions (donation request lists, facility usage, facility advertising, facility name usage, facility email usage).
- Become familiar with your state's fundraising regulations on raffles, bingos or auctions.
- Donated items can be raffled or auctioned in a silent auction, and/or given as door prizes
- Contact the organization you are raising money for. They may donate a raffle item and help you promote the event.
- Invite local celebrities from radio and TV stations.
- After the event, write thank you letters for prizes and celebrity attendance.

### **Expenses**

- Create a budget for the event and have your treasurer keep track of all the monetary transactions.



