

Sewing Hope Event – Our Experience and Recommendations

A. Is this event something your group would want to consider?

- 1. Are there enough people in your group/community who would attend such an event, so that you could actually raise money putting the event on?**
- 2. Do you have a group of people willing to commit to helping to put this together?**
- 3. Is a fashion show/fundraiser a good “personality fit” for your group? This was an ideal event for our group – we have over 200 members who enjoy sewing, learning about sewing and who also found doing something to help disadvantaged people worthwhile.**

B. Money – is this event feasible?

- 1. Expenses: cost of**
 - a. Facility**
 - b. Food – morning coffee/tea, snacks, and lunch**
 - c. Guest speaker – our group contributed the speaker’s fee towards this event**
 - d. Misc – publicity, pipe & drape, audio visual person, printing program, etc**
- 2. Projected income – gross income**
 - a. Ticket price x number of attendees**
 - b. Revenue from silent auction**
- 3. Net = gross income minus expenses: figure how many people you need to attend to break even on the overhead – if you can cover this, and get more people to attend and also make money on silent auction, then it’s worth doing.**

C. Our Event Format/basic outline – see program

- 1. Guest speaker lecture/demonstration in the morning**

Someone who is recognized as a national-level sewing educator.

 - a. We were able to get Sandra Betzina at a discounted rate for this event**
- 2. Seated luncheon – make it classy – servers, table decorations, assigned seating**
 - a. Sewing Hope (Fount of Mercy) provided pictures and a video we showed on a large screen during lunch**
 - b. Liza Morgan, a Sewing Hope rep gave a brief talk about the project (and also sold necklaces made by women in Africa).**
- 3. Fashion show**

4. Silent Auction

- a. Donors – for prizes and silent auction**
- b. “Lots” – packaging items together**
- c. Value/minimum bid (about 25% of value); raise (\$5-10)**
- d. Payment options - we offered cash, check, credit card (used Squareup.com on I-pad or I-phone)**

D. Location/Facility

- 1. Select/down payment 6-9 months before event – to ensure locale, for publicity**
- 2. Facility which can handle/seat/feed/park 150-250**
- 3. Easy access/easy to find**
- 5. Stage/runway area; changing room area**
- 6. Price – within budget?**
- 7. Is food service/catering available at this facility – this includes not just food, but table set up**
- 8. Bathrooms, accessible, handicapped access**

E. Committees/groups:

- 1. Chair/co-chair – our group had 2 co-chairs**
 - a. Organize the event**
 - b. Have a vision/idea of what the total event includes, what the event should “feel” like.**
 - c. Be the “go to” people with**
 - i. Concerns/problems/questions/ideas**
 - ii. Assign or get volunteers to head sub-committees such as registration, decorating, fashion show and silent auction**
- 2. Registration**
 - a. Handling tickets for registration – we did ours online, and also offered mail-in registrations**
 - b. Track lunch choices for caterer**
 - c. Greet people as they come in**
 - d. Give people fashion show “people’s choice” voting slip, feedback form**
 - e. We also had pens made with our chapter name, American Sewing Guild, and contact info**
- 3. Decorations – we had one person doing this**
 - a. For the room, lunch tables, etc.**
 - b. We had African quilts on the stage as a backdrop. Table decorations included a square of African fabric in the center of each table, a vase with dried greenery and papier maché African masks.**

4. Silent auction

- a. Collecting items for the auction – we solicited locally, as well as at Sewing and Stitchery Expo in Puyallup, WA.**
- b. Putting items into “lots” – some just a couple of items, some several items. Be sure to have some non-sewing themed lots.**
- c. Assign a value to each “lot”, minimum bid amount and minimum bid raise.**
 - i. We added up the value of the lot, and set the minimum bid 28% of that amount**
 - ii. Each lot was listed in the program, given a number, a brief descriptive name, and list of items, as well as bidding sheet placed at each lot.**
 - iii. All donors were listed in the program**
- d. Payment**
 - i. We gave cash, check or credit card as payment options**
 - ii. We used “Square” for credit card payments on iPhone or iPad . it was easy, a flat 2.75% rate, and we think this enhanced bidding www.squareup.com**
- e. Each lot was wrapped and decorated attractively**

5. Fashion show

- a. Need to decide order of models/outfits**
- b. Listing in program for “people’s choice”**
- c. 1-2 people to help with dressing/changing outfits& lining up models**
- d. Music – live or iPod**
- e. We had 2 parts – the contestants (eligible for prizes), and “exhibit pieces” – national/local designers, and pieces that were not in the competition.**
- f. Judges – we had 3**
 - i. What are categories for winning? We had grand prize, first prize garments, first prize accessories, people’s choice (audience vote)**
 - ii. Prizes – we used donations, including a Baby Lock Imagine serger from a local vendor**
 - iii. Getting info/entries to judges for review – we gave them an electronic file of the entries to review prior; contestants dropped off entries in the morning, and judges reviewed during the morning presentation.**
- g. Emcee for the show**
 - i. We used our morning speaker**
 - ii. We put together a 3-ring notebook of entries, with photo, name of designer/contestant, model and brief description for**

speaker to use as script

h. For exhibit pieces, we got garments from the New York Sewing Hope fashion show, and local designers

6. Publicity

a. Media

b. Word of mouth with local members – this was our most effective tool

c. Posters/flyers and postcards (We got a printer to donate them.)

F. Miscellaneous

1. Photography – of each model, general photos of the audience/event

2. We had 2 photographers

3. AV/sound – for speaker and for music during lunch and fashion show

4. Programs

a. Program/Day's schedule

b. List of silent auction items to help with bidding

c. List of fashion show - contestants (voting and feedback form given at entry)

5. The night before the event, we set up the table decorations, put up pipe and drape on stage, set up silent auction, checked AV system

G. After the event

1. Pay space, caterer, speaker, etc

2. Thank you notes to businesses that contributed, along with a copy of the program.

3. Add it up – expenses/income/net revenue (note silent auction vs. ticket income)

H. Our conclusions

1. A fun, very worthwhile event, but a huge amount of work

2. Not an event that would be producible very often – it was novel, but if we did it annually, it wouldn't be novel any more, and we would have a hard time finding people to put it together again so soon, and people to donate.

Questions: sewinghope@columbiariversewing.org

Program: http://columbiariversewing.org/sewinghope/SewingHope_program.pdf

Postcard: http://columbiariversewing.org/sewinghope/SewingHope_postcard.pdf

Poster: http://columbiariversewing.org/sewinghope/SewingHope_poster.pdf