



The
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
of the New River Valley



EVENT PLANNING
Third Thursday Society
August 17, 2023





Today's meeting

- Will be recorded
- Feel free to add questions/comments to the chat
- Please mute if you aren't speaking
- Captions are running

- Next meeting:
 - September 21 from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. (note the time change)
 - In-person at the Radford Public Library
 - Listening session about how NRV nonprofits can network better



Format for today

- We'll share what to consider when planning events, with an emphasis on donor events
- **Group discussion**
 - We want to hear from you what has worked & what hasn't worked
 - Pros & cons of different types of events
 - Venues & caterers you've enjoyed working with



Why hold donor events?

- They can be time-consuming and costly, so...why do them?
- Events are opportunities to...
 - Share about your work with a captive audience
 - Network with people new to your mission
 - Thank existing supporters (donors, volunteers, board members)
 - Raise money for a specific project or your mission



Start with your purpose & goals

- Introducing new people to your mission
- Raising money for a specific goal
- Thanking/stewarding existing donors



What would success look like?

- **New people involved in your mission**
 - Success could be conversations with key people at the event, with a goal to follow up with them afterward
- **Raising money**
 - Success could be number of donors who give or money raised (or both)
- **Thanking donors**
 - Success could be simply gathering your supporters together, updating them on your work, and thanking them for their support



Holding events when your budget is small

- An event doesn't have to mean to thousands of dollars spent or hundreds of people invited
- Examples of lower-budget events:
 - Pint nights or percentage nights
 - Pot-luck picnics
 - Open house in your space
- **Have you held an event like this? How did it go?**



Planning a larger event

- 100+ people and/or complex planning
- Types of events
 - Banquets
 - Galas
 - Auctions
 - Tournaments



Event timing

- **Look at your full year calendar and consider:**
 - Are there times of year where you are less busy?
 - How often do your supporters hear from you?
 - Is there an event like GiveLocal that could be a natural fit to hold an event?
 - What's going on regionally that could interfere with attendance?
- **Do you have something exciting coming up?**
 - A milestone anniversary
 - A new project or branch of your work
- **But...there doesn't need to be something new going on**
 - Can simply be an opportunity to keep supporters updated on your work



Details: what to keep in mind

- **Determine your event purpose**, then figure out:
 - Date
 - Venue
- **Put together your event timeline**
 - When to send out invitations (mailed or electronic)
 - Follow up after invites are sent out!
 - If it's an open to the public event: what's your publicity plan?
- **Other details to arrange**
 - Caterers
 - Speakers
 - Music



Venues in the NRV

Montgomery	Floyd	Giles
Eastern Divide German Club Hahn Garden Inn at Virginia Tech Iron Tree Brewery Smithfield Plantation	Floyd EcoVillage Floyd Center for Arts Jesse Peterman Library Community Room June Bug Center The 84	Buckeye Farm

Pulaski	Radford
Claytor Lake Draper Mercantile NRCC Omni Place Train Station	Bisset Park Highlander Hotel Long Way Brewing Selu Conservancy

**What venues
would you add to
this list?**

Event follow up

- **New people involved in your mission**
 - Follow up with any leads generated during the event – send more info to those who indicated interest, schedule coffee or lunch, etc.
- **Raising money**
 - Share your success with those who attended & those who didn't
 - Send personalized emails to large donors/sponsors
- **Thanking donors**
 - For those who couldn't attend: send an electronic update



Event Examples



Small event: house parties

- Hosted by a donor or prospective donor / 20 – 30 people
- Purpose: introduce our mission to people unfamiliar with our work and get them involved
- Invite list:
 - Host provides bulk of the invite list
 - Key CFNRV insiders (executive committee of the board & staff)
- Event follow up:
 - Emails/phone calls to those made good connections with
 - Invite to get further involved with our work on committee
 - Follow up with those who might be interested in starting a fund



Medium-sized: Celebration of Giving

- Hosted by the CFNRV / 75 – 100 people
- Purpose: thank existing donors, honor specific donor(s), & share about the year's success
- Invite list: fund holders, board & committee members, individual donors, & corporate sponsors
- Event follow up:



Large event: annual meeting

- Hosted by the CFNRV
- 200 – 300 people
- Purpose:
- Invite list:
- Event follow up:



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QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



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THANK YOU!