

# THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT

## Thoughts on Fund Raising for Campus Ministry

Office of Lutheran Campus Ministry Advancement  
1407 North Cleveland  
St. Paul, MN 55108

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### “Fund Raising Events”

“Just holding an event and charging an entry fee will not raise significant amounts of money. Often, if you counted the time that paid staff put into organizing an event, you would find that you have actually lost money.” Stephanie Roth<sup>1</sup>, *Making Special Events Work for You*

Let's not kid ourselves. Special event fund raising is a lot of work. They take time, resources, energy, and a whole lot of planning. But in these days, when fund raising is really about “friend raising,” special events can provide your ministry with a lot more than dollars for daily expenses. They can broaden your base of support. They provide you with an opportunity to show off your programs. They give all of your constituents a time and place to mingle and mix. Sure, special events are a lot of work, but increasingly the benefits are worth it. Here are some possibilities to consider the next time you and your board get the itch to do a special event.

First, special events are not “get rich quick” schemes. You will not raise a large amount of money in a short period of time, because these events take large amount of time to plan and execute well. Persons involved in planning these events are distracted from other important aspects of the ministry. Be sure you know this in advance and recruit volunteers to assist in the overall work.

Second, use your special event to create other funding opportunities. In-kind contributions will cut costs and allow local businesses to participate and receive free publicity. Asking for an in-kind contribution might be an opening to build an ongoing relationship with a business donor. Sponsorships increase your net income over and above the price of admission. Sponsors who contribute more than the expected amount may receive extra benefits, such as an early session with the wine master, extra tickets to the event to share with friends, their name on a program booklet, or the business logo promptly displayed. Silent auctions solicit further contributions from attendees, beyond the entrance ticket.

Third, special events bring your supporters closer together. People who have not seen each other in years may find themselves getting re-acquainted at your event, especially alums of your ministry. Sometimes special events are the only time the organization comes face-to-face with

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Roth is the editor of *The Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. Some of the insights in this Report are gleaned from her article, named above, in the November/December 2002 issue.

its donors. Attendees get to meet board members, students, and ministry staff. Special events build community and get people acquainted and involved. Even if no funds were raised, these kinds of connections would be worth the effort.

Fourth, special events provide a way for potential new donors to see the ministry close up. The entertainment, interaction with students, and maybe even the facility itself will stick in people's minds. They will hear of the need or see the need close up, and if it is presented well, they won't forget it.

Fifth, special events generate publicity in the community. An ad in the paper or flyers in local church bulletins lift up the ministry and makes the gathering a media event. Pictures may appear in the local paper or campus paper. You can put it on your Web page. People will talk about what you're doing.

Sixth, volunteers often turn into future board members after helping with a special event. They become allies and supporters. They begin to see the ministry from the inside. They want to continue to help.

It's still true. If you need lots of money in a short time, nothing beats a personal, face-to-face request, or writing and phoning your most faithful donors. But if you feel a creative urge to plan a special event, it may well be worth the time and effort.

Listed below are samplings of special events from ELCA campus ministries across the country. There are a host of other successful events out there that we hope to share with you in future First Monday Reports.

Galen Hora  
ELCA Campus Ministry Advancement

# **WOODWORKING AUCTION**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**Mara McClellan, Director of Development**

This is the second year we have held our woodworking auction. We invite congregation members and everyone on our alumni list to build an item for the auction. We receive a wide variety of items. There are no restrictions, except that they must be wooden and not used. Last year we had everything from tiny wooden painted crosses to a bunk bed.

On a Sunday in the fall we have a live and silent auction at the Lutheran Center and sell these items. It turns out to be much more than an auction, however. It is a day of fellowship and celebration of campus ministry. We intentionally hold it on-site (outside in the parking lot) so we can bring people to where we do our ministry. We invite people to come for worship in the morning, if they would like. Following worship we provide a lunch and then the auction starts at 1:00. It lasts about 2 hours.

One key is to find a really great auctioneer. We found a guy who does only non-profit fundraising auctions and he was amazing. During the auctions we have a "kids' room" supervised by our college students, where parents can drop their children off for games, snacks, crafts, etc. We are going to have credit card machines there, per the request of many of our donors last year.

All proceeds support our operating budget. This year we are doing a tribute to Pastor Larry Meyer. At some point in the auction read a short tribute to him and then auction off a tree that someone can plant at their home. We will do this annually in his memory and funds from this tree go to his memorial fund.

Last year was our first auction. We brought in around \$6,500.00 with only 50 bidders. This year our goal was to get more people there and make \$10,000.00. A side goal is relationships: to build a community among our supporters and those who are new to us, to expose them to what happens at this place. We want to get them involved in every way possible.

We have learned a lot in the past two years. We learned that people aren't very good at responding, but they do come through in the end. We sort of panicked last year when we didn't think we had enough people signed up to make things. At the last minute (and past the deadline) a bunch of people brought stuff in. We have learned to trust the last-minute donations.

My advice is to let you know in advance that it is a lot of work to get people to the event. This year I am spending more on publicity and advertising, because I believe it is worth it. If we can make \$6,500 on 50 bidders, what could we do with even 20 more bidders?! Another piece of advice: organization. It should go without saying, but it will be really hard to pull an event like this off without it. Save the timelines and materials from year to year. Keep records so that you don't have to re-invent the process each year. And you will need sufficient people-power. It takes a lot of time and people-power to pull off an event like this smoothly and efficiently.

For more information contact Mara McClellan, Lutheran Campus Ministry of Nebraska, 535 North 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE 68508 402/335-3697

# **ART AUCTION AND WINE-TASTING**

**Buffalo, New York**

**Gail Riina, Campus Pastor**

In the spring of 2004, Lutheran Campus Ministry in Buffalo, NY held their first Art Auction and Wine-Tasting Event. They collaborated with Greenfield Niagara Lutheran Home, a new facility with a beautiful atrium, who provided space for the event free of charge.

The event was attended by 50-60 persons who were asked to RSVP. Over \$5,500 was raised for campus ministry at this first time offering. Some matching funds were provided by the local Thrivent chapter.

The art on display was provided on consignment by a local art vendor. There was a mixture of prints, watercolors, and original high quality pieces, some of them by locally-known artists. Each piece was labeled with a minimum and a maximum bid. This was done so that a piece could be purchased outright if the bidder really wanted it.

Patrons were invited to a special time an hour prior to the auction. A local wine connoisseur (actually a retired Lutheran pastor), provided a "wine-tasting 101" presentation. All other attendees were treated to wine, cheese and deserts. The wine was provided by local vendors at cost.

A piano played in the lobby as guests mingled and talked amid the wine, snacks, and art pieces.

The Buffalo campus ministry has decided to hold these events 18 months apart. Each new event will have a slightly different edge. For example, the event this fall will consist of donated art pieces. A local Lutheran framer will donate his work to frame a piece that is given unframed. The wine presentation will pair certain wines with certain foods, like fruit, cheese, and bread. Eighteen months from now the event will focus on Photography and Spirituality.

For more information contact Gail Riina, St. James Lutheran Church, 1407 North Forest Road, Williamsville, NY 14221. Phone: 716/688-4064

# **CHILI COOK OFF**

**San Diego, California**

**Molly Knutson-Keller, Campus Pastor**

The “Second Annual ‘Hotter Than Thou’ Chili Cook Off” was another great success this year in San Diego. Last year the first-ever event raised \$5,500 and this year it brought in over \$8,500. The money came from individuals, churches, and a Thrivent chapter matching grant.

Here are some details about how the event is structured:

1. Pastors are invited to enter the Chili Cook Off or send someone in their place. Each congregation gives a \$100 “entry/fee donation.” This guarantees raising enough money to get the matching funds.
2. The campus pastor personally calls local clergy to ask them to participate. Last year there were 13 congregations, this year 16, next year 20, hopefully.
3. At the event each pastor/representative brings a crock pot full of chili. In front of the pot is a tip jar. Whoever has the most tips at the end of the event wins the “Golden Ladle.” (A student made the ladle trophy.)
4. Each pastor/participant wears an apron (first year) or a chef’s hat (this year) that says “hotter than thou.” This was ironed on and given out the day of the event.
5. We also provide salad, break sticks, beverages, child care, and face painting.
6. The student music team plays sets throughout the event. Students, campus pastor, or board members talk about campus ministry every 15-20 minutes.
7. A member of a local congregation does the decorations for the event, making the place look festive.
8. The Cook Off runs from 4:00 to 6:00 at a local church. This year’s event was hosted by the winner of the Golden Ladle last year.
9. Set up and clean up are coordinated and done by board and students.
10. This year we realized that we need to have a LEAD kitchen person to make sure we were stocked with everything, such as salad, serving cups, etc.

Costs are low, the only expenses being for the extra food and hats. Both years the hosting church paid for child care. Good music and students present at the event were key this year.

The event has many benefits beyond the raising of funds. Sixteen congregations and over 280 people came out for chili. It not only raises awareness about campus ministry, but it is one of the only events that draw multiple congregations together. It’s fun to watch the friendly competition among pastors as they try to win the Golden Ladle.

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619/583-3972

# **WINE-EDUCATION EVENT**

**Boulder, Colorado**

**Laurel Alexander, Campus Pastor**

The first, annual, wine-education fundraiser at the University of Colorado campus ministry was a huge success. Over 50 people attended the event and more than \$2,000 was raised as net profit for the ministry.

The key to the event was a board member who is savvy about wine and willing to share his expertise with others. Handouts and newsletter inserts were sent to area Lutheran congregations. Postcards were sent to the whole ministry database. Those wishing to attend were asked to RSVP, which helped in the purchase of wine and food. Requested donations were \$35.00, of which \$23.00 was net profit. Many attendees donated more than that, however. Several checks were over \$100.00.

Grace Lutheran Church opened the parish hall for the event. Students assisted in welcoming and serving those who came. The theme was on the movement from old world to new world trends in the wine culture. Four “flights” were offered, moving from light to heavier reds. Light food was provided—cheese, crackers, and fruit. A power point presentation about growing regions provided educational moments.

The only change suggested for next time is to have the presenter stationed at the door, so that people can ask questions or make comments as they are leaving. If there is no one on the board or among volunteers who can do such an event, a local wine distributor can often do it for a fee.

Prior to this, the campus ministry held a combined beer-tasting event and student servant auction.

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