

# Guide to Special Events

## Special Events Overview

The information in this guide was collected from a wide variety of sources: families and friends of the National MPS Society, books, websites, philanthropists and our Fundraising Committee. The Society is excited to share ideas from individuals who have hosted successful special events. We hope that you find it helpful in your fundraising efforts. If you have hosted an event that you don't see in this manual, forward it on to the National MPS Society and we will add it in.

This guide is intended to help with specifics of a fundraising special event. In our efforts to reduce costs and provide electronic documents for our families and friends of the Society, we are providing a digital version of the document. If you'd prefer a hard copy, please contact the office. This guide will explore creative fundraising events and provide assistance and tips about:

- Budgets
- Checklists
- Letterhead
- Invitations
- Solicitation letters
- Thank You Correspondence

Fundraising is a very important part of the National MPS Society. Nearly all fundraising is done by members, friends and volunteers of the Society. The money received from fundraising enables the Society to fulfill our mission statement and goals.

We have been fulfilling our mission and providing assistance to our families for over 47 years. With successful fundraising, the Society is able to support Family Assistance Programs, Research Initiatives, Education and a Legislative platform for MPS and ML.

The National MPS society is a nonprofit organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, therefore donations to the Society are tax deductible. The National MPS Society FEIN is 11-2734849.

If you have further questions please contact Tracy Kirby, Development Director at 919.806.0101 or email her at [tracy@mpssociety.org](mailto:tracy@mpssociety.org).



## Table of Contents

Before the Event	4
Increasing your Networking Opportunities	5
Deciding What Type of Event to Host	6
National MPS Society Sponsored Events	10
Community Fundraising Ideas	11
Fundraising Ideas for Children	15
Planning a Large Event	17
How to Ensure Events Make More Money	20
Media Relations	25
After Your Event is Over	28

## Before the Event

Be sure to contact the National MPS Society. We can help advertise your event on the website and in the eCourage Newsletter. We also have useful marketing materials and templates to help build resources around your event. The Society has insurance and non-profit status information available that may be necessary for your event.

It is also helpful to talk with the Society staff to see which components of your special event we can help with and which ones are best dealt with at your local level. Listed is the contact information for the Society:

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## Tips for Successful Special Events

1. Set a **GOAL** – How much money do you hope to raise? A special event without a goal is like an arrow without a target.
2. Develop a **PLAN** – Create a committee and calculate how much each member of your team must do in order to reach your team's goal. Include a timetable for each member to reach his/her individual goals.
3. Choose an event that has **MEANING** – Select a special event that your family, friends, and community can and will participate in and provide support.
4. Create a **SCHEDULE** – A schedule means calendar of events. Note your key dates: Save the Date; Pre-Launch; Launch; Drive; Event and Conclusion. Select a special event that your family, friends and community will participate in.
5. Be **EXCITED & BE ENTHUSIASTIC** – These are two key ingredients that every special event needs. It really works!
6. **PROMOTE** your event – Promote your event every moment of the day during your fundraising drive. Use press releases, posters, internet, mail, prizes, etc.
7. Use good **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Good accounting practices are important and not too complicated. Remember, you are doing your special event to raise funds for a great cause.
8. Think **SUCCESS!!** – Paint a positive mental image of you and your group achieving success.

## Increase Your Networking Opportunities

This is the key to a successful event. One of the biggest oversights in fundraising is that too much time is spent attempting to raise money from strangers. Successful special event fundraisers make friends before they fundraise. Remember that friendraising is energy intensive, rather than fund intensive. Today, internet use and email contacts are among the top of the list for initial contact and follow up. Be action oriented and bring awareness to your cause and the event.

## Why Donors Give

- Personal relationships
- Support for a cause with clearly stated goals and missions ie; support will come for a new scoreboard rather than for a contribution to the activity fund.
- A donation is received when the Donor is confident that their contribution will make a big difference.
- Donors give when there is something in it for them. It is much easier to ask for the support of a small business owner in your community when you do business with his or her store.
- Donors give because they are asked.

## Fundraising Fundamentals

- You have to ask for what you want.
- Donors respond to people not paper.
- Donors want to know what they are supporting.
- Wealth and generosity are not related.

How many friends can you raise? There is a critical rule called the 5-30-45-20 Rule. When applied to your potential fundraising audience it works like this:

Appeal to Donors begins:

- 5% will respond immediately
- 30% will respond when told how to support
- 45% will respond when they are persuaded to support
- 20% will not respond at all.

Many fundraising attempts fail because they only rely on the initial 5%. They fail to realize that good fundraising is 90% research. By concentrating on friendraising, you are able to reach 80% of your audience rather than just the first 35%.

## Deciding What Kind of Event to Host

A special event can range from a bake sale to a charity dinner! Although black tie events can be very successful, by no means is this the most common type of event. The Society has seen success at raising awareness and funds from both small and large events!

Whatever the event, the appeal has to mean something for potential Donors. Equally important is the awareness the event raises in the mind of your community. The single biggest benefit of an event is not raising money but raising awareness. Through your publicity efforts, good networking skills and by word of mouth, people in your community will become aware of MPS and ML.

A Special Event is an experience that brings people together and raises awareness for an MPS and ML Cause.

The event could be anything from a bake sale, golf outing, casual day, charity dinner, walk/run, online auctions, dances, etc.

Some special events do not raise a lot of money, but they do increase awareness of MPS and ML

## How Large Does Your Event Have To Be?

Only as large as your budget, your community and your volunteers will support!

## Planning

The secret to a good event is in the planning. If you want your event to be truly successful, your planning needs to be thorough and detailed. If you are ready for your event and do it well, you can use your event to maximize awareness in your community, build good relationships with your volunteerism have some fun and raise money.

Planning the event involves making a number of decisions before you get the ball rolling:

- Who will lead the event? Who are your volunteers?
- What kind of event will you host?
- What do you want to accomplish? Are you interested in raising awareness, money, good will or all three?
- Do you have the time and energy to do the event?

Some events become annual events. The anticipation and repeat promotion of the event from year to year helps the community recognize the organization and the cause.

## Choose the Right Leader

With the right leader your volunteer group will be energized. People want to help, and the event will be successful. Your event should consist of a group of volunteers who love doing this sort of thing. Invite people to help that you know will get the job done!

## Choosing the Venue for your Event

It is not realistic to make a large amount of money for your first fundraising event, although we don't want to discourage you, and it has been done! When you have your first committee meeting, spend time on discussing goals and expectations. From your planning, venue options should be chosen, and site visits made. By good planning sessions using the following criteria, venues in your community will become apparent. Set goals with the following:

- Number of people attending
- Cost per person
- Coverage from the media
- Number of volunteers involved
- How many committees needed
- Amount of money raised

### Selecting the Event

Select an event that has meaning for you and will work with your community of friends and family. Be sure to include other MPS families in the area.

- Think about who you want to attend and why
- Know what you want to accomplish from the event
- Consider how the local press will cover such an event
- Complete a budget and be realistic

## Budgeting

Budgeting your event is very important. Here are a few costs that you need to be mindful of when organizing a new fundraising event:

- Venue/Facility (rental fees, insurance, permits, lighting, sound)
- Equipment (tables, chairs, audio-visual equipment, tents)
- Services (catering, housekeeping, transportation, security)
- Entertainment (speakers' fees, performers' fees, bands )
- Publications (invitations, flyers, post cards, tickets, banners, thank you and postage)
- Recognition (gifts, awards, plaques, pins)

*Remember these are considerations. Try to get sponsorship from as many companies as you can. You may be able to get a single sponsor to underwrite the entire event, or get several sponsors. Treat your sponsors well. Recognize their contributions. A small sponsor this year may be a large sponsor next year if treated well.*

## National MPS Society Reimbursement

The National MPS Society will reimburse up to 25% of the expenses associated with a Society sponsored event. It is important to have good communication with the Development Director initially and throughout the event planning stages.

The National MPS Society and Board of Directors have developed a reimbursement policy. The Society wishes for your event to be all around successful and we are excited to mentor you in achieving your goals. It is important that although the Society will cover expenses for your Fundraising Event, we do have some guidelines:

- Fundraiser coordinators should contact the Society office prior to their event to set up an advance of funds and/or a reimbursement plan.
- Family fundraisers may not exceed 25% of expenses.
- For a first time fundraising event, the Society may advance money prior to the event date based on need after an evaluation of the proposed event by the Development Director. If the coordinator of the event has already sent donations to the Society office, they may be reimbursed for expenses up to at least that amount of money, provided that expenses not exceed 25% as stated above.
- For repeat fundraising events the Society will advance expenses prior to receiving any proceeds based on the past performance of the event.
- For repeat events, coordinators may hold their event and reimburse themselves for their documented expenses from the proceeds. They will then send the remaining proceeds to the Society office.
- The Society will not reimburse expenses for alcohol. Coordinators must adhere to local liquor laws and are discouraged from serving alcohol without a licensed bartender.



## Saying Thanks!

Whether you are considering doing another event next year or not, don't forget to say thank you. Say "thank you" to everyone involved.

Saying thank you can be a big task. But it is a very important one. It requires heart-felt recognition for the various parts of putting the event together, from the person stuffing envelopes to the volunteer who put extra hours in during lunch at the printers' office to the neighborhood children who passed out the flyers.

Once your event is over you will need to give the Society a list of the donors who gave \$250.00 or more so that we can properly thank them and provide the required follow up IRS letter.

The rest is up to you! Here are a few suggestions:

- Visit a volunteer to say "Thanks!" personally
- Make a phone call or send a follow-up letter, an email thank you is too informal
- Patron the business that donated to your event
- Hold a thank-you luncheon for all involved
- Create and send thank you note cards



## National MPS Society Sponsored Events

### National MPS Society 5K Walk/Run

The Society provides a very extensive packet with a checklist and all the details for hosting a Walk/Run Event. The two most consistent messages from past event hosts are to start early and get dependable help. Talk to your dependable friends and coworkers about helping. View the walk/run guide for detailed information about hosting an event.



### National MPS Society Gala

The Society hosts a biannual Gala. This event has been held both in person and virtually. Committee help is needed to make this event a success! Volunteers are asked to sell tickets, solicit for sponsorships, acquire auction items, and help plan the event. Reach out to the development team at the Society if you are interested in participating in the Gala Committee.

### Million Dollar Bike Ride

Each year the National MPS Society participates in the University of Pennsylvania's Million Dollar Bike Ride. This event raises money for rare disease research at UPenn. There is often a match involved. In the past, the Society has needed to raise at least \$20,000 to receive the 1-1 match. All donations up to \$30,000 are matched, resulting in \$60,000 for research funding. Members may make a donation to the event or register to ride for Team MPS.

### The Big Bake for MPS and ML

The Big Bake for MPS and ML is an annual event, occurring in the fall. This is an initiative to raise awareness for MPS and ML through community bake sales, a baking competition, and other avenues. Participants are asked to fundraise through their chosen method of participation.

## **Community Fundraising Ideas**

### **Matching Programs**

Does your company have a matching gift program? It could double your support for the Society. Check with your Human Resource department.

### **United Way**

Does your company have United Way pledges at your workplace? You can designate the National MPS Society as your recipient, and the funds will be forwarded to us through the United Way Campaign! Please supply your local united Way agency with the National MPS Society name, address and our Federal ID #11-2734849.

### **Concerts**

There are many different types of concerts you can hold that will attract people. You could hire a community pops band, a college vocal group, or a concert pianist, the list is endless. Many local acts will perform for next to nothing so the cost to you is minimal.

If you have substantial financial resource, you could bring in a national act. This will require some upfront money and some long range (6 months as least) planning but with good promotion this could be a highly profitable event.

### **Talent Night/Trivia Night**

Many communities have a large talent base. You can hold a talent night and charge a small fee at the door for admission.

### **Family Movie Night**

Rent and show some family movies. Charge a small admission fee and then supply snacks for a small amount. (WARNING: please be sure that you are not violating any copyright laws when scheduling a movie night).

### **Theatre**

You could also have a play starring a local youth group. Another option is to hire a local theatre company. Some of them will perform for a percentage of the ticket sales.

## **Restaurant Night**

There are a number of restaurants that will offer a non-profit up to 20% of the proceeds from the nights' proceeds by getting involved with their restaurant. Some good examples of this are Pizza Kitchens and Big Boy Restaurants. You can expand the idea through local merchants as well. This type of fundraising works very well if you have school age children with many local connections! Everyone needs to eat!

## **Backyard Carnival**

If your community has a large grassy area, you could hold a small carnival. Have booths set up with games and activities. Charge a small activity fee for each booth. Hand out small inexpensive prizes that you could have donated by stores. Some fun ideas at booths could be:

- Dunk Tank – Get some important people from your community to sit at the tank, or your child's teacher or even yourself!
- Petting Zoo – Especially for rural areas, you may have access to small farm animals. Kids love to pet and feed animals that they are not used to being around, like sheep and goats.
- Carnival Games – There are many different kinds of games you can play. Ring toss, balloon darts, basketball foul shooting, fishing games, knocking down items with a baseball, etc. Be creative and maybe put a theme spin on the games.
- Food Booths, Cake Walks – What good is a carnival without baked goods! Set up booths that serve many varieties of food.
- Side Show/Bands/Clowns/Entertainment – Be creative and charge admission for live bands or comedy entertainment.

## **Winter Carnival**

If you live in a colder climate, you could take the backyard carnival idea and turn this into a winter theme!

## **Craft Fair**

Ask permission to use your local church school, fellowship hall or gymnasium for a craft fair. Advertise in the local paper to get people who sell crafts interested. Rent a table to them for the day. You can also sell baked goods.

## **Give your Heart to A Child**

Hold a Special Valentine's Day collection – what better way to honor a loved one than giving the gift of a brighter future in his or her name.

## Balloon Tag

Blow up regular balloons with helium and tie strings to them. One person pays \$1.00 to “tag” someone that someone has to wear the balloon. If the “tagged” person pays \$1.00 he doesn’t have to wear the balloon. The “tagged” person can also pay \$2.00 - \$1.00 to not wear the balloon and \$1.00 to “tag” someone else.

## Dinners

Food for a good price always attracts a crowd. Make sure you have a hardworking group of volunteers because dinners need planning and manpower. Also, charge a fair price so everyone including families, can participate.

- Spaghetti Dinner – A low-cost dinner to make on for many people and admission can be worth the net.
- International Dinners – A themed meal that centers around the country
- Potluck – Everyone brings a dish and admission
- Dinner of Many Countries – Host a variety of tables to sample dishes
- Progressive Supper – Moving supper from house to house with a gradual increase in the menu.
- Brunch – A themed brunch with a guest speaker/parent/child

## Flowers

Flowers are a way to express ourselves. Sell Poinsettias for Christmas, Lilies for Easter and Mums for Mother’s Day or Roses for Valentine’s Day.

## Holiday Items

The end of the year holidays are a good fundraiser time. People are always looking for gifts and other items this time of year.



December 5 / 10am-12pm / 4908 Barbara Road, River Oaks, TX

## Cookbooks

If you have a creative, hardworking group you could form a cookbook team to gather recipes, layout the pages, print, bind and distribute the books. It is a lot of hard work, but well worth the effort.

## Yard/Garage/Barn Sales

Have people donate items for a large grounds sale. Then find a good location on a main street and get your yard sale underway. You can use free or cheap advertising in local papers or on the community website to attract bargain hunters. Another possibility is a sale for the entire weekend. Have a number of people hold yard sales at their homes and donate a percentage to the cause.

## Bake Sales

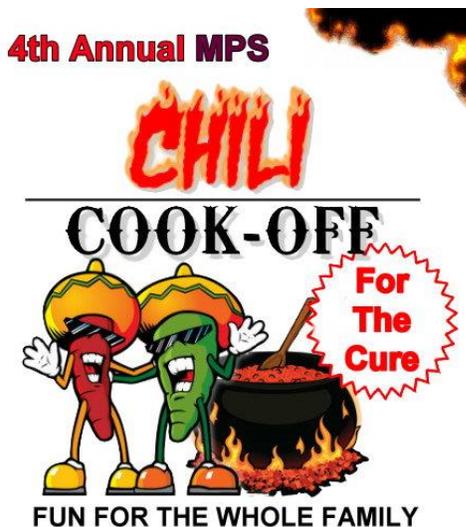
Many people will give a homemade cake or pie to sell at a bake sale. There is always a person in every family who makes something that most people would love to buy. Make sure that you have plenty of Mrs. Smith's best cookies on hand.

## Cornhole Tournaments

Invite teams, have an onside auction and charge per team.

## ???? – A – Thon

There is nothing like getting people to sponsor you to undertake a grueling endurance event. Send the participants out to get sponsors who donate a small amount of money for each mile or hour the event is happening for. At the end of the event the participants collect the money from their sponsors based on the total amount of time or distance they completed.



## **Fundraising Ideas for Children and Siblings**

### **Get to Work**

Offer to mow a neighbor's lawn, rake leaves, or shovel snow. Say that you are collecting money that will help children across the country. Your neighbors might even find other jobs you can do, like cleaning out the garage.

### **Dance-A-Thon**

With your teachers and principal, organize a fundraising dance for your grade. Pick an evening, get parent chaperones and, of course, find a classmate to deejay. Ask for donations at the dance.

### **Collect Pennies**

Ask a grown-up for a clean, empty jar. Every time you get a penny, put it in the jar. When it is full, ask a grown-up to get penny rolls for you. Put 50 pennies into each roll. Then donate the pennies to the National MPS Society.

### **Raffles**

Ask local merchants to donate prized that you can raffle. Increase your contribution and fun by holding a benefit party to pick the winners.

### **In Store Collection**

Ask merchants to put a counter-top collection carton in a safe, high traffic location to collect spare change and dollars from customers.

### **Read-A-Thon**

Select authors from around the world and ask your parents, friends and classmates to pledge money for each book you read!

### **In Lieu Of**

Instead of receiving gifts for a child's birthday they could have their friends and relatives send a monetary donation to the National MPS Society.

## Babysitting

If you make money babysitting for friends and relatives, you could donate a portion to the Society.

### Walk –A-Thon (see sponsored events)

Walk a long distance, 15-20 miles. Get sponsored by the mile. It's also fun to add a theme to the walk or have it in an area that means something to your city or town.

### Bike-A-Thon

Like a walk, only with bicycles.

### Rock-A-Thon

Rock in a rocking chair for hours. Get sponsors by the hour. 55 minutes of chair rocking leads to a 5 minute break.

### Bowl-A-Thon

Raise money bowling. Collect money for total pin count.

### Pitch-A-Thon

Have a radar gun booth to use for pledges to see how fast you can throw a baseball or kick a soccer ball, etc. Supply all pledge sheets, parent information sheets, instructions and advertisements.



## **Planning A Large Event**

This includes events that can justify high admission prices or attract large numbers of people. Examples include: gala dinner-dances, benefit concerts and golf tournaments.

Advantages of these events include:

- High ticket prices can upgrade donors who are willing to give more, or more often
- A fun or prestigious event can attract new donors who may give again in the future
- An event that builds a sense of community strengthens the bonds among people, encouraging everyone to work harder for a common cause
- An event including highly respected people can bolster a group image by association
- Parties can bring in substantial net revenue.

Disadvantages of these events include:

- There is a higher degree of risk, and thorough long planning is essential
- The workload is usually very intense
- Organizations have lost fortunes
- If ticket prices are not high enough, supporters may complain that their money is being wasted on parties instead of being used for the purpose for which it is given
- If ticket prices are too high, supporters who cannot afford the full price may feel excluded and complain that the organizations is becoming elitist

## **Gala Dinner/Dance**

At Christmas or Valentine's Day hold either a winter wonderland dinner and dance or Cupid's dinner and dance.

## **Auctions**

Hold an auction in addition to other activities at a special event.

Why? It allows those who are capable of giving extra a chance to do so. While ticket prices are set for the level most people can afford, there are always a generous few who would give more if you made it appealing. Auctions are an easy way for people to give exactly as much or as little as they want.

Auction items should be donated! If you pay for an auction item you run the risk of losing money. At the very least, you drive your costs up. There are so many wonderful companies and individuals who will donate for an auction.

Sentimental items are usually better than merchandise. Bids for merchandise tend to stop just below the real market value. The price for non-commercial items has not set limit.

Services also work well. For example, dinner cooked by a volunteer who has a talent in the kitchen, gardening by a green-thumb, ride in a local venue, services from home improvement businesses.

A good auctioneer is recommended. An auctioneer who knows what they are doing can get the prices higher, or read the crowds for signs of fatigue. They can pace the expensive items with the low cost fun ones. Ask a professional auctioneer to volunteer time or try a local celebrity who makes a living by talking, such as a radio or TV announcer.

For silent auctions, no auctioneer is needed. Have your item descriptions and bidding sheets set up prior to the event so that participants can bid on their items throughout the event. Have a specific cut off time for bids.

With the increase use of the internet and other blog platforms, online auctioning can be fun and raise awareness.

The National MPS Society has created bid sheets to use for events. It is important to keep good accounting records of auctioned items. Please contact the office for more information.



## Golf Tournaments

Many of our families have hosted golf tournaments. It is a wonderful opportunity to raise funds and awareness for MPS and ML.

Venues for these events can be very costly. It is important to plan. Here are some ideas to help you plan your event:

- Corporate Sponsorship is essential
- Provide levels of giving: Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze
- Seek sponsorship to cover your entire venue costs with one large donor or a few small donors
- Have holes sponsored at your event and market their companies with logos/posters at each hole
- Companies can sponsor the beverage carts
- Host an auction at a luncheon at the conclusion of your tournament
- Ask a guest speaker to communicate information about MPS and Related Diseases during lunch
- Market team ticket prices
- Give awards for top finishers, hole in one, etc.

The Society has many marketing materials developed by our hosting families. Please contact the office and we can provide you with templates for your event.



## How to Ensure Special Events Make More Money

### Get Everything Donated!

Get in-kind donations for every possible expense. No other technique has produced so dramatic a difference in how much money is netted from special events run by grassroots organizations. Anything you pay for can be had for free.

Determine your budget and market your event to businesses and individuals who can donate goods and funds so your event is expense free.

### Networking and Mailing List

Hosting a special event is a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness and hopefully increase donors in the future to your cause. The National MPS Society works hard each day to inform donors and then more importantly at retaining them!

Your event can achieve the same outcome. Building a mailing list for the future will help ensure your event to grow.

How do you get names? Offer a free draw in combination with the purchase price for the event. Make the prize attractive enough that everyone joins in. Have ticket stubs with a place where donors can write down their names and addresses. Make sure that everyone who buys tickets is included on the mailing list even if they don't come to the event.

Once you have found them, make friends of them. Remember it isn't just fundraising it is friendraising. Too many groups leave the names they have gathered from a raffle or an event to collect dust in boxes or worse yet they throw them out.

This is perhaps the most valuable part of a special event. Collect names and addresses of all the people who participate and find a good reason to stay in contact with them more often.

Anyone who has helped you once is likely to help again. At least they've heard of you, even if it was only a name. Finding supporters is one of the hardest jobs a fundraiser has.

### When do you make a Follow-Up Contact?

- Right away to say thank you and share the results
- Within three to four months to ask for financial help on a different project
- To invite them to the next special event

## **Tickets, Tickets, Tickets and How to Price!**

Determine a reasonable rate of return on your ticket sales. When pricing, try to charge twice the cost per person on the event. If you can't keep half the gross returns, the event probably isn't worth doing.

Be reasonable, but don't undercut your ticket prices. While high prices are certainly not for every person, many nonprofits are too worried about capping the upper limits. Check out other events in your area to help you set an admission fee. This is especially important for charity or gala dinners.

## **Multiple Ticket Pricing**

Multiple ticket prices can be essential to your event. In order to reach many markets of people, pricing may need to be different. To accommodate the people who could not afford a regular price ticket, offer a discount for students, senior citizens or children under a certain age. Offer premium-price tickets for those who could give more! Concerts and theatrical productions do this routinely.

Provide incentives for purchasing premium priced tickets. Here is an example:

- For the regular price, you go to the concert
- For an extra donation of \$10, the gold ticket holders get admission and a chance to win a fabulous prize
- For an extra donation of \$25, the platinum ticket holders get all of the above, plus an invitation to a reception afterwards with the star
- For an extra donation of \$50, the diamond ticket holders get all of the above, plus dinner before the show with local celebrity hosts

## **Moving Ticket Sales**

The biggest mistake most groups make is over-estimating how many tickets their supporters can sell. On the average, a ticket seller will sell ten tickets or fewer. A few superstars will sell many more. Their sales will be counter-balanced by those who take a book of tickets and return them unsold.

*To find the total number of tickets you will sell, count your active volunteers, and multiply by ten. Don't expect many strangers to sell tickets for you unless you have a marvelous relationship with a service club. Don't over-estimate how many tickets will be sold through the mail, or in booths at mall, or in ads, or because you got a good story in the media. Most tickets are sold by volunteers asking their friends.*

### Combine Fundraising Ideas in your Event!

- Golf – Luncheon – Speaker – Raffle
- Run – Auction – Logo Items
- Cornhole – Bake Sale – Carnival
- Theatre – Beverage - Auction

### Everything Has A Price!

Many items can become extra sources of income for your event:

- Take photos of attending donors and charge a fee. Have your photography services and film donated
- Charge for parking at your event
- Have a Courage Jar for coat check
- Prepare to have back up items for auction
- Charge for specialty drinks
- Raffle off donated decorations

### Piggyback your Event

Rather than underscoring your own event, sell tickets for another group's production. Selling tickets for an event is hard enough, without the work of renting the hall and arranging the entertainers. Let someone else do that part. Theatre companies and local concert producers are often glad to give a group a substantial discount on tickets that they sell.

Many of the bestselling theatrical performances have charity nights. Shows that are not guaranteed to sell out are even more likely to provide you with a block of seats. Each group helps the other.

Restaurant owners may also host a banquet at far below cost just before they open a new restaurant or during a slow season. It attracts customers and gives the staff practice.

The risk is less for an established event. You will have a larger opportunity of selling more tickets.

It benefits the organizer if there is an established relationship between the cause and the event – a movie about a disabled hero, a restaurant that is accessible, or has Braille menus. But it is fine even if there is no connection.

Piggy-back further by getting a co-sponsor to handle all the publicity. A radio station or a newspaper might like to be seen doing something good for the community. A corporation might sign on as a joint presenter and have the PR group handle the media work. A company that is already sponsoring a theatrical event might be a good risk for a combination like this.

## **Quality Printing and Programs**

Make best use of your programs and distribute them at the event. Pictures speak a thousand words, so utilize them. Whether is a simple two-page flyer or a multi-page extravaganza, it serves important purposes. Here are suggestions:

- Use programs with pictures of individuals living with MPS or ML
- Use the program to thank all of your donors and volunteers. Seeing their name in print makes people feel appreciated. That is important if you want them to help again.
- Have your printing costs donated. Include a section on the back cover thanking the printer for generously donating all the costs.
- Include information about the National MPS Society and our mission. An exciting article about you and your child can make people understand what you do as never before. Perhaps you can get it written free by a talented journalism student who wants clippings for a portfolio. You can also include ads about various projects you hope people will sponsor. It should make people want to donate, so be sure to include a mailing address or the website information so they can donate online.
- Sell ad space in the programs. Your largest donors may get free adds. Others may simply want to include an add that says good luck. It is important to have a volunteer group over see this function of the fundraiser, as this can be time consuming.

## **Avoid Single Shots & Keep your Event Growing!**

Learn from experience – no matter how experienced you are in running special events, each event is an individual and unique! If you are going to invest the time and money in learning how to do it well, be sure it can be repeated. If you are only going to do it once, be sure it makes a lot of money then and there. Most ideas don't. They improve with age. They become part of the community's traditions.

*Stay positive during your first special event and each event thereafter! You may make a few mistakes, but the second time you host an event you will likely raise more money or achieve greater results.*

*Follow Successful Events and Build on Them!*

Trade ideas with your competitors. Ask them what has worked and what has not. Everyone wins when you share information.

## **Keep Files**

Start maintaining files in your home or online and gather ideas throughout the year whether good or bad. It is important to stay organized from one event to the next. By keeping examples for your event.

## Keep Good Accounting Records

We had said it earlier, but it cannot be said enough! It is important to keep good records of your event costs and donations. Here is a quick list:

- Donor's name, address and amount they gave
- Sources of free goods and services
- Volunteer talents
- Who can you ask again
- How much time it really took
- Hidden Costs
- Problems to avoid

## National MPS Society Policies

To ensure that your event is working towards the mission of the National MPS Society and for accounting purposes, the Board of Directors has created three policies that will help with the planning of your event. These policies will also help determine a budget in your phase of planning. At the onset of your event, please contact Tracy Kirby, Development Director at 919.806.0101 or [tracy@mpsociety.org](mailto:tracy@mpsociety.org) and she can provide you with a copy of each of these. They include:

- Reimbursement Policy
- T-Shirt Policy
- Joint Fundraising Policy



## **Media Relations**

### **Effective Press Releases and Public Service Announcements**

There are very specific formats for writing press releases and public service announcements. You will improve the odds that your story will be picked up if you follow them the standard press release format is designed to be used and quickly and easily, so you have every incentive to use it.

Begin by developing the press release and/or public service announcement, (PSA). Include on letterhead, the National MPS Society, a contact phone number address, fax and email. Write “Press Release” or “PSA” at the top right. It should be written on standard letter size (8-1/2”x11”) paper.

The top left of your press release or PSA should read “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” and today’s date or “FOR RELEASE ON....” With the date it is to be released.

The first paragraph should be a brief summary. It should follow a basic “Who, What, Where, When, Why”. This is your only opportunity to get the attention of the reader. If this paragraph interests them, they will continue to read and the chances of them picking up your story increases.

Media announcements transmit facts. Opinions should be expressed in quotes from someone in your group. Clearly state who is being quoted and what relationship they have to your fundraiser.

At the end of the release, you need to indicate that the release has ended with a “#” symbol. If your release goes over one page, type “MORE” at the bottom of the first page. The retype the title and the date on page two, so there is no question which release page 2 goes with.

Try to keep your media announcement to 1 page on a press release and under 60 seconds for a PSA. You will stand a much better chance of it being picked up and printed.

### **Media Tips**

The following media tips were developed by Beth Karas for the National MPS Society. Beth is a reporter for Court TV whose two brothers, Joseph and Jonathan, had ML III (pseudo-Hurler polydystrophy).

To utilize media to tell your story you need to understand the basic process and a few rules.

Keep in mind that without you, the story cannot be told. Likewise, the media could decide to withdraw from the story. So, it is in everyone interest to work together to make the story happen. Television viewers and to some extend readers are attracted to character-driven stories, as opposed to issue driven stories. While the objective is to educate the public about MPS and ML and the National MPS Society (the issue), it can be done successfully through your personal experience (the characters).

## **Contacting the Media**

### **Television**

When reaching out to your local television stations, you should contact the news director or the reporter who is assigned to the health/medical beat.

### **Radio**

Many radio stations have mascots that can come to your event and do a live broadcast. Check their local websites for contacts.

### **Newspapers**

The best contacts at your local newspaper are the lifestyles editor and the managing editor.

***Of course, if you know anyone in the media, use those contacts also.***

Your initial presentation to the media is critical. Whether you do it by letter, phone or in person, you need to grab the attention of the contact immediately. If you write a letter, follow it up in a week or so with a phone call. Keep in mind that it is harder to turn away a person when the meeting is face-to-face, so a personal meeting is best, if possible.

As for the timing of the story, if possible, associate it with an event or with National MPS Awareness Day on May 15th and tie this into your upcoming event. The compelling stories of the children with MPS and ML should speak for themselves. Fact sheets are up to date and available on the website for ancillary materials.

*One objective of getting your story told is to educate people about the National MPS Society. Make sure the reporter has the name, phone number, mailing, and website addresses for the Society. Ask them to refer to the Society in their story. The idea is to have a televised piece, for example, post a full-screen graphic at the end with the information that reads: For more information about MPS and ML, contact the National MPS Society at 919.806.0101. Also log on to its website at [www.mpssociety.org](http://www.mpssociety.org).*

### **When the Television Crew Shows Up at Your Home**

It's likely to be fairly disruptive when a television crew shows up at your home. At a minimum, expect two people, but more likely three or four. The reporter or producer will interview you.

Typically, there is at least one cameraperson and one audio person. The crew will move your furniture, set up lights, and at least one camera, as well as audio equipment. Trust the crew - they know the space they need and how to make the setting and lighting work for them and you.

The most common complaint I hear from people who are not accustomed to dealing with the press is that the interview took an hour or more and only seconds of it were used in the final product. This is not unusual.

It's the way the business works. For a 2–3-minute piece on the nightly news, you can expect to hear/see perhaps 10-30 seconds of sound bites from you. For a longer, magazine-style piece, your contribution will be more. Remember that you are probably not the only person being interviewed for the piece. There may be a doctor, therapist, educator, or legislator who will also speak to the issues.

To help illustrate your or your child's story, the television crew will want to shoot video - or what is called b-roll in the business. (B-roll is pronounced "bee-role" and is a term that originated in the earlier days of television.) Typical b-roll for your story would include "day in the life" video such as you or your child at home, at play, getting ready for school, at physical therapy, etc. - anything that would help tell the story. If the story is for a newspaper or magazine, the still photographer will want the same type of photographs.

If the reporter wants family photos of you or your child, I advise having them shoot the photos at home if possible, rather than turning over the photos to the reporter. (If you give the photos to the reporter or producer, they will, in good faith, promise to return them safely and punctually but that doesn't always happen.) If they videotape the photos while they are in your possession, you can save yourself the headache of tracking them down with the reporter. In the event you do entrust them with your photos, mark the back of them clearly with your name and address.

You may also want to share home videos with the reporter. If so, ask if it's possible to dub the home video from your VCR at your home. If not, it's your call whether to lend the home video to the reporter. (My experience is that the press is more careful about returning home videos than photos.)

Many television and radio reporters will send you a copy or dub of the piece on VHS (or audiotape if radio) once the piece airs. If it's not offered, make sure to ask for it. You are not entitled to the raw video shot at your home or elsewhere for the story. Likewise, you are not entitled to the unpublished still photos taken by the professional photographer. Although you have no right to them, the producer, reporter or photographer may agree to give you some of them.

It is a good policy to know whom you will be dealing with and how to contact them. Get the contact information from the reporter and producer so you can at a minimum, stay informed about the publication date and return of personal items, if any, such as photos or home videos.

Sometimes people who are the subject of a story are under the mistaken belief that they can review the article or see the television or radio script before the piece is published or broadcast. You have NO RIGHT to review the media's work before the publication date. Of course, if there are errors or if you are misquoted, you can and should contact the reporter and/or managing editor by letter or phone.

## After your Event is Over

To make the process run more smoothly, please ask your donors to make their checks payable to the National MPS Society and include their name, address and phone. We will also need to know if the donor received any goods or services in exchange for their donation. The IRS only allows charitable deduction credit for the excess of the donation over the goods or services received by the donor.

For Example:

*Mr. Smith has a golf outing. Joe writes a check for \$1000 which allows him to play golf. If the green's fees were \$100.00, the actual donation amount is \$900.00. The IRS letter would recognize the \$900.00 as Joe's donation.*

For more information on IRS regulations or any other follow up procedures, please contact the Society office directly.

When sending in your donations to the Society office, please include:

- Deposit Transmittal Form
- Event Recap Form
- Photos and story about your event!

Please utilize certified mail when sending in multiple checks or if you have a larger event please contact the Society office and we will provide you with our Federal Express account number. Today, it is important that we secure our donations and keep them safe for their due intentions. Lost mail is never acceptable to a Donor.

If you are including matching gifts from companies, be sure to include the check attached to the form from the employer or have the proper paperwork filled out online by the employer.

If any of your donors would like to make their gift via a credit card – point them in the direction of the website at [www.mpsociety.org](http://www.mpsociety.org). They can make online donations, 24 hours a day and at their convenience. Be sure to inform them to reference your fundraising event in the donation.

**On behalf of the National MPS Society and the Fundraising Committee, THANK YOU for all of your daily efforts in raising awareness and funds for MPS and ML. Together, we can find therapies and treatments everyone impacted by MPS or ML.**