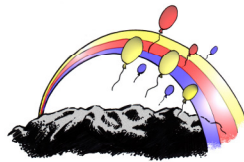


HOW TO HOST A SOFT CONFERENCE



By: Jim Dye & Steve Wagner

Getting Started

- Selecting a Hotel
- Establish a Working Budget
- Other Items
- Conference Committee
- Take Aways
 - Review-SOFT Conference Planning Manual (CD)
 - Salt Lake 2007 Budget (CD)

Selecting a Hotel

- Consider ADA requirements
- Meeting Space
 - Rooms: 4-5 Workshop rooms, 1 Registration room (area), 1 Memory Room, 1 Day Care room
- Look at total value of property
 - (Free Breakfast, Meeting Space=Catering, banquet facilities, etc.)
- Location to other events
 - (Picnic, Outings, Clinics, etc.)
- Located by some creature comforts
 - (Dining, Shopping, transportation, etc.)
- Try to avoid holiday weeks-added challenges
- National signs all contracts

Working Budget

- Review Previous Conference Budgets
- Start with attendance numbers from previous Conference
 - Good starting place-adjust weekly last 6 weeks
- Consider cost of moving people around
 - Transportation can be very expensive
- Conference dues
 - Dues=Food Costs+ Smaller misc Costs
 - All monies run through National
- Make all events self-funded
 - Picnic Food (\$10)+Transportation (\$9)+Entertainment(\$5), Misc. Supplies(\$1)=\$25

Other Key Items

- Daycare
 - Soft & Sibs
- Outings
 - Usually 3 to 8 & 9 & older
 - Self Funded
- Auction
 - Income source
- Volunteers
 - Daycare, Clinics, Workshops, Picnic
 - Friends, Family, Church, Service Club, etc.
- Church Service

Conference Committee

- Explore everyone's talents
 - The Planner, the Organizer, the Fun Person, the Cheerleader, the Fundraiser or the Machine
- Explore everyone's network
 - We all know different people, there is a way every one can help
- Delegate
 - Divide up tasks based on talents
- Communication
 - Meetings, E-mails, Phone Conferences
- Committee Size

The Reason We Gather

- Family Support
- Workshops
- Clinics
- Balloon Release
- Picnic

Planning Workshops

- Make of list of Workshops
 - Choose 16-20 to start
 - Brainstorm with your Committee
 - Poll long time conference attendees
 - Both w/Kids and without
 - Utilize network
 - Current or past caregivers
- Location
 - Dry run with hotel as needed
- A/V equipment needed
 - Utilize questionnaire to gather information
- Bio's
 - Utilize questionnaire 4-6 weeks prior

Planning Clinics

- Partner With Hospital
- Teaching Hospitals are more open to our situation. Benefits learning for all
- Network with someone at the hospital
- Ask current caregivers for help
- Utilize John Carey-He knows everyone

Planning Picnic

- Location
 - Consider Transportation Costs
 - Balloon release friendly
 - Support for picnic
 - Tables, chairs, shade, restrooms, etc.
- Invite Major Donors as a thank you
- Food
- Entertainment
 - Sound System a must
 - Blow Ups, Boats, Etc.-Wish List
- **BALLOON RELEASE**
 - 200-250 Balloons
 - Programs, Helium, etc

Misc. Planning

- Welcome Dinner
- Auction
 - Start Early, Cast a wide Net
- Conference Theme

Financial Considerations

- Income
- Expenses
- Wish Lists
- Budget Reviews

Income

- Dues
- Donations from members
- Fund Raising
 - Car Washes, Yard Sales, Family, Friends, etc.
- Corporate Donations
 - Local Companies very receptive
- Donations in Kind
 - Corp Sponsors, Local Industry, etc.
 - Donations in kind to offset traditional cost
- Auction Items
 - Artists, Sport Teams, Local Businesses, Friends, Family, etc.
- Sponsorship of major events or expenses

Expense

- Food
 - Dinner, Picnic,
- Transportation
 - Depending on venues
- Event Insurance
- Must Haves
 - Clinics, Workshops, Picnic
- Wish List
 - Goodies (Bags, Blankets, Entertainment, etc)

Wish List

- Printed Lanyards
- Inflatable for picnic
- Menu Choices
- Bags, Gifts, Pens, asst goodies
- A/V equipment
- Entertainment

Back to the Budget

- Revisit & update weekly
- Prioritize Wish list-Add in as income grows
- Take care of the basics-1st
- Making the Impossible-Possible
 - We reduced our expense \$10K from 2003
 - Slightly lower attendance
 - More Cheap Thrills
- Completely different path than 2003

Conference Manual

- Suggested Topics
 - Welcome Section
 - Conference Schedules
 - Workshop Information
 - Maps/Activities/Events
 - Conference Attendees
 - Conference Committee-Contact Info
 - Contributors List

National Support

- Registration Materials
- Mailing
- Name Tags
- Seed Money
- Board Meeting Food
- Chapter Chair Luncheon
- Registration Support
- Data Capture

BIG FINISH

- Start Small
- Stay to your Budget
- Only Add as income grows
- Don't be afraid to ask others
- Utilize the knowledge of those that have hosted before
 - Chicago, Boston, Rochester & Salt Lake

Question & Answer

