



FUNDRAISING POP-UPS

Houston Symphony League Orchestra Size: Group 1 Metro Houston: 6.4 million
615 Louisiana St., Ste. 102
Houston, Texas 77002

Presenter: April Lykos
aprillykos@aol.com
(713) 516-2270



Project Description:

The Houston Symphony League was determined to meet the financial goal for the Symphony's major holiday fundraiser. How could they leverage all their skills and creativity toward making financial goals and raising money in these times?

With out-of-the-box thinking came the concept of Pop-Ups. Pop-Ups are mini-fundraisers of unlimited variety, held to raise money and contribute toward the goal of a major event.

The major event to be supported was Magical Musical Morning (MMM), an annual holiday program that supports the Houston Symphony's Education and Community Outreach. The goal was \$70,000.

To assist in meeting this goal, the League created two Pop-Ups: (i) Magical Musical Morning Salon Concert; and (ii) Magical Musical Morning Tea at Kiran's.

Purpose and Goals:

(i) raise money for MMM; (ii) delightfully engage audiences at a salon concert/dinner in a donor home with a HS musician *and* at a morning tea enhanced by a harpist, champagne and fascinators; (iii) hold events geared toward adults, where MMM is geared toward children and grandchildren; (iv) develop potential new patrons for MMM and the Houston Symphony by targeted invitations for each Pop-Up; (v) capture attendees who may otherwise not be able to support the major event, due to ticket price, timing, interest, etc.; and (vi) have fun and fellowship with patrons, league members, musicians and symphony subscribers!

Motivation and Need:

The League is always assessing how they can raise more net revenues and open opportunities to increase their membership base. The Pop-Ups achieved that and more. Its targeted, smaller scale and unlimited themes made it a perfect base to raise money and highlight the attributes of the League and the Symphony – thus, becoming attractive to donors and new members alike.

New Information/Ideas gained from the Project:

(i) The 'Pearls of the Symphony' were created; these are League volunteers who acted as hostesses/ambassadors and were assigned to different rooms/guests. They also made party favors ahead of time in the host's home; (ii) Pop-Ups are a great source of additional revenue and a way to gain traction for a larger event. The major event gets several financial 'bites at the apple' instead of just one; (iii) The musician/attendee interaction was fun and engaging; (iv) Donor support is not one-size-fits-all; we raised money for the whole by providing unique, smaller, targeted and special micro-events that raised money to support the larger need; and (v) The events were lovely and a fun time was had by all!

Volunteer Requirements: – Number of volunteers and how were they used?

Salon Concert: 15, including the Pearls of the Symphony. The Pearls acted as hostesses in each room location and were assigned to 14-16 guests. They utilized color coding to assign guests to three different rooms for cocktails, dinner and conversation. They led the guests into the concert area for the performance.

Tea at Kiran's: 3 Chairmen worked with Chef Kiran, considered the 'godmother of Indian fine dining,' to plan the menu; the Chairs provided champagne and guest favors, including fascinator hats made by one of the Chairs. On-site, the 3 Chairs, along with 2 Symphony staff were on hand to ensure a seamless event. Some of the Pearls were guests and also acted as helpful volunteers.

Timeline:

The beauty of Fundraising Pop-Ups is that they can be conceived, directed and executed in very short order.

Salon Concert: In September, planning for the November 10, 2019 event began. Betty Tutor, VP of Fundraising conceived the idea and put it in motion. One of the Pearls created the invitation. In October, invitations were sent. In early November, the Pearls met at Betty's house and worked on cookie favors. Betty organized the meal and musicians. Event was held Sunday, November 10, 2019.

Tea at Kiran's: In March, 2020 the idea was developed at a meeting for MMM. In May, event date was set. In late August, the Chairs met and drafted the invitation. In October, the invitations were sent and the event was promoted at various League meetings and events for the Saturday, November 2, 2019 tea.

Fundraising:

The expenses for the Fundraising Pop-Ups are typically donated by the hosts; they can be as small or as large as the donor wants and are limited only by one's imagination. Several people can participate. The net revenue generated: \$6,000 - Salon Concert and \$4,000 - Tea at Kiran's.

Overall, the Magical Musical Morning major event raised \$107,500 (goal was \$70,000). The net revenue was \$80,000. **\$10,000 of that net revenue was contributed by the Pop-Ups.** Not only did the Pop-Ups contribute directly to the bottom line, but they also added excitement and build-up throughout the Symphony community and beyond. People who supported a Pop-Up felt excited about supporting MMM, whether they were attending or not. League members who may not generally get involved with MMM were excited about the Pop-Ups, which led to their interest in MMM. A win-win situation!