



This manual is part of Sofia Squizziato's Gold Award where she organized a 3K Event and collected toys and supplies for care packages that got sent to Pediatric Cancer Warriors in six hospitals in six different states. For more information on how to plan an event, ideas for an event, or simply some help for your fundraising/awareness event ideas, please reach out to sofia@withgraceinitiative.org.

Organizing an event can be stressful and take up a lot of time. However, knowing you are working towards a good cause and changing lives makes it all worth it. Before you get started, take a look at these helpful tips and reminders to make sure you have everything you need.

1. **Pick a cause you are passionate about.** Whether it involves people, animals, or the environment, there are thousands of causes you could choose to support. Pay close attention to the communities you spend time in during your day, or the communities you wish you could help.
2. **Brainstorm how you will support your cause.** Take a creative approach. Remember: Support is not only in the form of funding. You can raise awareness, collect supplies, make cards, or even share stories of people willing to speak up. Everything amounts to something.
3. **Find who you need to talk to.** It's all about the connections. Talking to adults or people in a higher position can be intimidating. Remember: They are humans too! Make sure to state exactly what it is you want to do and why you want to do it. Be confident in yourself and your initiative to help.
4. **Set a realistic budget.** One of the biggest mistakes people make when planning events is spending too much money. Now, this may not be an issue if the purpose of your event is to raise awareness and you have unlimited funds. However, this is not the case for most events. Keep in mind that the more you spend, the more your budget will cut into your donations.
 - a. **Get discounts!** Oftentimes if you talk to vendors and explain the cause for your event, they will have discounts they can offer you. Always ask for discounts, the worst they can say is no.
5. **Advertise, advertise, advertise!** This is the most critical step in the process, and also the hardest. I have found it helpful to create flyers with QR codes or send emails with direct links. The easier it is for people to learn about your event and its cause, the more likely they are to show their support.
 - a. **Flyers:** Flyers are also a key aspect to successfully executing an event. You don't want it to be too cluttered or to have too many words. For flyers, simpler is better. Make sure to ask your local coffee shops to hang them up. People waiting for their coffee are bored and often take a look at the flyers on the walls.
 - b. **Advertise your results.** Advertising after your event is almost as critical as advertising prior to your event. If people see the results from your event, they are



more likely to participate in the future. Write an article for your local newspaper, use social media, or add it to your announcements at school.

6. **Plan your Supplies.** Do not leave this step for the week before your event. If you plan ahead, you can make sure to get the best prices and not have to worry about shipping taking too long if you have to order supplies. I tend to make a Google Doc with a list of supplies I will need and what I already have. This helps me keep track of my supplies, and is an automatic checklist as I load up my car the day of the event. (It is also helpful to make the google doc a few weeks in advance. This gives you more time to remember the small things you should always have such as tape, a donations box, and extra flyers - all commonly forgotten items)
7. **Create a chart for volunteers.** Also an honorable mention: Set up jobs for volunteers before the event. I have found that people's availability tends to change at the last minute. Having each volunteer assigned to a specific part of your event ensures you:
 - 1) Have enough people
 - 2) can reorganize jobs easily if availability of your volunteers changes
 - 3) can plan how much time you need for set up/clean up depending on how many people can come at those times
8. **Timing for Set Up.** Whatever time you think you will need, double it. You can never start setting up too early. This gives you buffer time in case you forgot something at home, there is traffic, or the weather doesn't cooperate. Better to be safe than sorry!

Helpful Reminders

1. **Don't get intimidated.** By the amount of work needed to be done, or the people you have to talk to. Planning an event is a lot of work and can cause stress. However, if you break it down and plan ahead, you will be able to manage it. Be confident in yourself and your ability to help others. If not, fake it 'till you make it!!
2. **Don't Assign Yourself a Job During the Event.** I know the feeling of wanting to do everything yourself to make sure it's perfect. The image you created in your head of how the event should run is hard to get on paper. However, you need to be able to delegate during your event. Not assigning yourself a specific job allows you to float around and make sure things are running smoothly, everywhere. This also gives you the freedom to take pictures and videos, talk to the people who come to support (highly recommended), and have some time to breathe.
 - a. Documenting events and posting them after is the best way to get the word out for the next time you plan a similar event! You can never have too many pictures and videos.



3. **Be proud, no matter what.** This is the most important reminder. Planning and executing a successful event is difficult and tedious. You may set expectations in your head for the amount of people to come, the amount of money raised, or the amount of supplies collected. However, you may not always reach these expectations, and that is okay. The most important takeaway from your event is to know that you are making a difference. Learn from your mistakes, but don't dwell on them. You did not fail if you did not reach all of your goals. You simply learned how to improve for next time :)