



Alpha Rho Chi

National Professional Fraternity
Architecture and the Allied Arts



HOW TO

Stage a Charity Concert

by Danielle Likvan, Anthemios Alumna

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When you have determined to hold a concert or other fundraising event for charity, you have a great task ahead of you, but one full of enjoyment. If you plan well and have great support, it will be a wonderful event.

In the fall of 2006, the Anthemios chapter hosted a charity fundraising concert at a bar on campus. The event was meant to break the chapter into a recurring fundraising event that would help a charity close to the chapter's heart – Habitat for Humanity. The event did not occur again until this year, however it was attempted in 2007. The chapter decided not to go through with it after running into some obstacles.

An alumni member and the recruitment chairmen did the planning for the event. It began over the summer of 2006 with a revamped recruitment program. The event was to be a kick-off to the semester and was used to gain exposure on the entire campus. The students created tee shirts to promote the event, as well as flyers that were hung around campus. They printed tickets, and each active member was tasked with selling at least 5 at \$5 each. As the chapter didn't have much to do with the planning, they may have not taken a complete stake in the project. Be sure to have buy-in from all members so they feel they are an integral part of the process.

The bands were known to the coordinator, and did the event for quite a cheap price. One of the bands backed out about two weeks before, but they provided a great replacement. Sometimes unexpected things like this can happen, and it's best to be prepared for them. We weren't prepared for this, but luckily it worked out just fine.

The bar was very easygoing, and provided meals to the bands. The bar saw that we brought a lot of business to their establishment at a not generally busy time of day (early afternoon), and were grateful and open to our group. Everything went very smoothly and the event was full, though we did not have a budget plan so we did not have an amount in mind that we wanted to raise. The event only raised a few hundred dollars and Habitat for Humanity was of course grateful, though in the future it would be more beneficial to have a budget in mind so after the bills are paid, the charity gets a decent amount from the event.

Below you will find the basic steps you need to consider when planning your event. Further down you will find a detailed outline with specifics for each step. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Danielle Likvan at (847) 612-8816 or dlikvan@gmail.com.

Basic Steps

Discuss the idea with the chapter

Get everyone on board and brainstorm what kind of event you want to hold. Determine specifically who in the chapter will be involved with planning. You may choose to have a committee, or you may choose to involve the entire chapter. Either way, you need to determine how each person will be involved.

Choose the charity or non-profit organization you want to support

If you find a charity you like but are unfamiliar with them (i.e. have not worked or volunteered with them before), or are looking into a specialty charity that may not be well known, be sure to

thoroughly research the organization. You can find information online on the charity's website, or by calling their office.

Contact the organization and let them know of your intentions

You should get authorization from the charity before proceeding with the event. It would be great if the organization had a chapter on campus so they can be involved in planning the event as well.

Determine what kind of show you want to put on

Music? Acts? Dance teams? How many acts do you want to have? If you are connected to any local bands or acts, it might be beneficial to contact them to see if they can do the event on the cheap. Groups at your university may do it for free.

Determine the date and a backup date

If for some reason the venue or the acts are not available on a particular day, you need to have a substitute. Be sure the majority (if not all) of the chapter is available on both of these dates.

Have a back-up plan

What will you do if an act backs out at the last minute? Do you have a substitute?

Create a budget

What you can spend on this event will be based on the current available funds within the chapter, funds expected to be raised from sponsors, as well as any money you plan to raise for the event. The budget must be strictly kept in order to be able to donate the most money to the charity. If you plan on only using funds from the chapter to pay for the acts, venue, marketing, etc, then seeing how much you end up with after the event, by the time you pay the chapter back for what they've put into the event, there may not be a lot of money to donate to the charity (which is the whole point). Budget properly and find outside sponsors.

Determine how much money you want to donate to the charity

This will determine ticket prices as well as how many people you need to attend in order to be successful. If you choose a venue with a maximum occupancy, determine if that is enough people to provide the amount of money you want. For example, if you want to be able to donate \$1000, but the venue only holds 250 people, you will need to advertise like crazy to fill the venue, and charge each person a minimum of \$4 in order to make it to \$1000. Be advised that you may not get the amount of people you're hoping for, so you may need to raise your price in order to hit your target. However, if you raise the price too high, you may not get the attendees, especially if they're students. This can be resolved partially by advertising in the local newspaper or on the radio as those advertisements will reach people outside of the school.

Create a calendar

This will keep you and your team on track. Be sure to hold everyone accountable to the calendar. If there are multiple things required of the venue or acts, they may benefit from a calendar as well so it is made very clear what you expect out of them and by when you expect it.

Contact the venue and the acts

Be sure to discuss the program with them, and let them know it's a charity fundraiser. They may give you a reduced cost if they know the money from the event is going to a charity. If you're going to audition the acts first, you will need to plan for more time in order to coordinate all of those schedules.

Identify specials the venue can provide on food and drinks to your attendees

For example, say you do it at a bar. You will be bringing in more patrons than normal at that time of day, so they may give your guests a discount on their purchases. Also, you might want to see if the venue will provide food and non-alcoholic beverages to the acts. If not, you should look at your budget to see if you have enough money to purchase them for the acts.

Create a cohesive graphics package

This will give the program a professional look and feel, and in turn will bring more attendees. What you need to produce may include:

- Tee shirts for the chapter members (and your friends) to wear (walking advertisements)
- Tee shirts for purchase at the event (not necessary but nice if you have the money)
- Tickets
- Posters
- Website
- Emails
- Flyers to hang around campus and local places of business (be sure you have permission to post flyers before you get out that stapler)
- Programs for the day of the event (not necessary but nice if you have the money)

Contact potential sponsors and donors

Ask them to participate in the event and if they are interested in donating prizes and gifts for a raffle or silent auction. In return, you can inform them that the donations are tax deductible (if it's a nonprofit organization) as well as free advertising and promotion for their business or company.

Advertise early and often

You have endless options – newspapers, radio, school bulletin boards, and of course, the internet. Keep it as cheap as possible, but you do have to weigh your cost benefit. Is it worth it to spend more money on an advertising space with the possibility more people will see it, and therefore attend your event? Or do you play it safe and advertise only where you can afford it? If you don't have a lot of funding and aren't expecting to bring in a lot of money from the event, it may be best to use cheaper or free advertising options.

Get everything in writing

This is incredibly important. Get a contract from the venue (they normally will have one already created). Get a contract from the band. If they're a newer band they may not have one created, but you can find basic ones online. If anything goes awry, you want to be sure you're not out any money. Read through all contracts thoroughly. If you have questions, ask. This is not the time to think you know everything about contracts. Read them line-by-line and discuss anything you need to with the venue and acts.

Suggested Planning Calendar

Spring Semester:

Hold a planning session for your fall semester.

- Determine what events to hold, including the charity event.
 - Name the committee for the event. If the entire chapter will be planning the event, be sure to divide up the roles.
 - Name a “point person.” This person will be the one the venue, bands, charity, etc contacts. This person should be in the know about everything and be able to help anyone with questions. Most chapters will probably divvy up the venue, band, and charity to different people, and that’s fine. Just be sure to have one dedicated point person for each part of the event so no lines get crossed.
- Determine roles of the committee, tasks, and a timeline. The committees should include:
 - Marketing - This committee will create the graphics package, create products, hang posters, talk with classes, teachers, and sponsors.
 - Talent Scouting - This committee finds talented acts for the event. They will call the managers and work out an agreement with the acts. They, or the dedicated point person, will sign the contract and be responsible for taking care of the acts while at the event (making sure they are comfortable and have food/drink, and that they are paid in their preferred method at the end of the show – fraternity check or in cash).
 - Chapter Involvement - This committee will keep the entire chapter up to date on what is going on, what is expected from them, and by when it is expected.
 - City Communications - Do you need any permits from the city? Do you need to inform the police or campus patrol? Is there enough parking for everyone, and if not, is there anywhere for overflow parking?
 - There may be more committees that you need as you go along. Create these as necessary.
 - Create a timeline for the planning. This may be easiest to do starting at the event date and working backward.
 - Choose the event date.
 - Be sure it is on a date when most students are likely to come, not necessarily on a holiday weekend when many students go out of town, or on a school night when people have class the next morning.
 - If you choose to do this event regularly and it becomes big enough, you may be able to do it on a school night or holiday weekend because people will go to it no matter what.

- Determine the timeline for creating graphics. Say this will take 2 weeks. You must also look at how long it will take to get the graphic to the printer, make any revisions, then print and deliver the products you are outsourcing.
 - If you are printing posters, tickets or programs yourselves, be sure to include how much time this will take to do. Don't underestimate the length of time it takes to print and put these things together. (Also be sure to remember the cost of paper/ink in your budget!)
 - If you have to inform the venue of your expected guest count, you must have a date by which all tickets have to be purchased. If you do not, you can most likely sell tickets at the door.
 - Determine when you will be contacting the venues and acts, and when you will follow up. Remember they generally schedule far in advance, so you can never call too early. If you do happen to call earlier than they're booking, they will let you know when they open their calendar to book new events.
- Plan weekly or bi-monthly chapter meetings to discuss the event.
 - Plan a final chapter meeting prior to the event to catch up on any loose ends.
 - Create a budget. This is absolutely necessary in order for your event to be successful.
 - As mentioned above, be sure to include the cost of paper and ink if you are printing yourself.
 - When looking at tee shirt costs, look at price of colors. Some colors may be more expensive than others.
 - You can ask for donations, but don't depend on them.
 - Ask for donations but do not depend on getting them in time for your event. If you contact a huge company such as American Apparel for a donation of tee shirts for your event, the email may or may not be read, and if so, it takes a long time for them to get back to you, if at all.
 - If you're serious about getting products donated, go to smaller, local companies, or ask your chapter if they have connections through their parents, and work face-to-face with them. This will increase your chances of receiving donations.
 - Include cost of bands/acts.
 - Include cost of venue, if any.
 - Include food and drink at the venue if you will be purchasing it for the band/acts.

- Include cost of any permits necessary.
- Choose at least 3 venues to contact.
- Choose at least 3 acts to contact.

Summer:

May-June:

- Contact the acts. Important things to ask:
 - What is your basic price?
 - What is your timeline for a typical event?
 - How long do they need to set up? Break down?
 - How long is your set?
 - What kind of electrical hookups do you require?
 - How would you like to be paid? Cash or check?
 - If you have to back out at the last second, will you find your replacement?
 - This is important – if the act backs out for whatever reason, you may already have all of your products printed. Be sure there is something in the contract that works through this.
 - Be sure to determine what 'last second' is. You may think three months out is cutting it close. They may think three weeks is enough notice. Be clear.
 - If you have to back out at the last second, will you refund us for the materials we've printed with your logo on them?
 - Can you promote this event on your website?
 - Can you sell tickets to the event as well?
 - If so, determine how the money exchange will occur. Get it in writing.
 - Do you have a trailer for your equipment?
 - They will need to unload their equipment at the venue, so be sure the venue can accommodate them.
- Contact the venue. Important things to ask:

- Are they able to accommodate a band or other acts in terms of hookups for audio/visual equipment?
- Is there a place for the band to park while they unload their equipment?
- Is there a noise curfew?
- What is the age limit at the location? If it is 19 or 21, will they allow under-agers to attend the event if they are marked on their hands or get a different color wristband?
- How long will they allow you to hold your event?
 - Some venues have lower attendance during the afternoon and will welcome an event in the early evening hours. They may not want to alienate their patrons during the evening if they normally do pretty well without a band.
- Is there a security deposit required?
- Is a payment for use of the space required?
- Can you promote this event on your website?
- (If they provide food) Will you provide those who purchase a ticket with a discount on food or beverages?
- Will you provide a discount to the band on food or beverage?
- Can the chapter sell tickets at the door?
- What happens if someone wants to enter the venue but does not want to pay for the concert?
 - Generally this happens when there are multiple spaces at the venue. Some people want to come in and go to another section and not listen to the band or watch the acts. You generally cannot ban that person from entering without paying, even if they do end up watching your show.
 - If you're holding an event where it is only your event and no other activities (such as if you're holding it at a theater instead of a bar/concert venue), you should be able to sell tickets at the door.

June:

- Committee prepares graphic package. Create a logo/theme. Be sure to include:
 - Name of event (For example, "Rock for Humanity")
 - Date of event (For example, Friday, September 17, 2010)

- Purpose of event (For example, Support Habitat for Humanity)
- Name of acts (For example, With Ha Ha Tonka and Treaty of Paris)
 - You can generally use the logos of the bands on your products. Be sure to ask the bands for these files or ask if you can create your own. Sometimes smaller bands will be ok with your making a logo of your own.
 - Price of event (For example, \$5 presale, \$6 at the door)
- The amount of proceeds going to the charity. You can give a percentage or a dollar amount.
 - For example, \$3 of each ticket purchase goes straight to the local chapter of the American Red Cross.
 - For example, 100% of the proceeds go to the Avon Foundation.
- Incorporate the logo/theme into the tickets, tee shirts, posters, giveaways, programs, etc.

June – July:

- Contact local sponsors to see if you can bring in some donations. Offer to put their logo on the tee shirts/tickets/programs, etc. This is best done by the following methods.
 - Do some research on the business to see who handles their donations. This may be available on their website. If you don't know, it is acceptable to call the main line and ask for a contact name.
 - Send the contact a professional, straightforward letter explaining Alpha Rho Chi, the event you plan to put on, and specifically how you want them to help. Being vague will end up in their not wanting to help you. Saying 'we would appreciate your support' or 'we would appreciate your assistance' doesn't tell them what you want. Say, 'We would appreciate a donation of 200 tee shirts' or 'we would appreciate very much if you would donate five sandwich platters for the event.' That lets them know exactly what you want.
 - Be willing to negotiate. Not every business will want to donate everything you need, but they might be willing to donate a portion.
 - Mention a date by which you will contact them if you have not heard from them. It is best to give them at least 5 business days.
 - Follow up with the business by contacting the person to whom you sent the letter.
 - If they would like to meet with you, schedule a meeting date in person and confirm the attendees. If you're bringing two chapter members to the meeting, let them know.

- If they decline, thank them for their time and ask if you may contact them in the future. If they say no, take them off the list. If they say yes, contact them for your next event. They may be going through financial difficulty, or perhaps they don't have time right now to schedule a donation.

July – August:

- Print the products prior to the beginning of the school year.
 - If you are outsourcing the products:
 - Be sure you will have them in hand when the school year starts.
 - If you are printing the products yourself:
 - Get a group together to print, or have one volunteer do it all. This will be time consuming, but the quality will be consistent.
- Contact friends and sell tickets prior to the start of the fall semester.
 - This can be done very easily through email and Facebook. You can ask family or friends to donate to the cause even if they can't attend.
- Post event on your website.
 - Use PayPal if possible for ticket sales online.
- Create a Facebook page for the event and invite all of your friends.
 - Ask the chapter to invite their friends also.
- Contact other student groups and let them know of the event.
 - Perhaps you can offer a discount to those groups if they mention their affiliation when purchasing a ticket.
- Contact your teachers for the fall classes and let them know about the event.
- Contact your chapter advisor and ask them to help you promote the event.

Fall Semester:

At your first chapter meeting, discuss the event and get everyone on the same page. Allow each committee to explain what they've been up to. Let the chapter know the timeline and what is expected of them.

- Have weekly check-in meetings leading up to the event to be sure the chapter is staying on task.
 - Schedule these in advance and stick to them. Don't schedule them week-by-week.

- Post flyers, send emails, and update Facebook throughout the weeks leading up to the event.
- Schedule the chapter members to speak to classes once a week. Don't limit this to architecture classes. Include all courses the chapter is taking.
- Distribute the tee shirts for the chapter and remind everyone to wear them often.
 - Remember, you are walking advertisements!
- Determine how many remaining tickets you must sell.
 - The tickets might not have all been sold over the summer.
 - Divide the tickets per each chapter member and get a commitment from them to sell the tickets by a certain date. Decide if they must pay for the tickets in advance and then keep the money they collect when selling the tickets, or if they are required to bring the money they collect back to the treasurer.
- Follow up with the band, venue, and vendors to make sure everything is still good to go.
- Have a final meeting prior to the event to be sure everything is going to plan and everyone's on the same page for the event day.
- There are a few tasks for the day of the event, however, most of the tasks should be covered by the committees.
 - If you can sell tickets on location, you need a point person.
 - Make sure the band is taken care of.
 - Make sure all monies have been exchanged between venue (if necessary) and the band.
 - Make sure the chapter is mingling and talking to people.
 - Determine how the donation to the charity will take place.
 - Will you do it at the event? When? Before, between acts, or after?
 - Will you do it at your chapter's location/meeting place, or the charity's?
 - Who will give the money? The president, the executive board, or the entire chapter?

There are many things to consider while putting this huge event together and it may seem completely overwhelming. If you take it bit by bit, it is manageable and well worth it in the end. Good luck! And remember, if you have any questions, please contact Danielle Likvan, (847) 612-8816 or dlikvan@gmail.com.