Women’s Symphony League of Austin

*Awards of Excellence: Tue, Jun 6  9:00 am, #2*

Red Haute Valentine Party & Children’s Styleshow

Presenter: Eledith Falk

**CLICK TO BEGIN**

**SLIDE 1   TITLE & INTRO**

Our thanks to the Volunteer Council for this recognition of one of our signature projects. I am pleased to present the Red Haute Valentine Party to you today.

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**SLIDE 2   CHALLENGES (NOTE: added to support goals)**

Founded in 1953, Women’s Symphony League enjoyed years of vibrant events and fundraising success. However, in 2012, we found ourselves with an aging membership and a spring fundraiser which was no longer as appealing to the community.

In revamping our program and introducing a fresh Spring Fundraiser, we wanted to meet two goals:

1. Introduce WSL to a new, younger group of women
2. Stick to our main mission of offering an event which would help raise money for ASO and its educational programs

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**SLIDE 3   PROJECT PURPOSE**

Red Haute Valentine Party and Children’s Style Show was launched to help WSL accomplish these goals. The event features an afternoon of fun for all generations and models ages 3-14 who proudly showcase local vendors while walking the runway.

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**SLIDE 4   GUEST EXPERIENCES**
The Red Haute offers a unique experience for the guests as well as the models. The guests are greeted at the door with a welcoming committee, WSL President and an ensemble of high school musicians. Once inside, guests have the opportunity to shop at the marketplace, or enjoy various activities like the card making station, chocolate fountain, photo booth, cupcake decorating station and the instrument petting zoo.

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SLIDE 5  MODEL EXPERIENCES

While the guests enjoy the activities, the models are treated like princesses backstage. Each girl has her hair and make-up professionally done and helped into her dress before she has an opportunity to walk the runway. As the model showcases her outfit, she is introduced by the emcee to the audience.

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SLIDE 6  PLANNING TIMELINE

While the event chairs, location and date are picked a year out, most of the event planning and execution takes place 6 months before the event.

The next important step is finding suitable stores or boutiques to provide clothing for the style show. We have had up to 4 as the ages of our models ranges from 4 to pre-teen.

Committee members also work on obtaining vendors for our pre-event marketplace as well as sponsors and underwriters for the event.

Sponsorships range from $1,000 to $3,000 and each include modeling spots (a hot commodity as the modeling spots sell out!). We have developed underwriting for all activities at the party, from the chocolate fountain to the instrument petting zoo.

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SLIDE 7  MARKETING

We market the event to our membership as well as the community. Marketing to our members is kept simple with announcements are meetings and internal eblasts. Word of mouth is critical as member’s friends are now eager to sign up their daughters to model. External marketing included ads in local papers and interviews are several local news stations.

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Red Haute is in its 6th year and it has clearly accomplished the 2 goals we had when we established the new event. This party attracts a younger audience and 70% of the attendees are non-members. We have seen our new member classes increase in size over the last several years and the average age had declined from 53 to 42.

This spring fundraiser’s profitability has increased the amount of money we can give to the Austin Symphony Orchestra in support of its educational programs.

This event has become a fun and profitable event for the WSL. Net income in 2016 was $38,127.

We used traditional revenue methods (ticket sales, sponsorships) and heavily leaned on donations to cut back on expenses. There are three line items I would like to address…

- In the expenses, we had a large Accounting fee of over $2,000... CLICK this is actually a percentage of the annual accounting fee for WSL of Austin. We divide the yearly cost amongst our fundraising efforts to make sure we have a true net income for each event.

- The other two items are under the revenue category - Hugs & Kisses and Pick-a-Prize. We feature two new fundraisers within the event to drive excitement AND revenue. CLICK As you can see, this year the two events raised an additional $5,100.

Hugs & Kisses games is a $25 buy-in per person and is played right before the fashion show starts. Guests participate in a “Heads or Tails” style of game for a chance to win an American Girl Doll. Pick-A-Prize is also a $25 buy-in game in which the guest picks a heart to determine which gift bag she wins. We offer red hearts for gifts geared for adults and pink hearts for gifts geared towards kids.
VOLUNTEERS

The event relies on many volunteers who work throughout the year to make the event a success. We used 60 volunteers to put on the event. This number is a little over inflated because we require each member to have a spring fundraiser placement. As such, we have to make sure we provide enough opportunities for each member. However, the day of the event does require a substantial volunteer participation. In particular on day of event, Pick-a-Prize sales and monitoring the models backstage need several, reliable volunteers.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

GREAT event to help reach younger AND multi-generational audiences
Event can be replicated in any town/city
Valentine theme makes the fashion show a bit trickier as stores are in between seasons and limited on stock .... PAUSE FOR FINAL PHOTO

CLICK TO END