



San Antonio Museum of Art

NATIONAL DOCENT SYMPOSIUM 2013

“SUSTAINED TO SUSTAINER: *Creative Organizational Self-Funding*”

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This session outlines how the San Antonio Museum of Art (SAMA) Docents partnered with another non-profit organization to raise funds with an evening of music and art to support respective outreach programs.

In the late 1990's, as the docent organization at SAMA was expanding and only limited financial support was available to develop community outreach programs, it became clear that the docents needed to be proactive in securing funds. This led to developing the idea of *Music at the Museum*, an event that has continued and grown for 14 years.

Fundraising Concept: Envisioned was an evening concert/reception at the museum hosted jointly with a partner organization. The target audience was to be upper-middle-income guests interested in supporting the arts through a moderately priced event. Revenues from ticket sales, donations and a silent auction, net of expenses, would be shared equally with the partner organization.

Partner Selection: A partner with common interests and goals was sought and found in the San Antonio Symphony League. Some of SAMA's docents already collaborated with the San Antonio Symphony League (SASL) and were aware of similar needs. Thus it was agreed San Antonio Symphony musicians would provide a musical program (*pro-bono*) and the museum would provide the venue. A committee of representatives from both organizations would share in the planning and development of the event.

Music at the Museum has evolved into an evening that includes a pre-concert recital featuring a high school orchestra, a reception offering appetizers and wine, a silent auction and a 50-minute concert by musicians from the San Antonio Symphony. Post-concert coffee and dessert are offered while guests are awaiting the auction results.

Planning: About a year before the event, the event date is set and the venue secured. Planned museum exhibits are considered in choosing a complimentary musical theme. The SAMA event is held on a Monday to best accommodate musician's

schedules. A caterer is secured and donations of wine and flowers for the reception obtained as well as gifts for the silent auction and, if possible, event underwriters.

Responsibilities are shared with our partner. The SASL is responsible for the musical program, the musicians, the high school orchestra and for preparing the formal program. SAMA's docents are responsible for venue related logistics (security and seating), for selecting and supporting the caterer and for the silent auction. Both groups secure donations and ticket sales are a joint effort.

Comments: We plan for an audience of about 200 guests and 20-30 items for the silent auction. Restaurant gift certificates, weekend hotel stays, vacation packages in Mexico and the US and hand-made crafts have all sold well

During the past two years we have added to the auction an Art Wall containing works by local artists. Our Contemporary Art Curator has assisted in selecting and recruiting the artists. Some artists elect not to donate their work but, instead, claim a sales price percentage if the item is sold. Some artists donate the complete piece.

SAMA docents have been very fortunate to find caterers that provide hors d'oeuvres, wine service, dessert and coffee at approximately half the actual cost, as well as a local wine merchant to donate the wine.

A wine pull of minimum value, wrapped bottles of donated wine has proven very popular.

All donors receive a thank you letter acknowledging the monetary value of their gift which also contains pertinent tax information.

Advertising and tickets sales are a joint responsibility. Promotion of the event electronically to both museum members and symphony subscribers has proven successful. Radio announcements, postcards distributed through the museum store and mentions in museum and symphony publications complete our advertising efforts.

The museum staff assists in handling ticket reservations and payment.

Music at the Museum has provided SAMA Docents with financial security. This event has allowed the docents to support SAMA's summer camp (a one week long program for elementary school children), support one Family Day (a monthly event of family oriented museum activities), host speakers for docent training and finance docent field trips to other art venues in the region. Funds are provided for docents to participate in the National Docent Symposium, partially host docents for a holiday celebration and the Returning Docent Symposium held each fall. The SASL has developed a program by which talented high school musicians can participate in a region wide competition that awards scholarship funds. Since 2011 *Music at the Museum* has officially become part of an annual citywide music festival sponsored by the San Antonio Symphony.