



AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF ONTARIO  
SOCIÉTÉ ONTARIENNE DE LA SCLÉROSE LATÉRALE AMYOTROPHIQUE

## **GALA EVENTS & CHARITY BALLS**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

Gala events are extremely time-consuming and challenging to organize, but once they are established, they can become a dependable source of income for many years. For this reason, do not consider including gala events into your fundraising program unless you intend to make it an annual event (your first attempt may do little better than break even). Once you decide to take the plunge, do everything in your power to ensure that guests have a good time so that they will return next year.

### **RESOURCES REQUIRED:**

- An event chair; this individual must be well-connected in your community as well as hard-working and organized
- A core group of volunteers to oversee major components of event; suggested committees: ticket sales, sponsors, souvenir programmed, entertainment, prizes and gifts, decorations, etc.
- A Junior Committee (to attract young people to your event)
- Patrons and corporate sponsor(s) to offset expenses and provide start-up capital
- A venue with catering facilities and staff, a large ballroom for the dinner and dance, a smaller room for the reception, and a bar
- Invitations, reservation forms, and return envelopes
- Live music, entertainment
- A stage and dressing room for musicians
- A sound system and technician
- Souvenir programmes
- Decorations, including flowers, balloons, etc.
- Door prizes and bonbonieres (the latter are small gifts given to guests)
- Raffle tickets
- A photographer
- ALS banners, posters, and flyers
- Security and first-aid personnel
- Liability insurance

### **PRE-EVENT ACTIVITIES:**

- Recruit chair and key volunteers
- Select date and facility
- Develop a theme with care; your event theme will play a large role in attracting sponsors and media attention
- Secure sponsors and patrons
- Draft budget; minimize your expenses by getting everything donated; your expenses should be kept to 25%-35% of your gross income
- Set ticket/ table price
- Compile invitation list
- Design invitations; they should include the details of the event (time, place, dress code, etc.), committee members, and information about the host organization
- Print invitations, reservation forms, return envelopes, and admission tickets
- Plan advertising and promotion of the ticket sales
- Mail/hand deliver invitations; if possible, they should be hand-addressed and personalized with a note from the Chair (2-3 months in advance)
- Organize sale of tickets to general public
- Invite corporations to buy tables for their employees
- Recruit volunteers to help at event
- Coordinate decorations
- Book live band/orchestra
- Determine format of souvenir programme; by selling advertising; draft copy (all volunteers, patrons, and sponsors must be acknowledged in the programme)
- Secure door prizes and bonbonieres
- Follow-up invitations by phone
- Maintain RSVP list and mail out admission tickets
- Coordinate schedule, menu, number of dinners, bar requirements etc. with facility manager
- Coordinate cocktail reception
- Arrange for stage, dressing room, and sound system for musicians
- Book photographer
- Finalize and print programme
- Organize advance publicity
- Prepare seating plan with care; do your best to ensure that people seated together will enjoy each-other's company
- Follow up with volunteers

### **EVENT ACTIVITIES:**

- Decorate facility; put door prizes on display; put souvenir programme and complimentary door prize raffle ticket at each place setting
- Check sound system
- Ensure that volunteers are in place

### **EVENT ACTIVITIES CON'T:**

- Cocktail reception precedes dinner
- Volunteers stationed at the door to the hall greet guests and direct them to their tables
- Assign volunteer to look after media
- Chair welcomes guests briefly when they are seated for dinner
- President gives brief speech after dinner
- Commence with dance
- Give out door prizes periodically
- Photographer should circulate
- Volunteers give bonboniere to each guest upon departure

### **POST-EVENT ACTIVITIES:**

- Confirm number of dinners served with banquet manager
- Remove and return decorations
- Collect and store left-over supplies
- Return borrowed items
- Pay outstanding bills
- Collect funds still owing for advertising
- Issue follow-up press release announcing funds raised, highlights of events, and thanking key sponsors and volunteers
- Write thank-you notes to all volunteers, patrons, sponsors, and advertisers
- Reconcile accounting

### **TIPS FOR SUCCESS:**

- Pay particular attention to the selection of your event Chair. Since many people will support your event because of its glamour and social appeal, your event Chair must be socially prominent and well liked, in addition to having exemplary organizational and management skills.
- Begin to publicize your event well in advance. Issue an early press release announcing the appointment of the Chair, the date, and the location. Publicize major developments in the organization of your event. Focus on the society press, women's magazines, and gossip columnists. Invite key media to the event.
- Keep expenses to a minimum. This is more difficult than it sounds since the magnitude of gala events makes monitoring expenses particularly challenging. Purchasing power should be limited to the committee heads, who should each be given a budget and required to adhere strictly to it. All major expenditures should require the approval of the Chair.
- Do not undersell you event. The social advantages of gala events are something which people are willing to pay for. Many people are suspicious of less-expensive events, which are often perceived as second-rate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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