



# Autism Awareness Fundraising Handbook

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# Autism Awareness Event Fundraising Handbook

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# Thank You!

Dear Autism Awareness Ambassador:

Welcome! Thank you for deciding to create an event in support of Autism Awareness Month. Autism New Jersey has created this Event Planning Handbook to provide you with everything you might need to plan a successful event.

We encourage you to become familiar with the contents of this handbook. All of the included information may not be appropriate for your event, but feel free to pick and choose the tools and tips that best work for you. You can always call us for information or help.

Good luck and, most importantly, have fun!

Sincerely,

Your Friends at Autism New Jersey

**“Failing to plan, is planning to fail.”**



# Defining Your Event

## What should your event be?

Now is the time to get creative. An event is an occasion where you bring together people to create, learn, dance, play or mingle. An event can be anything from organizing a free workshop about autism to a fundraising event such as a Tricky Tray Auction or Golf Outing.

The framework of planning an event or fund raiser is basically the same every time. Once you have planned one event, you can use the same blueprint for all of the events that follow, only needing to adjust small details.



**Bike-A-Thon**



**Bake Sale**



**Tricky Tray Banquet**



**Golf Outing**

## Defining Your Event

Here are some A to Z event and fundraising ideas to help get you started!

**A**

**Auction!** Collect donated items from local businesses, favorite restaurants or friends and hold an auction to benefit Autism Awareness.

**B**

**Bike Ride.** One of Autism New Jersey's most successful Community Events is a Ride for Autism. You can organize a bike ride to benefit autism, too!

**C**

**Canning!** Create an autism awareness information board, enlist some of your friends as volunteers and collect donations outside of your local supermarket. Tip: Make sure to first receive permission from the store.

**D**

**Dress Down Days!** Organize a district- or business-wide dress down day! Sign up with Autism New Jersey and receive free dress down day stickers for participants.

**E**

**E-mail.** Send an e-mail to everyone you know to publicize your event. Include facts about autism in your e-mail. Feel free to use our website to learn the facts!

**F**

**Fantasy Baseball!** Organize a sweepstake on this season's teams. Works well with other sports, too!

**G**

**Grocery Stores!** Approach the managers at your local grocery store and ask them to sell paper Autism Awareness Ribbons at their cash registers for \$1. Customers can sign their name on the ribbon and the ribbons can be hung on a ribbon wall in the store!

**H**

**Hats on for autism!** Similar to a dress down day, organize a silly hat day to raise funds for autism awareness!

**I**

**Inform the Public!** Organize a free autism information night. Publicize the event throughout the community and invite expert speakers. Contact us to supply information to hand out!

**J**

**Just ask!** Tell your friends, family and neighbors that you would like to plan an event for autism awareness. Ask them if they would like to be involved and what the event should be. Hold a brainstorming meeting.

**K**

**Karaoke Night!** Get your favorite karaoke establishment to donate a room and invite your friends and family to sing their hearts out for autism! This event can be coupled with an auction or an autism awareness ribbon sale.

**L**

**Letter Writing!** Visit the "Public Policy" page of our website, [www.autismnj.org](http://www.autismnj.org). Get everyone you know to write letters in support of the autism community. We need your help now!

# Defining Your Event

Here are some A to Z event and fundraising ideas to help get you started!

(continued from previous page)

- M** **Matched Giving.** Ask your company to match whatever your colleagues raise and suggest this to people when asking for donations.
- N** **Naughty Habits!** Here is your chance to kick a bad habit to the curb by taking a Naughty Habit Challenge! Have people pay to sponsor you.
- O** **Organize** a “Family Night Out.” Contact your favorite restaurant and ask it to dedicate an evening to serving families affected by autism. Supply restaurants with autism information kits.
- P** **Presentations!** Plan a kid-friendly presentation and speak to your local elementary school about autism. Tip: ask us for a copy of our Kids Booklet.
- Q** **Quiet Places!** Contact your local library and schedule a story time for families that have children with autism. You also can create a library display about autism! Tip: ask us about our new Library Training Program.
- R** **Recruit Ambassadors!** Before the month of April, at your place of work or home, recruit Autism Awareness Ambassadors. Tip: Contact us before your event for additional registration forms.
- S** **Sweets Sales!** You, your family and friends make your favorite sweets and have an Autism Awareness sweets sale! Tip: Try to make cookies in the shape of the autism awareness ribbon.
- T** **Temporary Tattoos!** Contact us for Autism Awareness temporary tattoos and sell them at community events during April. Tip: Ask your local high school to sell them at the snack stands during sporting events.
- U** **Unwanted Gifts.** After the holidays, we all have unwanted items. Get together with friends and post your items on eBay to raise money for Autism Awareness.
- V** **Volley for Autism!** Last year, Wall High School held a faculty vs. students volley ball game to raise money for autism. Snacks and Autism Awareness merchandise were sold at this event.
- W** **Wii Tournament!** Organize a Wii tournament and charge participants.
- X** **X-Factor!** Awaken all of those untapped talents! Host a talent show with refreshments and Autism Awareness materials. Tip: Sell Autism New Jersey awareness merchandise!
- Y** **Yard Sale!** Get together with your neighbors and have a block party and yard sale at the same time to benefit Autism Awareness!
- Z** **Zodiac Party!** Invite your friends over for an evening of astrological forecasts and star gazing (and charge them for dinner).

# Defining Your Event

Now that you have decided what your event will be, here are some things to consider:

## 1. What is the goal of your event?

- Raise Autism Awareness
- Raise money
- Generate energy for future events

## 2. Who do you want to participate? (Your objective will help you determine *who*)

- Think about groups of people that might be interested in your event and invite them.
- Remember, you do not have to personally know people or groups to invite them.

When you decide *who*, think about **what** you want them to do.

- Listen
- Exchange ideas
- Learn
- Play
- Mingle

## 3. Once you have identified the goal of your event and participants, it is time to get organized! Here are some things to consider:

- If you are planning to have speakers, think about who your participants will want to hear. Contact us for our Presenter's Referral List.
- Are there upcoming community events that can add energy to your event? For example, we start promoting our September Golf Outing at the June Ride for Autism event.
- Contact us to find out if other events like yours have been organized in the past. You may want to speak with past organizers for some tips.



# Planning Your Event

## Event Planning To Do List

- ✓ **Build a Planning Team**
- ✓ **Create an Agenda**
- ✓ **Allocate Time**
- ✓ **Staff the Event**
- ✓ **Plan a Time Line**
- ✓ **Set the Date and Time**
- ✓ **Select the Venue**
- ✓ **Create a Budget**
- ✓ **Event Promotion**



# Planning Your Event

## Build a Planning Team

### Planning Team:

A group of people who assist with the planning and execution of the event.



A good planning team is:

- one that can work together;
- one that supports the organizers as they do their work;
- one that completes all tasks in a timely fashion;
- **and one that has fun!**

Tips for a successful planning team:

- Set dates to meet and discuss the time line of tasks that need to be completed.
- Discuss which team members are responsible for each task.
- Take notes at each meeting and then e-mail everyone on the planning team a copy of the notes. Be sure to rotate note-taking responsibility.



All Autism New Jersey events require a planning committee. For our Gala, we select who our Committee Chairs will be for that year. First, a meeting is held with the Committee Chairs to discuss key points such as who to ask to be on our Gala Committee, the date and location of the event and when our first Kick-Off Meeting with the Gala Planning Committee should be scheduled.

Before the Kick-Off Meeting, we create packets of information to give each committee member. These kits include information about the event, a time line of “to dos” and other committee responsibilities. We also create a meeting agenda to ensure we get the most out of each meeting.

# Planning Your Event



## Create an Agenda

Remember, the activities in your event are just as important as the event itself. Choose activities that will help you to achieve the event goals and appeal to your participants.

## Allocate Time

Remember, when allocating time for each activity, also plan for participants to move from one place to another, if your event requires it.



For our Annual Conference, our Conference Committee must plan for participants to have time to walk from one workshop to another. This transit time is needed when assigning the start and end time of each workshop.

## Staff the Event

On the day of your event, you will need an array of facilitators. The duties of the facilitators will depend on your event.

A Fundraising event may need:

- Someone to collect money/check at registration as people enter.
- Someone to give a brief speech to welcome/thank participants for coming and name the cause and organization benefiting from the event.
- If there are entertainers, someone to introduce them and manage them back stage.
- Someone to manage volunteers.

It is essential that everyone on your planning committee be aware of who is responsible for what, on the day of your event. Here is an example of an agenda

Time	Activity	Who is Responsible?
10:00-11:00	Set-up and registration	Marshall and Lily
11:00-11:45	Hosting and introduce first workshop	Ted
11:45-12:00	Break down first workshop room	Robin
12:00-1:00	Break for lunch	Raphael
1:00-1:45	Host and introduce second workshop	Barney

# Planning Your Event

## Planning a Time Line



Planning a realistic time line is crucial to creating a successful event. We plan backward at Autism New Jersey. Backward planning is when you start with the date of your event and plan to the present day. Here are some steps to get you started:

1. Meet with your planning team and make a list of all of the tasks that need to be completed before the day of your event.
2. Put the tasks in order from tasks that need to be completed early (such as booking the location) to set-up on the day of your event.
3. Circle the date of your event on the calendar.
4. Write the last task that needs to be completed prior to your event on your planning calendar on the appropriate day. Continue filling tasks in on your planning calendar, working your way to the current day.
5. Now you have deadlines for each task. List all of the tasks in order of their deadlines and you have a time line!
6. Make copies of your time line and hand them out to your planning committee. This will help you with delegating responsibilities.



# Planning Your Event

## Select the Date and Time



Some things to consider when selecting the date and time of your event:

- Be sure not to schedule your event on the same day as other major events or holidays.
- Choose a time that is convenient for your participants. For example, if you are planning free workshops about autism, do not schedule them in the middle of a week day when most people are working or at school.
- If your event is outside, you may need to schedule a rain date in case the weather does not cooperate.
- How will the participants be getting to your event? If some of them will be taking mass transit, make sure you take the transit time schedules into account as well as your event location.



## Select the Venue (Location)

Some things to think about when choosing the venue for your event:

- How long will your event last?
- Who will set up ahead of the event?
- Who will clean up after the event?
- Is food allowed where your event is being held? Some libraries do not allow refreshments.
- How many rooms does your event require? How many people need to fit in each room?
- Is there on-site parking?
- If a majority of your participants are using mass transit, is your event within walking distance to train stations and bus stops?
- Think about the equipment your event requires. Does the venue have it (chairs, tables, screens for power point presentations, projectors, microphone, extension cords)?

If you are using a community space such as a park, check to see if permits are required.

# Planning Your Event



## Create a Budget

When creating a budget, look at your expenses and possible revenue.

**Expenses:** The money you spend.

**Revenue:** The money your event earns.

An accurate budget will let you and your planning committee know what you can spend, how much you may need to raise to hold the event and how much you would need to make a profit, if that is one of your goals.

Some expenses you may have:



If you are organizing an event to benefit Autism New Jersey, contact Brynn Alberici, Special Events Coordinator, at [balberici@autismnj.org](mailto:balberici@autismnj.org). We will help you promote your event!

- **Venue**— The location. If you need to rent a space, how much will it cost?
- **Catering**—Will you provide food or drinks at your event? How much will it cost?
- **Promotion**— Some ways of promotion cost money (radio time, billboard, TV, flyers).
- **Materials**—If you are using materials at your event, you will want to keep track of the costs



We can send you Autism Awareness materials to hand out at your event! We have kid-friendly materials as well as simple autism fact sheets and brochures. We would be happy to send you these materials for your event! We also have Autism Awareness merchandise you can sell!

# Planning Your Event



A great way to create a budget is to make a budget chart. Here is an example.

Cost	\$
Renting the space	\$200.00
Printing costs: Promotional Flyers-200 @ \$0.07/each	\$14.00
Printing costs: Programs-100 @ \$0.07/each	\$7.00
Presenter fee	\$100.00
Snacks to sell	\$50.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$371.00</b>
How Costs are Covered	Adjusted Costs
Space rental	\$200.00
Copy store gave copies to us for 300@ \$0.04/each	\$12.00
Presenter fee	\$100.00
30% off snacks at wholesale club	\$35.00
<b>Total Adjusted Cost</b>	<b>\$347.00</b>
Revenue	
Entrance fee: \$4 for 100 guests	\$400.00
Snacks sold for profit	\$35.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$435.00</b>
<b>Total Revenue - Total Adjusted Cost =</b>	<b>Profit</b>
\$435.00 - \$347.00	\$88.00



Some things to think about when creating a budget:

1. How much money do we currently have?
2. How much money will my event have to earn to cover my costs?
3. Can we raise money before hand? How much?
4. How will the bills get paid?
5. What on my cost list can I acquire through a donor?
6. Can I negotiate these costs any lower?
7. How will we pay the bills if the event is unsuccessful?



One of the many ways we at Autism New Jersey cover our costs before an event is solicit for event sponsors and in-kind gift donors. For example, to solicit sponsors and donors for our Annual Charity Golf Outing, our Golf Committee mails letters requesting donations to organizations and individuals.

It is important to remember to recognize all sponsors and donors. At our Golf Outing, we have an Ad Journal that everyone attending receives. In the Ad Journal, depending on the level of sponsorship purchased, sponsors acquire ad space along with other benefits such as signage at our event.

# Planning Your Event



**Spread  
the word!**

## Event Promotion

You cannot have an event without participants! Schedule a meeting with your planning committee to brainstorm the most effective ways to promote your event. Here are some ways to reach participants to get you started:

- Invitations: face-to-face, by telephone or e-mail, mailers, etc.
- Flyers: can be posted at schools, libraries, food stores, other popular places in your town, etc.
- Newspapers.
- Radio and television.
- Announce your event during other events and public gatherings.

## Materials



When publicizing an event, the materials should be creative, eye-catching, clear and to the point. Think about what type of design will be attractive to your participants.

*Important information to include:*

- Name of your event
- Who your event is benefiting (the autism community or Autism New Jersey)
- Location of event
- Date
- Time
- Cost to participate



If you start the planning process early, you also may want to send out a “Save the Date” postcard for your event. In the past, Autism New Jersey, has combined two separate events into one “Save the Date” postcard. Contact information was on the back of the card for people who were interested in joining our Planning Committees.

If you are having an event to benefit Autism New Jersey, be sure *not* to include our name in the title of your event. Feel free to add a line under the title that says, “Benefiting Autism New Jersey.”

Contact us to ask about promoting your event in our bi-monthly newsletter, which is received by all agency members. Events benefiting Autism New Jersey also can be promoted on our website!



## Event Planning Checklist



Have you...

- Decided what the objective of your event will be?
- Decided what kind of event you would like to have?

Organizing a Planning Committee

- Have you found people to be on your planning committee?
- Have you decided what tasks need to be accomplished and by whom?
- Have you created a time line and given a copy to committee members?

Have you...

- Set the date and time?
- Chosen a venue?
- Made a budget?
- Made a plan for obtaining funds?
- Decided how you will promote your event?
- Created promotional material?
- Set an agenda?
- Invited speakers or entertainment?
- Invited participants?
- Made sure your venue caters to people with disabilities?
- Confirmed attendance of participants?
- Sent directions to participants?

If necessary, did you...

- Organize transportation?
- Order food and finalize details with the caterer?
- Arrange for translators?
- Is someone accountable for making sure each of these tasks is accomplished?**

Day of your event, have you...

- Assigned someone to welcome participants as they arrive?
- Registered the participants and given them welcome packs or name tags?
- Assigned someone to be a floater throughout your event to answer questions, if needed?
- Made sure your venue stays clean?
- Remembered to HAVE FUN!

After your event, remember to...

- Send thank you notes to any presenters and your planning committee.
- Schedule a post-event meeting with your planning committee to discuss successes and changes you would like to make for the following year.
- Ask your planning committee if it would like to participate in the planning process again the following year.

