



HOW TO COORDINATE A BENEFIT PLAYATHON

Thank you for your interest in coordinating a benefit for the MusicLink Foundation. An event of this type can raise funds to build or expand a MusicLink program in your state and it is a fun and rewarding experience for all involved. Students love performing in a public venue, teachers enjoy giving their students an exciting performance opportunity, parents like seeing their children help other children with their talents and the Mall appreciates the traffic which is generated by performers, families and friends.

Below are step-by-step instructions on how to go about coordinating this type of event and all forms are included as Word Documents, so they can be adapted to your particular needs.

SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT:

1. Enlist the support of your state or local MTA in sponsoring a benefit. A public event like this raises awareness of the value of quality music instruction. As music teachers we need to be advocates for music education and having your local or state organization's support brings credibility to the event and educates the public on where to go to find qualified and experienced teachers for their children.

And/or

2. Talk to the people at your local music store to see if they would sponsor a benefit. They might be willing to support you by donating a piano for the performers and, in turn, you can see that they get publicity as the sponsor.

2-3 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT:

1. Contact your local Mall or some other public venue to see if they would let you use their space and, if so, set a date. Malls appreciate events that bring in potential customers and may even assist with promoting the event to the public.

2. Arrange for insurance for the event. If your State MTA is involved you can get insurance through MTNA as they cover all State MTA events. If not, check with the National MusicLink Office. (info@musiclinkfoundation.org) The Mall will indicate what kind of coverage they require.

3. Place an article in your State and Local MTA newsletters promoting the event to teachers. They, in turn, can promote it to their students and families. (A sample article is included.)
4. If you can, put Application Forms and Pledge Cards on your State MTA website, so teachers can easily access them there. If not, make sure teachers know whom to contact to get them. Set an application deadline of at least 2-3 weeks before the event.
5. If possible, see if you can send an e-mail notice out to all teachers in your state or local MTA directory telling them about the event. Teachers will also share with colleagues who may not be members of your local or state organizations. This will have the additional benefit of educating them about your organization and may motivate them to become members.

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT:

1. When applications begin coming in, enter the information into a Spreadsheet for easy access when scheduling. Once the deadline is passed, make up a schedule for the performers, taking into consideration the length of their pieces. Tip: Teachers tend to over-estimate the time the performances will take, so you can schedule the performers quite closely to help stay on schedule. Make a Master List with student's names, assigned number, and performance time to have handy on the day of the Benefit.
2. If you are going to have an emcee announce the students, print on 6 x 4 cards, the name of the student, their age and town (just for public interest) and pieces they will perform. This can be done easily on the computer.
3. Contact the MusicLink National Office (info@musiclinkfoundation.org) to let them know how many performers you expect, so they can send pins and totes. These are given to the students on-site. I-PODS are sent to the winners after the event.

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT:

1. Once the schedule is complete and the performance times are assigned, e-mail the teachers with their student's times and ask them to pass this information onto the students. Include any final instructions in this e-mail such as where to park, how early they should arrive, where exactly in the Mall they will be performing, etc. An example is included in the packet.
2. Check with the Mall for any last minute arrangements and with the Music Store to finalize the move of the piano. Make sure the Contact people from each know how to get in touch with each other.
3. Arrange for some volunteers to help with student check-in and to write out tax receipts for the donors. 3 volunteers at any one time should be enough.
4. Print tax receipts to have on site for the event.

DAY OF THE EVENT:

1. Using a copy of the Master List, a volunteer will check in student. Each student should be given the 6 x 4 card with their information which they will give to the Emcee when their name is called. Give each performer a MusicLink pin for participating. Pass the student's donations & pledge card onto the other 2 volunteers.

2. One volunteer will check the money against the donor card and the other can write out receipts for the donors. Check to see if the student has won a tote and then place it aside with the tax receipts for the student to pick up after their performance. Keep a list of any students who win an I-POD.

Use Post-its to indicate which students collected \$100 or more so they can have their pictures taken for the MusicLink newsletter. This is something you could do as the coordinator or enlist the help of a friend to take some pictures. Digital pictures are best, if possible. It's great to have pictures of the event for follow-up newsletter articles etc.

AFTER THE EVENT:

1. Count the cash and get a Cashier's Check for that amount from your bank. Add up the total amount of checks and send them & the Cashier's Check, with a list of students who earned I-PODS, to the MusicLink National Office. (MusicLink Foundation 1043 N. McKinley Road Arlington, VA 22205-1619) E-mail pictures of students who earned over \$100 to the National Office for inclusion in the newsletter.

2. Monies earned by your benefit will be kept at the National Office for use by your state's MusicLink programs.

DOCUMENTS:

- Application Form
- Pledge Card
- Sample newsletter article
- 6 x 4 Student Card for emcee
- Instructions for students
- Tax Receipt

All of these documents are available as WORD documents so you can adapt them for your own event. To request that these be sent to you by e-mail, please contact: Sue Wege swege71@comcast.net