



A Volunteers Guide to Requesting Sponsorship Donations

Corporate sponsorship of the **Montessori School of Alexandria (MSA) Live and Silent Auction Gala** accounts for a large majority of all event related revenue. Most companies make donations because they are personally asked by a friend, family member or colleague. You'll find donors are more excited to support YOU than any other sponsorship benefits we can offer.

With that in mind, the following tips will help you make a request for a sponsorship donation and, hopefully, get a positive response!

Who should I ask?

Ask anyone you have a relationship with that could provide a product, service or cash donation of \$25 and higher. A personal ask is 10 times more effective than a cold call or letter to a company you don't have a relationship with. Remember, most are more interested in giving to you than to the cause itself. Some possibilities include:

- The company you work for.
- The company your spouse works for.
- A business that you regularly patronize (dry cleaner, salon, dentist, etc.).
- A business owned by a family member or friend.
- A family foundation.
- A business with an interest in our cause (ophthalmologists, retinal specialists, etc).
- A local Lions Club (each club gives individually).

How do I make the ask?

Cindy Lanham, MSA School Administrator, can supply you with a sponsorship packet that includes a cover letter which includes a list of sponsorship benefits and opportunities as well as information about the school, and a donor reply form. The more you personalize your cover letter, the better, so feel free to request an electronic version for you to customize.

Who do I present the packet to?

Find the decision maker. The closer you are to putting the packet in the hands of the final decision maker, the better your chances for success. This may be a department head the CEO/President/Owner or head of Charitable Giving.

Try to present the packet in person. You will get the opportunity to talk to your contact about the MSA and the benefits of donating. If the connection is with a friend or family member's company, ask them to hand deliver the packet to the appropriate person. Our goal is to attach a name or face to your ask so it will stand out in their stack of requests. If you cannot arrange a face to face meeting, please ask Cindy to mail the packet with a personalized letter enclosed.

When do I make the ask?

Timing for sponsorship can often be a tricky thing. You may want to find out if a company gives based on the fiscal year or the calendar year. The company may track their giving in a database and automatically

reject multiple asks in the same year. Try to avoid presenting a packet near the winter holidays. By this time companies are toward the end of their giving and will replenish their budgets in the New Year.

Also, be cognizant of the deadline of March 1, 2010. Our goal is to receive all donations no later than 4 weeks before the auction. This gives MSA volunteers ample time to prepare.

How do I get a YES?

You have a much better chance of getting a positive response if you ask people you know to support you. Once you've made the ask, follow up with a phone call about one week later to inquire about the status of your request. Keep following up with your contact until you get an answer. The worst answer you can get is not "no", it's "I'll get back to you." If you get a "no" response, note the reasons why. We may be able to approach them again next year. If you don't get an answer, you will need to continue to follow up until you get one. That's why no answer is worse than a "no" response!

Last but not least, work with your Auction Chair, Caitlin Gomez. She is here to help you every step of the way!

Let the Caitlin or Cindy know who you are approaching with a sponsorship request. MSA keeps a list of all the potential sponsors that volunteers are approaching. This helps prevent multiple requests to the same company. Also keep the Cindy and/or Caitlin updated about the status of your request. There are deadlines that must be met and we will want to have as many sponsors on board by our deadlines as possible.

Thank you for all your help! Your contribution is a key to a successful auction.

If you have any questions, please call Cindy Lanham, at (703) 960-3498 or email montschoolalex@vacoxmail.com.

