

Concert Fundraiser

By Sharon Schuman, FARF Board of Directors & Philanthropy Council

For 18 years I have organized an annual concert to raise funds for FARF. My concerts involve classical music, but this idea would work with other types of music, or other types of events that have nothing to do with music. For musical events, you would not necessarily need to perform yourself, as long as you had friends you could ask to do it.

My basic formula is to aim for 100 people to attend, donating \$100 each, which raises \$10K. You may think that no one would be willing to pay \$100 to hear you or your friends perform, but that's not true! People are paying not just to hear music, but to support FA research.

The trick is to convince people that they can have fun while contributing to cutting-edge research that deserves their support. No one can make this case better than you can. I will not kid you that this undertaking is effortless, but I guarantee that it is worthwhile! Read on for a timeline of how you can raise \$10,000 with your concert fundraiser.

Seven months in advance

Decide what kind of concert you want to create. The important thing is that you pick something fun, then decide the details. How long will it be? Who can you get to perform? What kind of food or drink do you want to have? Will there be a silent auction? Do you want to try to get an FA scientist or an FA family to speak? If you can imagine the event, you can make it happen.

Take advantage of support from the FARF office and the Philanthropy Council. FARF staff are available to advise you personally and help with planning. They will send out invitations, process donations, send out tickets, and thank donors. Philanthropy Council members are here for support and can talk through your event with you by phone or email.

Six months in advance

Talk friends into helping. You will need help, both in planning and execution. It makes people feel good to learn more about FA and to contribute time and resources to something important.

Choose a location that is not too hard to get to and a date that does not fall on a holiday. The best location is one that will accommodate 70-100 people (a big house, a church, a park, a community center, etc.) and that either costs nothing or is inexpensive.

Five months in advance

Ask someone to donate the design of materials (this could consist of an invitation, an order form, a ticket, a poster, and a program). You will be surprised how many artistically inclined people you know.

Four months in advance

Ask a local printer to donate printing of invitations and materials listed above. The more time you give them, the more likely they are to help. If you can't find one, you can ask the FARF office to print.

Assemble a list of names and addresses of 400 people to invite. You or I may know personally as many as 50 people we could invite to such an event, but how do we come up with 400 names?

Say, for example, you have chosen to have a benefit concert of gospel music, and six people from your church are willing to perform. Your church has a congregation, and you can approach your pastor for permission to announce your event in the church bulletin. You can also brainstorm with church friends for contact info on as many members of the congregation as possible. If there is a gospel choir in your area (or another choir, amateur or professional), you can approach them for a one-time use of their mailing list of audience members. If they say yes, you can go through this list carefully looking for names you or your friends recognize.

You can also ask your friends to generate their own lists of friends, family, co-workers, and acquaintances to invite. This aspect of your preparation cannot be underestimated. You want to keep growing your list until



it contains about 400 names and addresses.

Three months in advance

Write a letter to include with your invitations and order forms, explaining your family connection to FA, how important it is to push the science forward, and how amazing the achievements and ambitions of FARF are. This letter will inspire people to want to be part of the effort to extend lives and one day cure FA. Staff in the FARF office will edit and format your letter, suggest good scientific points to include, and add photos that you select. They will print your letters and send them for you. Your order form can include the option of not attending, but still donating \$XX.00.

Two months in advance

Send out invitations two months in advance. Decide what the major tasks are to make your event a success and assign someone you trust to be in charge of volunteers for each task. Set-up, Clean-up, Parking, Welcome, Reception, Food, Beverages, Silent Auction Acquisitions, Silent Auction Set-Up, FARF Information, and Program Logistics are common categories. Meet with key volunteers and check in with FARF staff the week before the event to make sure all is in order. Check with performers to make sure they have what they need in preparation for event day.

Event day

Have fun! Pat yourself on the back. Try to keep track of all the people who helped and thank them. Debrief afterwards with key volunteers and with FARF staff, then plan for next year.

Consult the FARF Fundraising Toolkit for more helpful tips & forms to make your planning easier and your event more successful!

Available at www.fanconi.org, by calling 541.687.4658 or by emailing info@fanconi.org