

**ARTHRITIS
FOUNDATION**

**BONE
BASH**

PROFESSIONAL EVENT PORTFOLIO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section II

Executive Summary

On September 15, 2006 the Louisville Branch of the Arthritis Foundation, Ohio River Valley Chapter, hosted the First Annual Bone Bash at Louisville Glassworks.

The Ohio River Valley Chapter serves southern Ohio, Kentucky and counties in West Virginia and Indiana. United by a commitment to a cure, they seek to collectively make their voices heard and put an end to the pain of arthritis and related diseases while improving the quality of life for the 2.8 million people with arthritis and related diseases in their service area (see AF pamphlet, Appendix page A).

The Louisville Branch raises the majority of their funding through the annual Arthritis Walk, but their intention is to replace it with the Bone Bash silent auction and gala. Not only will the Bone Bash serve as the Louisville Branch's primary fundraiser, it is also an opportunity for sponsors, community members, arthritis sufferers, and their families to spend an evening together in support of finding a cure.

The event consisted of a Cocktail Reception, a Live Glassblowing Demonstration, a Silent Auction, Dinner and Arthritis Awareness Program, Keys to a Cure, and Live Music and Dancing. The planning committee consisted of one full-time AF staff member and four volunteer committee members. My function was that of Committee Chair, which consisted mainly of coordinating and producing the silent auction. I also assisted with budgeting, catering negotiations, marketing, volunteer recruitment and management, and onsite coordination.

In its inaugural year, the Bone Bash attracted an attendance of 150 guests and raised almost \$23,000 through sponsorships, monetary donations, and a silent auction.

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RESEARCH

Section III

Event Research

According to the Goldblatt Event Management Process, there are Five Stages of Event Management: Research, Design, Planning, Coordination, and Evaluation. The intention of this portfolio is to document an actual event – The Louisville Arthritis Foundation’s First Annual Bone Bash – in which I have participated and have gained an understanding of a significant portion of the Five Stages of Event Management including administration, marketing, legal, ethical, and risk management issues. I will begin with Phase 1: Research.

To meet the goals of Dr. Goldblatt’s Research Phase, an event manager must conduct comprehensive needs assessments and feasibility studies, identify and prioritize goals and objectives, and identify and resolve potential challenges to a successful event.

The research process for the Bone Bash began in December 2005. The goal was to create a “gala” style event for the Arthritis Foundation to reach out to a broader constituent of the Louisville community. At that time, the primary fundraiser for the Louisville branch was the annual Arthritis Walk, which brought in an average of \$29,000 annually for the Foundation.

Many of the Louisville area’s 1800 non-profit organizations use walks as fundraisers, causing the market to become increasingly oversaturated and the monies raised annually by the Arthritis Walk to decrease. Molly Young, the Louisville Branch Manager, felt that a gala-style event would not only reach out to a newer and wider segment of the community; it would also have the potential to be more financially lucrative than the fading Arthritis Walk. Successful gala-style events hosted by the Louisville Branch in the recent past - the Tribute Dinner in 2002 and the Sopranos Gala in 2003 – were proof that the community and Arthritis Foundation supporters would likely embrace a new AF gala.

The new gala would be a Bone Bash, a popular and lucrative concept used by Arthritis Foundation branches all over the country. Traditionally there are six parts to the evening: A cocktail reception, a silent auction, dinner, a program with several

speakers, a “Keys to a Cure” auction, and live entertainment. In mid-December, I came on board as the Committee Chair and assisted Molly with the ongoing research process.

The Louisville Bone Bash concept was developed by first researching successful Bone Bashes held in nearby cities such as Cincinnati, Nashville, and Knoxville. All of these models use slightly different variations of the same event and are increasing the levels of funds raised each year. All three hold their event in the fall, and two of them use a Halloween theme. They also reach out to all levels of the community, from the higher echelon of business executives to young professionals to families and friends of all those who suffer from arthritis.

To examine the goals and objectives of the Louisville Bone Bash with more detail, a **Needs Assessment** (see Appendix page B) was performed. A Needs Assessment asks:

- **Why** must we hold this event?
- **Who** will benefit from the event?
- **When** - time and date of the event.
- **Where** will the event take place?
- **What** can be expected from this event?

The clarification of the Five W's provided the Bone Bash with a clear statement of purpose for the upcoming four phases of the Event Management Process to rely on.

Needs Assessment

Why must we hold this event?

The purpose of the Bone Bash is for it to become the primary annual fundraiser for the Louisville Branch of the Arthritis Foundation and also to celebrate 55 years of service to the Louisville and Southern Indiana communities. This festive affair will bring together 200 of the Foundation's corporate partners, individual donors, community volunteers, and young professionals in celebration of the great strides that have been made in the areas of public health, public policy, and research.

Who will benefit from the event?

As the number one disability in America, arthritis is not just a disease that affects the elderly. Over 300,000 children and 70 million adults battle the disease daily. Funds from this event will assist the Louisville branch in serving the more than 1.2 million people in Kentuckiana who suffer from some form of arthritis in the forms of arthritis research, education, and awareness.

When will the event be held?

The Bone Bash will be held on September 15, 2006. After researching the dates of non-profit fundraisers, community events, and local university athletic events being held in the months of August, September and October, the best available date with the least amount of potential competition was chosen.

Where will the event take place?

The Bone Bash will be held in the Glassworks Building at 815 West Market Street, Louisville, KY. Multiple venues were evaluated on characteristics such as availability, price, ease of accommodation, and atmosphere. Glassworks is a beautifully restored building on the West side of downtown Louisville. In addition to the event space, it is home to studios for glassblowers, flame workers, and architectural glass designers, a jazz club, commercial business offices, and residential loft apartments. The venue is conveniently located and offers ample surface parking.

What can be expected from this event?

The Bone Bash is conceptualized as a celebration, a fundraiser and an educational vehicle to enlighten the individuals who are unaware of the services AF provides to those in the Louisville community suffering from the many forms of arthritis.

A **SWOT Analysis** (see Appendix page C) was conducted to determine the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats that would affect the outcome of this first-annual event. This was an imperative step in determining the feasibility of holding the event.

Though the Louisville Bone Bash was somewhat unprecedented, it appeared to have many strong and appealing factors, such as a goal-oriented staff and committee, strong sponsorship connections, historic success of similar events, the ability to secure popular local entertainment, holding the event in a trendy venue, and the

support of the Cincinnati office. Strong features such as these led to the belief that the event would be a success thanks to the immense effort and creative decision-making put forth by the planning committee.

Every event, whether new or old, has weaknesses in its structure that could possibly lead to the event's failure. The Bone Bash was a first-time event with an undersized staff, a minimal planning committee, and only two local board members. There was also no way of forecasting the attendance or popularity of the event with young professionals, which is a group highly sought after to be involved. Any one of these factors could have hurt the event extensively.

Opportunities are predictable factors that may benefit as well as justify the Bone Bash. The most important opportunities for this event are that the money raised will help the bottom line, AF will gain stronger name recognition in the community, and the event's overall success will ensure a repeat event in 2007 along with the elimination of the floundering Arthritis Walk.

The fourth portion of the SWOT analysis identifies the external factors, or threats, that could affect the outcome of the Bone Bash. Factors such as competing events and organizations, the economy, the weather, the event location, and the ticket price have the potential to significantly impact the success of the event. Precautions taken and careful planning will hopefully allow the Bone Bash to evade these potential risks and the threat of failure they bring.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal-oriented staff and committee • Strong sponsorship connections • Historic success of similar events • Ability to secure popular local entertainment • Trendy venue • Support from Home office 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-time event • Two-person staff in Louisville office • Two local Board members • Small planning committee • No way to forecast attendance of Young Professionals
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money raised will help bottom line • AF will gain stronger name recognition in community • Success will ensure repeat event in 2007 and elimination of Arthritis Walk 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing events and organizations • Economy • Weather • Location • Ticket price

Strengths: *Historical factors and capabilities that will improve or support the success of the event.*

- **Goal-oriented staff and committee** – Core staff and committee members are all highly motivated and will strive to reach all goals and objectives.
- **Strong sponsorship connections** – Local AF office has strong ties to pharmaceutical sponsors as well as contacts within many doctors' offices and area businesses that will help to secure corporate funding for the event.
- **Historic success of similar events** - the 2002 Tribute Dinner and the 2003 Sopranos Gala were gala-style events and were both lucrative fundraisers.
- **Ability to secure popular local entertainment** – One goal is to secure a local band that has a high following, can accommodate a variety of musical tastes, and will attract people from all age groups.
- **Trendy venue** – Glassworks is a newly renovated downtown building that many people have not yet experienced in its reinvented state.
- **Support from Home office** – The Cincinnati office can provide both knowledgeable advice and physical onsite support for the event. They hold a similar event annually and will be a valuable resource.

Weaknesses: *Historical factors that may hinder or weaken the success of the event.*

- **First-time event** – Many first time events fail due to lack of attendance or poor planning. Though all efforts will be made to eliminate the probability of such factors; failure on some level is always a possibility. First time events are a learning experience for everyone involved; mistakes will be made and lessons will be learned.
- **Two-person staff in Louisville office** – Because Molly and Jo Ann (the AF Health Outreach Coordinator) have such a large variety of activities going on during the planning stages of the event as well as an incredible amount of responsibility associated with serving the public, it will be extremely challenging for them to prioritize and follow a strict timeline. Details could be overlooked or pushed aside in favor of more urgent matters.
- **Two local Board members** –A multi-member board with strong community ties is highly desirable when marketing a new event. Having only two of the 40-plus Board of Directors involved with the Louisville branch (the rest live in the Cincinnati area and advocate through the home office) increases the challenge of getting more people involved with AF Louisville.

- **Small planning committee** – With only four committee members who are often busy with other commitments, there may be difficulty completing all goals and objectives in a timely manner. As with the small staff, details could be overlooked or pushed aside in favor of more urgent matters.
- **No way to forecast attendance of Young Professionals** – Although other AF branches have had success drawing in their local young professionals, this may prove a challenge for the Louisville branch due to a perceived inability to properly market to that particular group. Most other branches use their theme of Halloween as the draw for young professionals, which Louisville can't do at a September event.

Opportunities: *Future predictable factors that may benefit the organization and justify the event.*

- **Money raised will help bottom line** – Proceeds of the event go towards funding the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program, Exercise Program and Self-Help Program, along with variety of public health activities, education and research.
- **AF will gain stronger name recognition** – Getting the Arthritis Foundation's name out into the Louisville community is critical to its continuing success. The media attention surrounding the event will provide opportunity to draw more supporters and volunteers to the organization.
- **Success will ensure repeat event in 2007 and elimination of Arthritis Walk** – The event's success will ensure that it will replace the Arthritis Walk as the primary fundraiser for the Louisville Branch.

Threats: *Future predictable external factors that can jeopardize event.*

- **Competing events and organizations** – Similar non-profit events held on the same weekend, such as the Komen Pink Tie Ball and the Planned Parenthood Gala, local athletic events, and community events are all competition for potential attendees.
- **Economy** – Experts feel that the economy may be having an effect on the way people spend their disposable income. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and as a result of high gas prices, there is less room in the budget for superfluous spending and charitable giving.
- **Weather** – In the event of bad weather (rain or cold weather are common in late September) attendance could be low.

- **Location** – The Louisville community is being re-conditioned to going back downtown after business hours. The city has recently undergone a massive make-over and is trying to lure people back with new nightlife and entertainment. Some people, however, are still unsure about being downtown (they think it is dangerous, there is no where to park, etc.), and this could affect attendance. In actuality, the building provides security and a parking lot.
- **Ticket Price** – While the full-event ticket price (\$100 per person) is low in comparison to many other non-profit galas, the \$65 per person Entertainment and Dancing only ticket price may be too high for the Young Professional audience it is targeting.

In addition to the SWOT Analysis, we conducted a **Feasibility Study** (see Appendix page D), to objectively examine the event design and to determine if the proposed event was feasible given the resources available. The purpose of the feasibility study is to clearly define the following:

- The ability to secure financial resources
- Confirming that the physical space met the needs of the event and its attendees
- Being aware of the political environment around the event
- Identifying any potential challenges
- Examining legal, ethical, and risk management considerations
- Evaluating the overall potential value of each item listed

Feasibility Study

A critical step in event research is to develop a feasibility study, which is used to objectively examine the event design and to determine if the proposed event is feasible given the resources available. The purpose of the feasibility study is to clearly determine and define the following:

- The ability to secure financial resources
- Confirming that the physical space meets the needs of the event and its attendees
- Being aware of the political environment around the event
- Identifying any potential challenges
- Examining legal, ethical, and risk management considerations

- Evaluate the overall potential value of each item listed

The most important aspect of a fundraising event for a non-profit organization is the event's ability to turn a profit. Board members and other stakeholders need to see that the event is bringing in more money than is being spent to produce it. The goal of the Arthritis Foundation was to keep the expenses at or under 25% of the total income.

In order to identify all potential expenses the event could incur, the initial projected budget was based on the Cincinnati Bone Bash budget from 2005. According to their event model, the total projected expenses would be approximately \$27,750. One of the main goals for the Louisville event was to secure multiple sponsorships from pharmaceutical companies that produce arthritis medications and draw on that revenue to cover event expenses. In-kind donations of items such as invitations, rentals, and food and beverage were also sought to lessen production costs.

Another important step of the feasibility study was confirming that the physical space met the needs of the event and its attendees. Before signing a contract with Glassworks, the chosen venue for the Bone Bash, a thorough site inspection was conducted in early January with Sydney O'Brien, the facility's event coordinator. Because the location of an event has profound effects on its outcome, the venue had to meet specific legal, physical, and environmental requirements. Once we confirmed that the facility was ADA compliant, could comfortably accommodate the capacity of the projected 300 attendees, was environmentally pleasing (great atmosphere, prime location in the downtown area, and offered ample parking), and provided a list of caterers that AF would be willing to work with, a contract could be signed.

Upon close inspection, it was clear that the political environment of this event would be minimal. As a first year event with so few people involved in the planning process, there would likely be little if any internal or external conflicts. The potential for some to develop is always there, but none could be foreseen.

Every event is susceptible to Murphy's Law (anything that *can* go wrong, *will* go wrong), so it is important to identify possible challenges early on and determine

what contingencies may be necessary. Factors that often interrupt or cancel an event include theft or vandalism, inclement weather, violence and terrorist acts, government regulation or action, etc.

Precautions were taken from the start to protect the auction items from theft. Small items were stored out of sight at the AF offices, and the larger and more valuable pieces were not picked up (or delivered) until a few days before the event. Everything was be moved to the Glassworks site on the morning of the event.

As the event was an indoor affair with pre-purchased tickets, it was unlikely that weather would be a factor in the event's success or failure. September is a very mild month in Kentucky, the only exception being an occasional strong thunderstorm.

In the event of sudden severe acts of God, terrorism or violence, or government actions, it was assumed the event would be postponed or cancelled. AF cannot afford to hold two venues at once, but given enough notice could possibly reschedule the event for a future weekend in the same or another venue.

One last step towards completing the feasibility study required taking into consideration any and all legal, ethical, and risk management issues that may arise. The venue, caterers, and entertainment all required signed contracts and deposits in the weeks prior to the event. Each of these were reviewed carefully and examined to any potential mistakes or oversights. Copies of each were kept in a master file and could be referred to if any issues were to arise either during the planning stages or onsite at the event. Local and state regulatory bodies were consulted to ensure that the silent auction process complied with all rules and regulations that apply to non-profit organizations.

Once all goals and objectives were realized, all potential risks, threats, and problems were researched, and contingency plans were created, it was decided that the Bone Bash was a very feasibly produced event, and it was time to move forward to the next phase of the Event Management Process.

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DESIGN

Section IV

Event Design

The second phase of the Goldblatt model is Event Design. In this phase, the event planning committee conducted brainstorming sessions that effectively assisted in the event development process. The information generated from the conclusions of the Needs Assessment and Feasibility Studies mixed with the results of these sessions enabled the committee to create the desired experience through the proper event environment.

In order to put together a fully conceptual event design, there were many factors that had to be considered. At the barest minimum, the event design had to address the basic human needs including accessibility, security, and sanitation. Beyond that, it was up to the event budget and creative objectives of the planning committee to choose the direction of the event.

In the case of a gala type event, critical factors include the following: Time and date, location, target audience, budget, ticket price, theme/decorations, printed materials (invitations, tickets, programs, etc.), audio visual needs, program script and speakers, catering, silent auction donations, silent auction production, entertainment, signage, public relations, marketing, and advertising. The budget, target audience, location, date, and time were all decided upon during the Needs Assessment portion of the research process. Once those were established, the more creative decisions could be made.

In January, Molly and I met to discuss preliminary ideas for the event and do more creative brainstorming. Separate one-on-one meetings were held between Molly and two other committee members (Norman Stiefler and Laura Jones) to brainstorm and expand the creative options. Ideas and thoughts were also passed around the committee via email. A full-committee planning session was held on March 20, 2006.

It was decided during these meetings that an elaborate theme for this inaugural event would be too pricey for the budget and overwhelming in the moderate space. The Glassworks building already provided a very artsy, enchanting atmosphere, with

big picture windows looking out on the city, bejeweled pillars in all of the rooms and beautiful, colorful pieces of glass art displayed everywhere. A simple but glamorous color scheme and decorations for the Bone Bash would incorporate the existing ambiance while also defining the event. The colors chosen in lieu of a theme were black, purple, and silver. In the dining area, the tablecloths on the rounds of eight would alternate black and grey with dark purple toppers. Napkins would alternate by table, some plain black, some gray with purple designs. Balloon towers would decorate the entrance, program stage, and dance floor areas.

Wildflowers Florist was contacted to design inexpensive decorations for the dinner tables. The centerpieces were very elegant arrangements of roses and carnations in various shades of purple with leafy greenery and faux-sterling silver pots. Smaller arrangements in bud vases were made for the cocktail rounds in the entertainment area. At the end of the evening, the centerpieces were available for guests to purchase (for a \$20 donation to AF) and take home to help offset the cost.

The evening would begin with a "VIP" cocktail reception and the silent auction. During dinner, a short program consisting of an emcee, two or three speakers, and a "Keys to a Cure" auction were next. The "After Party" would follow with light desserts, a live band, and a wine toss.

The ticket price for the VIP Reception, Dinner, and After Party was \$100 per person; tickets for the After Party were \$65. Many vendors had already been selected by Molly based on existing relationships and offers of donated product. The rest were chosen based on the evolving needs of the event.

Power Creative, a graphic design firm whose owner is heavily involved in AF, had already met with Molly to discuss the design of the event materials and how we wanted to brand the Bone Bash. They were formulating ideas based on Glassworks' atmosphere and our creative brief for the event information card, commemorative poster, invitation, and program.

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PLANNING

Section V

Event Planning

Phase 3 of the Event Management Process, the Planning Phase, is critical to the success of the event due to the tasks and responsibilities it entails. The objectives of this phase are:

1. Establishing a comprehensive organizational chart for the event that details staff and volunteer duties.
2. Developing a critical path timeline for all aspects of planning the Bone Bash.
3. Identifying a list of possible vendors based on both price and ability to perform/provide the services needed.
4. Reviewing and updating the projected budget.
5. Implementing an ongoing performance review and evaluation process for the staff and volunteers.

The organizational chart visually describes each team member's place in the event process and how decisions are made within the team. Given the small number of stakeholders involved with the Bone Bash, establishing an Organizational Chart (see Appendix page E) for the Bone Bash was simple. Molly Young, the Louisville Branch Director, was the main coordinator of the event. She held the responsibility for the overall success or failure of the Bone Bash. Her support and assistance came in three forms: the Home Office of the Ohio River Valley Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, the two Louisville Board members, and a Chaired Planning Committee.

The primary function of the Home Office was to provide support to the fledgling Louisville event with helpful ideas and suggestions, document templates, and volunteer manpower. They were a great asset to the Louisville staff and planning committee because they hold their own successful version of the Bone Bash annually in Cincinnati and know the ins and outs of the event. Their staff is accustomed to producing large galas and offered experience and guidance in all aspects of planning and coordination.

The two Louisville Board members provided support with the program and with attendee recruitment. Edie Nixon agreed to be a speaker during the program, and

both she and Dr. Gary Crump were assets in engaging the local medical community to participate in the event.

The Bone Bash Committee consisted of a Committee Chair (me) and three members: Bo Brinly, Laura Jones, and Norman Stiefler. As the Chair, I was responsible for coordinating the efforts of my fellow volunteers and making sure goals and objectives were reached in a timely manner. The Committee ideally would communicate with Molly through me, although in reality we all corresponded openly with Molly. Outside of committee communication and assisting Molly with all other planning aspects, my main priority was the Silent Auction. I was responsible for obtaining/collecting the auction items, determining the presentation of the auction, and tracking all incoming donations with an excel-based database.

Laura and Bo were in charge of decorations and the more creative aspects of the Bone Bash. Acquiring centerpieces and other décor and placing it the day of the event was their primary function. Norman, the Administrator at Rheumatology Associates and a longtime volunteer of the Foundation, held an important role in attendee recruitment. With his extensive knowledge of the Foundation and his various relationships within the local community, Norman was a great asset. All three committee members were encouraged to help procure donations for the silent auction and recruit volunteers to help on the night of the Bone Bash.

Once the committee was formed and tasks were assigned, the next step was to create an Event Timeline (see Appendix page F) to establish critical deadlines and communicate them to all stakeholders. As vendors and service providers were procured, individual timelines were collected from each of them. We then identified which elements or components of these would impact another's deadlines. From this, an excel-based comprehensive timeline was created and distributed it to all internal stakeholders. As the event moved forward, aspects of the timeline were modified or changed, but the basic structure remained the same.

In many cases, event planners research and consult with several vendors of each product before settling on one or the other. However, because the Arthritis Foundation has been producing events in the Louisville area for many years, Molly already had a list of vendors that she utilizes frequently. All of the listed vendors

offered either non-profit discounts or donated goods to AF as a result of their long-term relationships. From that list, the suppliers were selected for Graphic Design, Food and Beverage, Audio Visual, Event Signage and Printing. The vendors for centerpieces, balloons, and entertainment were all chosen later in the planning process based on rates and ability to provide the required service (see Vendor List, Appendix page G).

Once vendors were selected and their prices quoted, it was time to review and adjust the Projected Budget established during the research process. The projected budget for the Louisville Bone Bash was based on the Cincinnati office's version for their gala. The projected income was \$111,000.00, less projected expenses of \$27,750, for a projected AGI (revenue less DDBC) of \$55,150. However, it included costs that we would not have, such as security, valet parking, and tenting and rentals. It was also designed for an event that would likely draw a larger crowd and more sponsorship dollars, so the overall projected revenue was higher. In May, the budget was revised to more accurately reflect the Louisville event (see Appendix page H) and distributed to all internal stakeholders.

The final step in the Planning Process was to implement the evaluation and performance reviews for the staff and volunteers. Tracy Hearn, VP of Development for the Ohio River Valley Chapter and Molly's immediate supervisor, was responsible for monitoring Molly's performance. Molly, in turn, was in charge of keeping the board members and committee moving. Her management style is very relaxed, so verbal encouragement, phone calls and group email reminders were her way of keeping volunteers on task or communicating a need for change. Post event letters of review were sent out (on request) from Molly and Barbara Perez, President and CEO of the Ohio Valley Chapter. I also requested one from Norman Stiefler to include with this portfolio (see Appendix page I).

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COORDINATION

Section VI

Event Coordination

Planning leads into the next phase of the Goldblatt model: Phase 4 - Event Coordination. This is a multi-faceted, complex process that is a combination of anticipation and logic. The event has to be completely thought through from inception to completion from a variety of viewpoints, including the guests, volunteers, vendors, and staff. Then, all elements imperative to a successful and sustainable event have to be established, prioritized, secured, scheduled, and evaluated. Communication is critical to make sure all goals and objectives are clearly defined, understood, and accomplished in the allotted time frame.

In the months leading up to the event, vendor contracts were detailed and signed, decorations were chosen, sponsorships were obtained, advertising was distributed, and the silent auction solicitation progressed. The Bone Bash staff and committee made every attempt to stick with the event timeline and were, for the most part, successful.

Each of the vendors was met with separately to negotiate the detailed specifications of what they would provide and when they would provide it. The details can be found in each Vendor Contract (see Appendix page J) and a summary of each is below.

Glassworks (Venue)

- First vendor contract negotiated, contract signed and deposit paid in January.
- Event space consisted of two separate areas on the First and Second Floor (see Appendix page K). Diagrams were created with Microsoft Visio to represent the Bone Bash set-up in those spaces (see Appendix page L).
- Equipment provided included the program stage, dinner tables and chairs, silent auction tables, a registration table, cocktail rounds for the entertainment area, and power for the band. This was set before the staff arrived the morning of the event, and Sydney was on hand to make any adjustments.

Power Creative (Graphic Design)

- Also hired in January, no contract required.
- Creative Brief (see Appendix page M) and color scheme was submitted to explain what we wanted the designers to incorporate into all printed materials, which were approved by Molly and sent to C&R Graphics for printing.

Masterson's Catering (Food and Beverage)

- Contract and deposit of \$300 were submitted by May 10th.
- Alice Bard, Catering Sales Manager, assisted in planning a menu for 200 of passed appetizers, Chicken Breast Calvados dinner, and finger desserts.
- The menu and bar arrangements were adjusted on August 10th and again on August 24th.
- For the event, Masterson's staff included a bartender, servers and prep staff. Equipment supplied included table linens, cocktail rounds, and tables for dessert stations. They were responsible for much of the set-up and tear down.

C&H Audio Visual (Audio Visual)

- C&H was contracted in late July, no actual contract was required.
- Equipment for the event was minimal – a podium and microphone onstage, sound speakers, a 6x8 screen with rear-projection, and patch cords to house TV's. The mix position and two sound techs sat behind the screen and drape.

C&R Graphics (Printing)

- Secured in April to print event documents, including the event information card, the invitation and RSVP cards, envelopes, and the program (see Appendix pages N-Q) as needed.

Nervous Melvin & the Mistakes (Entertainment)

- Band secured July, contract signed in September for two-hour performance.

DanD Signs (Event Signage)

- In late August, multiple foam-core backed signs (15"x20" or larger) were ordered to display at registration, the silent auction, the wine toss, etc.

Wildflowers Florist (Centerpieces)

- Contacted in August to create centerpieces for dinner tables and cocktail tables, no contract required. Centerpieces were delivered and set on day of event.

After the vendors' goals and objectives had been stated and shared, it was time to focus on coordinating the various components such as the registration process, silent auction, dinner program, and wine toss. The Event Timeline helped everyone coordinate details and meet goals in a timely manner during the pre-event months, and a Production Schedule (see Appendix page R) was created to organize and prioritize the day-of event activities.

Registration

As seats to the Bone Bash were purchased (either via phone or by returning the RSVP card) the attendees' names were added to a master list. Upon arriving at Glassworks, each ticket holder received a registration packet that included an event program, silent auction item list, and (2) drink tickets.

The Silent Auction

The goal for the Bone Bash was to generate \$25,000 from a silent auction comprised of a minimum of 200 items (a combination of single items and baskets) with a starting value of \$75 and up. The items sought were an eclectic and unique mix of items, such as gift certificates from retailers and restaurants, merchandise, and "experiences" such as a balloon ride or a dinner prepared and served in your home by a local chef. The solicitation of these items began in January and continued until the week before the event.

Because I had never coordinated a silent auction before, the first order of business was research. I gathered information from various nonprofit websites – everything from sample letters and forms to lists of items they had acquired for their events.

Molly also had a list of donors from the Sopranos Gala and a list of items from a gala she did for a previous company, which were also great references.

Next I created the Auction Donor Database, which contained contact information for all potential donors and, once received, a listing of the items acquired and their values. Donation request forms (see Appendix page S) were sent out to potential donors via email, mail, and fax and contained a Return Fax Sheet that indicated interest in participation.

The 2-3 days before the Bone Bash were spent cleaning up the donation database, collecting all items, and organizing the donations into single items or baskets. Enhancers such as baskets and small fillers were also purchased to spice up the items or tie them together. Inexpensive frames were purchased for posters and certificates that were displayed in the baskets and on the auction tables.

A silent auction also comes with ample paperwork (See Appendix page T): Bid sheets to place in front of each item, a tabletop description card for each package, and a numbered sticker that corresponded with numbers on the bid sheets and description cards. Each item was assigned a numbered envelope and any paperwork (gift cards, certificates of authenticity, etc.) was kept in the envelope and given to the winning bidder at checkout. An Item Description database listing all of the items numbered order with the title, description, donor names, total value, starting bid, winning bid, and winning bidder was used as a reference for staff and volunteers.

The silent auction was a major component of the event-day set-up; it took the better part of five hours from start to finish. Items had to be taken to Glassworks, organized, and displayed on the auction tables with bid sheets, pens, etc.

Dinner Program

The Program began as soon as everyone was seated for the dinner portion of the evening. The emcee for the evening was local news personality Renee Murphy. Molly made the introductions, and the Program Script (see Appendix page U) details the order of speakers.

Wine Toss

The wine toss was incorporated into the event not only to raise additional funds, but also to entertain the attendees. Several local distributors donated product for the event, and it was set up in a corner of the First Floor space near the band. For a minimal donation, guests could toss rings at the wine bottles and, if they circled one, they got to take it home.

Volunteers

A crucial component of a non-profit organization and its events are the people of the community who volunteer their time. Several of the Cincinnati staff came down to help with the event, but we still needed more bodies and hands on the night of the event. We organized a list of volunteer duties in several "shifts" and asked family and friends to come out and help. As the Entertainment Director for the Young Professionals Association, I reached out to my committee and fellow members and acquired several volunteers there as well.

After the event was over, there was still work to be done. All proceeds from the event were processed, the budget was finalized (see Appendix page V), and thank-you letters (see Appendix page W) were sent to all donors and sponsors.

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EVALUATION

Section VII

Post-Event Evaluation

It is important at the end of every event to evaluate the event's success or failure and keep records of this evaluation to use in the future. While no official process or instrument was used to evaluate the Bone Bash, Molly, Norman and I did make our own personal direct observations as well as ask for feedback from several different individuals at the event. We also took photos of the event (see Appendix pages X-Z). Everyone felt that the overall event was a success and that the attendees all seemed to enjoy themselves. There were, however, a few things about the entire process that could have been done differently.

First, there were two committee members that were not willing/able to fulfill the commitments they had made, which resulted in missed deadlines and caused the rest of us to exert more effort. There were also several volunteers who promised things they could not deliver. Although Molly and I tried many times to encourage more action from these individuals, not much could be done to rectify the situation. After all, it's hard to fire a volunteer. Their duties were simply taken over and completed by either Molly or myself.

The next problem that arose was our inability to access the young professionals market. Although the "After Party" portion of the event was for them, we could not get them engaged with or interested in attending the event. Thus, there were very few After Party tickets sold and it had very low attendance.

For the dinner portion of the evening, there was also an issue of low ticket (seat) sales. The goal for the evening was 200, but only 95 actual seats were purchased. The remaining 40 were sponsors, hosts, and speakers for a total of 135 filled seats. Approximately 10-15 of the ticket holders did not show up for the event, leaving us with around 120 attendees. We felt that marketing the event more and to a broader constituent of the community would have increased our attendance significantly.

The low attendance caused a few problems with the silent auction. First off, there were almost as many items as there were potential bidders. We had 85 auction items for 120 attendees. This led to very low bidding on most items with several

items never receiving a single bid. Halfway through the auction, I marked down starting bids on over half of the items to encourage more bidding. In the end, an auction with a retail value of over \$22,000 raised less than \$6500.

At the end of the dinner program the emcee, Renee Murphy, botched the Keys to a Cure auction. There is a certain script that is supposed to be very carefully followed in order for the auction to work, and she ad-libbed so much that no one understood what they were bidding for. Molly had pre-arranged several "fixed" bids to encourage bidding, but because the attendees were confused, only three guests made bids. The Keys to a Cure auction, which is very successful at other AF events nationally, only brought in \$5025. One volunteer suggested that, because there was no one videotaping or taking photographs of the donors (who were instructed to stand as they made donations), perhaps potential donors did not give due to a perceived lack of recognition.

The purpose of attending a non-profit fundraiser, in theory, is to donate money in some capacity. On the whole, we got the sense that this particular group of guests was not that keen on spending a lot of money. Even though many of them did not personally pay for their (tax deductible) admission tickets, they were bidding very low on the silent auction and not at all on the Keys to a Cure auction. We do not know if this was a result of the event itself, or just the nature of the guests.

As mentioned previously, the "After Party" portion of the event also suffered low attendance for a variety of reasons. By the time the band was wrapping up, there were only two guests and a few volunteers on the dance floor. The wine toss, as part of the After Party, was not highly participated in. It raised only \$105 and there were five out of seven cases of donated wine left over.

Even though there were issues and oversights, everyone was pleased overall with the inaugural event. Every mishap can be viewed as a learning experience and improved on in the future. This is looked at in more detail in the GAP Analysis.

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GAP ANALYSIS

Section VIII

GAP Analysis

The Gap analysis is a valuable assessment tool that enables an organization to compare its actual performance with its potential performance. This provides the organization with insight into areas that have room for improvement, or the “gaps” that need closing in the Event Management process.

This event’s committee was very small and as a result unable to complete all of the goals and objectives to their desired levels. I feel like everyone did a fantastic job with the resources we were given, and the event was a success in spite of our small planning committee. However, the goal for the 2007 event is to have double, if not triple, the amount of committee members working on the Bone Bash. Norman and I will co-chair the next event to take some of the pressure off of Molly, and we are all currently trying to attract several more ambitious committee members. We are also being more selective about who joins the committee so less time is spent picking up the slack of those who commit but cannot produce.

Another obvious gap in the event research was our inability to market the event to Louisville’s young professionals. I joined the Board of Directors for YPAL in July and, until recently, was unsure how to get around the association’s solicitation and sponsorship policies in order to market AF to their members. Several weeks after the Bone Bash was over, another non-profit approached YPAL with an offer of discounted tickets and a “YPAL VIP Reception” if YPAL would allow the non-profit to market to their members. Because this counted as a “member benefit,” it was approved, and the non-profit was in with the young professionals. For the 2007 Bone Bash, we have already decided to sell the After Party as a VIP party for Young Professionals, and offer YPAL members a steeply discounted admission, perhaps with complimentary cocktails or appetizers.

As for marketing the event to the rest of the community, we hope to expand on that in 2007 as well. We felt that because the website and promotional advertising did not start sooner, we weren’t successful in reaching our target audience. The lesson learned is that marketing the event early and often is crucial in a community with hundreds of nonprofits. A major goal for 2007 is to increase the attendance by half.

Now that a Silent Auction database has been created, the process of soliciting items will be much smoother. Starting from scratch eight months before an event – and having never done one before – hindered our ability to acquire the more eclectic and desirable packages. Due to the time frame and lack of contacts in the community, it was a challenge to put together auction packages that people could not easily go to the store and purchase. Armed with a better understanding of the process and a database of over 200 potential donors, the 2007 auction will be even more impressive than the last.

On that same note, I will also be careful to have a better ratio of packages to bidders. Although we hope for a larger crowd in 2007, I am planning to have only half as many packages (of possibly higher value) as we have attendees. I think the perceived value and thus the bid prices of the items would be higher if more people were competing to win each item.

Finally, there are many other small and large details of the event that we look forward to improving upon in 2007. We would like to streamline the auction checkout process, manage our volunteers better, try harder to stick to the timeline, and increase the overall organization of the event management phases.

I feel like we learned so much from this inaugural event that will give us the tools to set loftier goals and stronger objectives for future Bone Bashes. We can use benchmarks set by this event to raise the bar higher and have something to compare the success of future events to.

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**PERSONAL
ESSAY**

Section VIII

Personal Essay

In August of 1999, I graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management. I had transferred into that major halfway through my junior year after two and a half years as a Student Athletic Trainer pursuing a Kinesiology degree. It is sufficient to say I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life after graduation.

After two or three years of working in restaurants, considering and then discarding the idea of a career in restaurant management, I stopped to think long and hard about what I wanted to be when I grew up. I remembered a section of one of my college courses that had focused on meeting and event planning. It was probably one of the few classes in my major that I had actually enjoyed and paid attention to. I thought: why not give special events a try?

I spent the next four years working full time and doing unpaid internships with various non-profits like the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Kentucky Derby Festival, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana to gain the experience I needed to land a job in Special Events. Through the Derby Festival I was able to become a member of the International Festivals and Events Association, and won a scholarship to attend their Annual Convention in 2004. I also began taking the Event Management certification courses at GWU to further enhance my knowledge of the industry. After countless job interviews, I landed a position as an Event Coordinator with the Kentucky International Convention Center in March 2005.

In my almost two years at KICC I have learned so much about the facility side of meetings, conventions, sporting events, galas, etc. My primary function is to work with incoming meeting planners and show management and coordinate their needs with our facility staff. I help them with room and exhibit hall set-up and often create floor diagrams for them on Microsoft Visio. I order their electric, tables, chairs, staging, and assist them in making contact with service providers for catering, a/v, telephone and internet, security, first aid, decorations, and anything else they may require. During the days of their event, I help them with any last minute details and "put out fires."

I've actually found it's very similar to athletic training, just without the band-aids. As a trainer, I prepared my athletes before the game with stretching and tape, and was always on hand during the game to fix problems with more tape, ice bags, and water. At KICC, I prepare my clients before hand with all of the equipment they ask for, and stand by during the show ready to provide extras and fix problems.

While I enjoy my position at the convention center, my goal is to become more involved with the planning aspect of the events, either with a non-profit organization or in a corporate meeting planning department. Ordering tables and chairs can be challenging, but not very often. In order to continue enhancing my education, I volunteered to be the Committee Chair for the Bone Bash. Because I knew Molly from my days at Make-A-Wish, she was confident in my abilities and gave me practically unlimited creative and decision-making freedom.

While working on this event, I was able to drastically improve my knowledge of silent auctions and putting on a gala. I gained valuable information about researching an event, projecting a budget, revising and staying within the budget, working with caterers and other service providers and negotiating contracts, and successfully recruiting and managing volunteers. There are still areas that I can improve on, such as sponsorship negotiation and solicitation of pricier auction items. I also want to learn how to better market an event and in turn increase attendance.

I truly believe that the Bone Bash was an incredible and valuable learning experience for me. The knowledge I gained - about things I learned and things I still need to learn - is priceless in my pursuit of a career in special events. My goal is to one day earn a position with a non-profit or corporate department as a meeting or events planner and then begin working to earn my CMP designation. The one thing I have learned through the years is that hard work always pays off in the end; you just have to keep moving forward.