

Catering

Objectives:

- **Provide and prepare food and drink for all Dance Marathon needs**
- **Create the menu for Dance Marathon meals and snacks**
- **Solicit in-kind food donations from area businesses**

➤ The Dance Marathon Vision

- It is important that you become a resource on everything related to Dance Marathon. You will consult committee members, student organizations, campus administrators and businesses. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the duties and responsibilities of every committee.
- You are a spokesperson for DM. Discuss and represent the views of Dance Marathon throughout the campus and community.
- Make sure that you understand all rules/ guidelines set up by your school, the hospital, and even your community. These will guide you and your members need to understand the importance of following these guidelines.
- The responsibilities of a director are endless and limitless- you must learn to delegate. Many committees will work together to accomplish their responsibilities. Make sure your committee set-up is comprehensive and that one chair is ultimately responsible for each task.

➤ Committee Creation

- Chairs responsibilities can be time consuming. The majority of former Dance Marathon council members say the most important task they accomplished was selecting a strong council. After you relay the Marathon vision, the committee members carry this vision to reality.
- Involve as many people as possible, but make sure to assemble a committee that is dependable and energetic. Search to find individuals that are hard working and able to commit a large amount of time to fundraising for the kids!
- When faced with a great task, many of us find the urge to turn to our close friends. If you feel that urge when it comes to selecting your Dance Marathon council, try to resist it. The committee should be a diverse group that has the drive and determination to make Dance Marathon a hit. Use objectivity in your selection process. Just because someone is a close friend doesn't mean they are a good selection.
- Encourage students of all levels to apply.

➤ Run Committee Meetings

- Once the committee is selected, it is time to bring everyone together. This is a good time to get chairs comfortable with each other. Define expected actions and have them set goals.
- Make the first meeting fun. Conduct some ice breakers and team building games. These activities can immediately make you aware of committee members' personalities and how best to work with them throughout the year. Make the meetings motivational with members leaving feeling empowered to help the kids at Riley.
- Teach the chairs everything about Dance Marathon. Every member must know all marathon information inside and out.
- Be the critical eye and ear for your committee. Often chairs have great ideas, but they also have the tendency to get carried away. It is your responsibility to provide members with a reality check and help them design back-up plans.
- Keep the students on track. Everyone has great stories to tell about the weekend, etc, but you are there for a purpose.
- As you move throughout the year, you will be able to gauge how often meetings should be held. Some committees hold weekly meetings, some don't. This is up to you, however as it gets closer to the marathon (no less than three months away) each committee should hold weekly meetings.
- Set your meeting day, time and place in stone. Attendance should be mandatory and it is helpful to send out a reminder one week in advance.
- Be sure to construct a committee timeline and see that the president receives a copy as well as your committee.

➤ Personal Qualities

- In order to be successful in this position, you need to be extremely persistent, personable, and well organized. You will be constantly working with businesses to get donations and you might hear multiple no's before you hear a yes. Do not get discouraged.
- You might not get all of the food donated and have to pay for some. Do not worry, this happens at most schools. Try to negotiate the best price possible for items you need to pay for.

➤ Provide and prepare food and drink

- Don't expect dancers to arrive with a full stomach
- Students will need food throughout the marathon especially at times when you don't normally eat a regular meal due to the extenuating circumstances of being awake and on their feet for multiple hours. That is why you need meals and snacks scheduled at regular intervals through the night like you would during the day.
- Check campus contracts and policies. What are local sanitation rules that govern the campus? Does someone need a food server's permit or the local equivalent? Additionally, some campuses have a contract with a food service company that might put up a fuss about bringing in outside food. Fill the paperwork out with the

person who manages the property where the Dance Marathon will be held. For example, Pittsburg State University had an initial challenge with their campus food service company. They worked out an agreement where the company would receive sponsorship status and got all of their food donated from this company.

- Recruit people to prepare and clean up food
 - After you assemble a committee, divide responsibilities. You could divide responsibilities with someone overseeing one or multiple areas such as breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, paper products, appliances, major sponsors and/ or minor sponsors.
 - Attend meetings of different university classes, clubs and departments (health and nutrition, hotel and restaurant management). Committee members with hospitality and food majors are a huge help and committee membership is great practical experience.

- Create the menu for all meals and snacks
 - What do you like to eat? What do your friends, committee members, and dancers like to eat? Many of those items should be included in your marathon's menu. But before you get started, make an appointment with a campus nutritionist to develop a healthy and feasible menu. Tell them what will be required of the dancers and ask them what menu items and combinations they suggest.
 - Form this menu around your community resources. One school has a locally owned bagel shop which many students frequent. The Catering committee asks this business to donate bagels for breakfast. Foods that are easy to prepare, serve and clean up easily, simplify your job. Get input on the menu from other committees.
 - As a committee, review every meal and snack. How was the food obtained? Where is the food stored? When and how will the food arrive at the site? How does it need to be prepared? How will it be served? What utensils are needed? Anything missing? (salt? sugar?) With what and how will we clean up after the meal? How will we return items that we borrowed or did not use?
 - Meet with Dancer Relations prior to the final dancer registration. Design a method to gather special requests for meals because some dancers, such as vegetarians and diabetics are unable to eat certain foods.

- Food preparation
 - Determine the logistics of food preparation. Where will you prepare the food? On-site? In a Greek Organization's kitchen? Will you store perishable items on-site or is there somewhere near the event where this can be done? What equipment do you need to prepare the food? Do you need a microwave or a refrigerator?
 - Determine the logistics involved with feeding the dancers. How will you do it? Where will you do it? Many schools have an area big enough for feeding dancers

on the marathon site, but choose to feed the dancers elsewhere. For example, Southern California had enough space, but decided to give their dancers a change of scenery and set up their food in a room away from the hustle and bustle of the marathon.

- Confirm food preparation arrangements one week before the marathon. The best way is to have the food delivered by the sponsor during the marathon when the food is needed. If delivery is not an option, a suitable place will need to be found for the food as well as transportation to get the food from the sponsor to the storage area and from there to the marathon.
 - Work with Facilities/ Operations on pick up and delivery of food and appliances you will be using.
- Solicit in-kind food donations from area businesses
- After you have created the menu, it is time to find the food. Your goal should be to get all food donated or as “in-kind” gifts. That way you have none of your money going to pay food bills when the marathon is over. Which local businesses sell your menu items, prepared or unprepared? Approach these businesses the same way the Marketing committee approaches businesses looking for cash donations. Work with the Marketing committee and your Dance Marathon Coordinator on sponsorship levels for food sponsors and receiving marketing packets.
 - When presenting Dance Marathon to a company, go to the meeting with more than one idea of how they can get involved. That way you have a few tricks up your sleeve if they say no.
 - Do not limit yourself to just area businesses. Try campus facilities and some unusual places such as: dining facilities, fraternities and sororities (utensils, cereals, breads, etc), athletics (coolers, Gatorade, etc.), and restaurant suppliers (bulk food).
- Contact sheets
- A contact sheet contains all the important information about business contacts. Keep the original sheet and give a copy to the Marketing director. If a committee member contacts anyone, make sure they give you a copy of their contact sheet for your files. This prevents two different people contacting the same business, which is unprofessional and embarrassing for both parties.
- Create a back-up plan
- For one reason or another, food sponsors sometimes fall through. Also, if you have more dancers than you planned on you could have a shortage on your hands. That is why it is good to get more food lined up than you think you need. If you end up having too much food, which is always a possibility, plan ahead to give it to a local shelter or other needy group.

➤ Celebrities

- Schedule local and on- campus celebrities (professors, athletes) to serve meals and if willing, prepare food. Dancers love to see familiar faces scooping ice cream and serving pasta!

➤ Additional supplies to consider

- Tables, table cloths, napkins, paper towels, plastic silverware, paper cups, microwave, paper plates and bowls, gallon dispensers, refrigerator, freezer, ice cream scoops, tongs, spatulas, serving utensils, bowls and cleaner to clean utensils between meals, knives, preparation dishes and serving dishes.

➤ Meal ideas

- Breakfast: Cereals, bagels, English muffins, toast, donuts, fruit, milk and juice
- Lunch: Hoagie sandwiches, chips, pizza, chips and salsa, soup and salad
- Dinner: Pasta, garlic bread, macaroni and cheese, salad, potato bar, breads
- Snacks: Pretzels, popcorn, granola bars, frozen yogurt, popsicles, ice cream, freeze pops, frozen juice bars, fruits and vegetables

*** Helpful Hints:

- Dancers get very dehydrated. Always have water or sports drinks available!
- Check with your university/ school to make sure they do not have a contract with a caterer, beverage distributor, etc. It will change your donation list!
- Are the meals appropriate and scheduled accordingly?
- Make sure all food is prepared according to health codes!
- What will you do with left-overs?

*** Remember:

- Always have a back-up plan!
- Delegate! Do not allow yourself to become overwhelmed.
- Act as a DM role model. You represent DM whether you are meeting with a potential sponsor, briefing campus administrators, or sitting in a class. Encourage all committee members to remember they are also role models; everything they do reflect on DM. Have fun but remember to never jeopardize the perception of your organization.

Do it for the kids!