

# **A Virtual Party with a Purpose**

*Event Fundraising Without the Event*



## **Today's Presenters**

Madeline Pruett  
Director of Development

Mary Beth Muscarella  
Annual Giving Manager

Charlotte Becker  
Data Analytics Manager

Jaime Sales  
Auction Chair and current parent



**2019 Auction raised \$630,000**



**2020 Auction Target: \$600,000 - \$650,000**



## **Wednesday, March 11, 2020** **Three Days from Auction**

**10 p.m.** Oregon Governor Brown limits public gatherings to less than 250 people due to the novel coronavirus.



## Thursday, March 12, 2020 Two Days from Auction

**8:15 a.m.** Email sent to all auction attendees and community members informing them OES will not hold the annual auction as planned on March 14, 2020.

That afternoon, parents were emailed that the school would close for four weeks.

**Agonized over options and strategy.**  
**Committed to a plan by end of day:** Livestream the “Live” auction (bid online) and Special Appeal.



## Friday, March 13, 2020 One Day from Auction

**12:30 p.m.** Announced that the OES Auction would proceed as a Livestreamed event. Live Auction and special appeal would take place via the already-opened online auction the next day.

**Worked through all elements of executing on our plan:** Promotion/Instructions via email, Live opening bids, Closing times, AV/IT logistics, scripting, Greater Giving set up, and volunteer outreach to community.



## Saturday, March 14, 2020 Auction Day!

**Noon** Opened the Live Auction packages and sent bidding instructions via email and personal bid link via text.

**1 p.m.** Set up stage and sound with The AV Dept.

**5 p.m.** Rehearsal with Auctioneer Johnna Wells and MC Peter Buonincontro (OES teacher).

**7 p.m.** Livestream







**\$620,000 raised!**

## **Livestream Auction Program**

**7 p.m.** Welcome from Head of School, Board President, and Auction Chair. Why we are here.

**7:08 p.m.** Draw winning raffle.

**7:10 p.m.** Begin Live package descriptions with current bid update.

- One minute description per package.
- Two minutes between each package closing starting at 7:12 p.m.
- Circle back to announce winners and update on bidding.

**7:50 p.m.** Special Appeal with passionate intro. from MC (current parent and teacher) and auction chair.

Announce pre-commits, and read names as gifts come in. Push to stretch goal of \$250,000.

**Thank you!** Close with Special Appeal video.





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SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020  
**THE 150**  
2020 OES AUCTION AND GALA  
CELEBRATING THE PAST INSPIRING THE FUTURE

## **Communications Tips:**

- **Take your time.** Don't rush to communicate if the plan isn't final. A good plan is easier to communicate and changes confuse people.
- **Make it meaningful.** This is an unprecedented moment. Remind donors why your mission is important and how they can support your community.
- **Give detailed instructions.** This is new for many people. Train your volunteers; consider video tutorials. Pre-stream instructions and staff a call/email/text center for quick response.
- **Engage your volunteers.** Your team needs supportive volunteers now more than ever!



## Maximizing Volunteer Resources:

- **Determine volunteer roles.**  
Incorporate their knowledge of event as applicable. Have they been primary contact with donors? (ie. live items, silent, etc) Can they help set the stage- decor, parties, etc.
- **Take the community temperature.** Will parents and donors get on board with the plan? What do they need to hear, see, and know to make this plan a success?
- **Spread the word.** Peer-to-peer communication about supporting mission is very effective and can create more *hype*. Determine how to use Social Media to your advantage.

**STAFF:** Listen to your volunteer leaders and incorporate their community insights into plan!



## Revenue Generator Tips:

- **Focus on the Special Appeal.** Create a system for donor recognition. Secure your pre-commits. Set a goal and give updates in real time. Simplify other revenue streams.
- **Cultivate “Live” Auction bidders.** Seek opening bids and shop packages around.
- **Set “Buy It Now” prices.** This creates a reference point for package value.
- **Maximize your raffle.** Work with your local dept. of justice to sell online.
- **Refunds only on request.** Including tickets, advertisers, and sponsors.
- **Precommitted Paddle Raises.** What we would have done differently and how best to handle these donations.



## Technical Tips:

- **Use experienced vendors.** Coordinate outside vendors with internal IT and other partners.
- **Know how to use your auction/online bidding software under pressure.** Know where to look for winning bidders, new donations, running totals, etc.
- **Assign clear roles.** Cue cards, live package winner tracking, paddle raise recognition, answer viewer emails/texts, and stage direction.
- **Consider how closing times and other time limits are communicated to participants,** both via software and the live stream.
- **Strategize about registration and post-auction.** What information do you want to require of online bidding participants? How will you collect payments and distribute invoices and receipts?







## **Our Thoughts on Isolation Fundraising:**

- **Community sparks joy.** Find a way to bring people into community, hear voices, and see faces.
- **Give grace to yourself and others.** We often demand perfection of ourselves and others, but don't let perfection be the enemy of good.
- **Get creative with delivery.** Flowers? Wine? Desserts? Win a curbside singing telegram?
- **Steward your sponsors, donors, and constituents.** While we are all stuck at home, reach out, check in, offer and accept help.
- **And don't stop.** Continue to remind people of your mission and continue to seek support through philanthropy.



## **Planning for an Unpredictable Future**

- **Review contracts** for non-refundable deposit changes, cancellation details and new quarantine/isolation protections.
- **Anticipate some donor hesitation** to attend large gatherings until there is a vaccine/treatment.
- **Incorporate online bidding** and other virtual tools as a new standard. Train your donors and create more options for your event to be accessed virtually.



# Questions?

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**Thank you!**

*And good luck!*

