



# Dravet Syndrome Foundation



**GALA & BENEFITS  
HOST GUIDEBOOK**

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# WELCOME



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**I AM SO GLAD THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HOSTING A DSF BENEFIT EVENT. HOSTING AN EVENT IS A FUN AND EASY WAY TO BRING FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TOGETHER TO SUPPORT A GREAT CAUSE. YOU WILL BE AMAZED AT THE GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT FROM YOUR COMMUNITY.**

As a non-profit organization, our annual revenue is derived from the generosity of our supporters. A significant portion of this support is garnered through events organized by individuals, like you. Your role as an event host is pivotal in driving the success of DSF, and you are actively contributing to changing the landscape of Dravet syndrome. Your willingness to step forward and support these efforts is commendable and we couldn't accomplish this without dedicated individuals like you!

It is my job and my pleasure to make your experience in planning this event easy, fun and rewarding. Let's work together to make an unforgettable event, and in the end bring us one step closer to a cure!

Together in the fight,

*Meredith*

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DSF Event Coordinator  
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WHILE THIS GUIDEBOOK PROVIDES A SOLID OVERVIEW, THERE WILL BE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS THAT MAY NOT BE COVERED OR ADDRESSED IN GREAT LENGTH. FOR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, AS WELL AS SUPPORT, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO ME.

# HOSTING & PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

## KEY ELEMENTS OF AN EVENT

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### Venue

The choice of venue sets the initial tone. Whether it's a grand ballroom or an art gallery, the venue should resonate with the event's purpose and theme.

### Theme

A cohesive theme is crucial. It guides the decor, dress code, and even the entertainment, creating a captivating experience for guests.

### Entertainment

At the heart of any gala, entertainment should align with the theme: a classical quartet for a black-tie event or a contemporary band for a modern, chic gathering. Or perhaps even a casino night for a fun, relaxed evening.

*Good hosting is about creating an atmosphere where guests feel welcomed, appreciated, and inspired. It's the thoughtful details and personal touches that turn an event into a memorable experience.*

*-Martha Stewart*

### Catering

The menu and dining style contribute significantly to the event experience. It should reflect the event's elegance and satisfy the culinary expectations of discerning guests.

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## HOW DSF CAN ASSIST WITH PLANNING AND EXECUTION

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### DSF RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Budgeting and deposits
- Event insurance & permits
- Event website
- Event planning calls
- Event promotion
- Managing tickets & donations
- Invitations and printed materials
- Volunteers for onsite registration & checkout
- Night of execution

As an event host, you are the driving force behind the fundraiser. But our fundraising staff at DSF will support and guide you throughout the entire process. We want this to be a fun and rewarding experience for you. Working together to create a memorable event is not just a collaboration; it's the art of weaving individual talents, ideas, and efforts into a tapestry of shared experiences. Each contribution becomes a thread in the fabric of memories we craft for those who attend, leaving an indelible mark on the canvas of shared moments.

### HOST RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Event site selection
- Menu decisions
- Local planning committee
- Theme / entertainment
- Sponsorships
- Auction / raffle items

# EVENT CONSIDERATIONS

## KEEPING COSTS LOW TO ENSURE MAXIMUM BENEFIT

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### EXPENSES

Event hosts are not expected to take responsibility for any of the expenses associated with their event. In order to maintain the organization's established event income to cost ratio, the total cost of your event should not exceed 25% of the overall revenue expected.

All expenses will be paid by DSF including but not limited to venue, catering, bar services, entertainment, etc.

Expenses that are NOT covered by DSF are auction and raffle items. These items should be found by the committee members and will often be donated.



### UNDERWRITING COSTS

Securing sponsorships can offer a range of benefits for both the event host and the sponsors. Not only can sponsorships help off-set the cost of the event they can also open a door to network with businesses and donors who may not be otherwise connected.

# UTILIZING A COMMITTEE

## CREATING A COMMITTEE

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### USING A COMMITTEE

You may decide to champion the planning and logistics for your event alone, while other coordinators will choose to recruit individuals and build an Event Committee. Your committee members and volunteers can be built from local DSF families, as well as your own family and friends. Once you recruit committee members, be certain to have meaningful work or projects for them to take on, based on their interest, expertise and amount of time they can commit. Hand out assignments and get everyone motivated for the day. Make sure volunteers understand their roles and your expectations.



### COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assisting with event planning
- Attendance at planning meetings
- Soliciting sponsors
- Soliciting in-kind donations
- Community promotion & outreach
- Soliciting donations for silent auction or raffle

# SECURING SPONSORSHIPS

## FINDING EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

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Event sponsors play a crucial role in the success of an event, providing various benefits that contribute to its overall effectiveness. These benefits include: providing financial support, expanding reach, offering marketing resources, enhancing the attendee experience, and establishing valuable connections.

The best way to find sponsors is to start with your own, local network. Reach out to friends and family members who either own their own business or have a say in the financial decisions at their company. Make a list of those who have connections in the community and never be scared to ask; the worst they can do is say “no”. And let’s face it; in the Dravet world we often hear a lot worse than “no.”

**But more than anything...**



**THERE IS NO GREATER WAY TO CONNECT WITH SPONSORS  
THAN TO SHARE YOUR STORY**



# AUCTIONS & RAFFLES

## FUN ADDITIONS TO YOUR EVENT

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### PURPOSE

Raffles and auctions are one of the most popular ways to raise money during a fundraising event. To make a raffle or auction successful, you must first secure desirable items. The best place to start is to survey your committee members, family and friends. When reaching out to local businesses, begin canvassing early on. Come prepared with a request letter, flyer, donation contract and 501c3 paperwork (all provided by DSF). Every business is a viable option and it never hurts to ask. Remember, you are more likely to have success at businesses where you are a frequent customer. And don't let NO discourage you—another opportunity will always arise.

### SUGGESTED ITEMS

- Gift certificates
- Gift baskets
- Wine or alcohol
- Event tickets
- Artwork
- Signed memorabilia
- Services, such as child or pet care
- Travel package
- Meet a celebrity
- Designer handbag



# FAQ

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- **What is an in-kind donation?** In-kind donations are donations of goods or services, rather than cash. Examples would be food, water, entertainment, etc.
- **What is a sponsorship?** A sponsorship is a financial payment by a business or individual to support a special event.
- **Why should I solicit in-kind donations and sponsorships?** In-kind donations and sponsorships help to subsidize the costs associated with your event, allowing event donations to go directly to the programs of DSF.
- **Who should I ask for in-kind donations and sponsorships?** Typically a business owner or manager is the person to approach. However, sometimes individuals or families may also be interested in supplying needed items for your event or purchasing a sponsorship in their name or in honor of a loved one.
- **How do I go about requesting for in-kind donations & sponsorships?** Make sure to have a sponsorship packet (sponsor levels, donation contract, request letter, etc.) when you approach someone. You may be asked to fill out an application and supply the DSF EIN# (27-0924627) and/or a copy of our 501c3 letter.
- **What does the donor need to do?** They should fill out the donation contract in full, then return it to an event coordinator. They may also return it to DSF by fax or email. You should make arrangements to have the item picked-up or delivered, based on the donor's preference.
- **What does the event coordinator need to do?** Make sure to keep a copy of the donation contract to be turned in with the event paperwork. This will assure that the donor receives a tax receipt. Ask for a hi-res logo if the donor contributes at a level that includes signage. If an item needs to be picked up, make the arrangements to do so.
- **Will in-kind donors or sponsors receive a tax-donation receipt?** All in-kind donors and sponsors will receive a tax-donation receipt, based on the information on their donation contract. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. If you have questions regarding the issuance of tax receipts, email Jamie at [jamie@dravetfoundation.org](mailto:jamie@dravetfoundation.org).