



How to Plan a Successful Auction

Thank you so much for being interested in holding an Auction to benefit the Cure JM Foundation! The Cure JM Foundation is actively working to find a cure for juvenile myositis so that no child will have to suffer with this cruel disease. The fundraising you do will help get us closer to that goal.

This Fundraising Tool Kit was developed by the Cure JM Foundation to assist you. It's filled with tips to try to help you be able to succeed and to keep you from having to reinvent the wheel.

The Cure JM Foundation also has a network of volunteer fundraising coaches. This network is comprised of people--just like you--who have decided to make a difference and who have learned to successfully fundraise for Cure JM. When you complete your Third Party Fundraising Application and submit it to the Cure JM Foundation office, you will be given the name and contact information for the Cure JM volunteer who coaches people like you who plan to hold an auction. You can also find the list of fundraising coaches at <http://www.curejm.org/teamjm/coaches.php>. Your Cure JM fundraising coach is a resource for you. He or she wants to help you reach your goals. You can call and ask for tips and suggestions. You can also ask about how to get past the challenges you might encounter as you plan your auction.

This tool kit has been developed in 3 parts. In addition to this document with information-- a planning timeline, and fundraising tips--there is a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet available which has a Donated Item Tracker Page, a Guest Check-in Page, a Volunteer Contact Information Page, and a Volunteer Assignment Sheet. Finally, there are also some sample publicity tools to help you promote your auction and the items for sale within your auction. These tools will supplement this document and help you with your planning.

Auctions are a wonderful way to fundraise. They can be successfully run with or without a live auction. They can also be planned as a stand-alone fundraiser or as an add-on, wrap-around fundraising activity added to another benefit like a dinner or golf tournament. Cure JM also has fundraising toolkits for running a golf tournament and for planning a fundraising dinner. If your auction is being conducted in conjunction with another event like a dinner or golf tournament, we'll be happy to share the other toolkits with you.

Don't forget to complete your Third Party Fundraising Application form from the Cure JM Foundation website right away, if you haven't already. The fundraising guidelines and application form can be found at http://www.curejm.org/teamjm/fundraising_guidelines.pdf. If you have not already, please send the completed application form to fundraising@curejm.org or fax to 760-230-2243. Once your auction has been approved, you'll be on your way!

Again, thank you for wanting to host an auction to benefit Cure JM!

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Live v. Silent Auctions

There are 2 types of auctions: live and silent. A live auction is conducted with an auctioneer who encourages and accepts bids on an auction floor. A silent auction is one in which bids are recorded, usually on bid sheets displayed next to items for sale (or next to descriptions of items for sale). Some charitable auctions mix these two types of auctions and have both live and silent parts.

Generally, live auctions will net larger bids for items for several reasons. A good auctioneer can encourage bidding. A type of positive peer pressure and sometimes friendly rivalry can develop among guests during a live auction, driving prices upwards. However, in order for a live auction to succeed, some guests with sufficient resources to bid must be present.

It is not necessary to have a professional auctioneer to lead a live auction. A good natured, people-person who is comfortable on his or her feet can also successfully lead a live auction. Some professional auctioneers will donate their services, although many are professionals because they hope to make money from participating in an auction.

Usually, larger ticket items are best suited for live auctions. These items include things like special jewelry and vacation get-aways. Smaller ticket items like restaurant gift certificates and free oil changes are better suited to silent auctions.

If you decide to auction some items live, limit the number of items you will auction. Generally, a maximum of 7 items is recommended. However, if you have an especially engaged audience, very connected to Cure JM, and great auction items, this is a rule of thumb suggestion and not a hard-and-fast guideline. Typically, with too many items, the audience will tire of the process and the proceeds will diminish.

A good live auction is organized like a bell curve with easier, less attractive (less expensive) items first, building to the auction of the hottest, most spectacular items, and then concluding with a smaller item or two.

Live auctions are typically fairly brief--about 30 minutes of an evening (again, a really engaged audience may have a longer attention span). Silent auctions, in contrast, can run for several hours. Silent auctions can also begin before an event. Some businesses will preview items during business hours the week before an auction and accept bids. Items can also be displayed online and bids can be taken electronically before an event. Some silent auctions are actually conducted entirely online, displaying items virtually and accepting all bids electronically.

If a live auction is going to be held, it should be some way into the evening, after guests have had an opportunity to become comfortable and have had some food and beverage. When held in conjunction with a silent auction, many times after about an hour of a silent auction being open, a live auction of a handful of items is held. Then, guests have another hour or so to conclude bidding before closing the silent auction.

Planning Your Auction:

Whether you are planning a live or a silent auction or both, the planning process is much the same.

Planning a successful auction has four key steps:

1. Soliciting and collecting items for sale.
2. Promoting the auction and ensuring attendance at the event.
3. Packaging and displaying the items for sale.
4. Running the auction the night of the event.

This auction planner is organized around those four stages of auction planning. Each stage has tips for making good use of committee members to accomplish the tasks of that phase. Before you begin, you'll want to gather a group of friends and family members who are willing to volunteer who can serve as your committee.

Create a Committee: The first thing you will want to do is gather a group of others that will commit to following-through and helping to make the auction a success. A committee can help in many ways:

- A committee can help you brainstorm and come up with good ideas.
- Committee members can network and help get the word out about your event
- Committee members can help recruit volunteers - the day of your auction, there will be many volunteer opportunities.
- A committee can lighten the load. Successfully holding an auction is a labor-intensive effort. You're going to need help with things like collecting the items from local businesses that will be donated and preparing the items for display in your auction. You can divide these responsibilities among your committee members.

Establish a committee meeting schedule and location. A local restaurant or coffee shop is a great place to meet.

Your committee will need to meet about once a month during the first few months that you are planning the auction. About 3 months before the auction, it is recommended that you meet more frequently, about every 2 to 3 weeks. The last three weeks before the auction, weekly meetings can be helpful.

Tip: *To help your committee stay on track, consider taking and keeping minutes. A written record can help remind everyone of what has already been agreed upon.*

Event Logistics and Sponsorships:

You and your committee will need to begin with some crucial decisions about venue, date, time, entertainment, food and beverage. If your auction is part of a larger event such as a golf tournament celebration dinner, many of those decisions will be made for you. If not, you'll have to identify an appropriate venue, decide on a theme, decorations, food, and entertainment.

If your auction is not part of a larger event, you may also want to consider soliciting sponsorships. Sponsorships can add significantly to the revenue of an event. A sample sponsorship request letter is part of this packet. Note that if your auction is part of a larger event, you will need to coordinate the sponsorship structure. You can have sponsorships for the auction in addition to the sponsorships for other parts of an event (a golf tournament, for example), but the sponsorship benefit structure will need to be synchronized so that sponsors receive appropriate recognition.

Selling sponsorships, in addition to adding revenue to the event's bottom line, also helps to boost attendance. By giving tickets to the event to sponsors, you help ensure attendance at the event.

Use your committee to brainstorm a list of potential sponsors. Committee members can also help solicit sponsorships. Be sure that everyone who is asking for sponsorships is on the same page in terms of what benefits sponsors are to receive so that all promises made to sponsors in recognition of their sponsorships are delivered. A sponsorship structure (like the one included in the sponsorship request letter in this toolkit) agreed to by the committee can help prevent misunderstandings of sponsors.

Start Early! Beginning to plan your auction 6-9 months in advance is a great way to help your event succeed. While a successful auction can be planned in as little as three months, for best results, start much earlier.

Step 1: Soliciting and collecting items for sale.

For a silent auction to succeed, it's essential that you have a large selection of desirable items to sell. Fortunately, many, many local businesses are willing to donate gift certificates and other items for you to offer for sale in your auction. Most businesses will be very generous with you.

To ask businesses for donations, you will need to be prepared to give them information about Cure JM and about the event you are planning. To ask a business, take with you:

- An event flyer
- A fact sheet or brochure about Cure JM
- A donation form

There are samples of all of these in this toolkit.

The best businesses to ask are ones to which you are already connected. Think not only about businesses in with which your friends, family, and professional connections work, but also think about those businesses with which you regularly do business. Your dry cleaners, your favorite restaurants, the place where you have the oil changed in your car - these businesses are likely to be grateful for your business and willing to "give back" by contributing to your cause.

Ask in person: A face-to-face request is usually the most effective. It is more difficult for a business to tell you "no" to your face. Plan to stop in a business to make your request. Ask for the manager. Note that if you consider yourself shy, lots of businesses will also say "yes" to email, mail, and phone requests so don't let the recommendation to ask in-person deter you from deciding to conduct an auction.

Try not to arrive at a business to make a request at the busiest times of day. It's difficult to see a restaurant manager during lunch hour, for example.

Remember that businesses are in business to make money; not to donate. Courtesy goes a long way toward getting the donation. The words "please" and "thank you" are critical.

It's not necessary to wear formal business attire like a suit when asking, but it is important to look clean and neat. When you ask, you are representing the cause and the business owner is sizing up how you will represent him or her if he or she says yes. You'll want to make a positive impression and to inspire confidence that they can trust you to represent them well.

Make sure that the business owner knows that he or she will be recognized at the auction. Let him or her know that you will be listing the donating business on the auction bid sheet and, if you are creating an auction catalogue, in the catalogue as well. If there are other ways that the business will be recognized, be sure to list those ways, too.

Some businesses may give you "maybe" for an answer. If that's the case, leave the print materials you have brought (the event flyer, the fact sheet about Cure JM, and the donation form) with the business. Ask when you can follow up and return at the agreed upon time.

It's perfectly appropriate to suggest a donation item: "Would you be willing to donate a gift certificate for dinner for two?" for example or "I really think our guests would absolutely love _____. Would you consider donating one for our auction?" Many businesses will donate what you suggest. Some will make a counter-offer, however.

Businesses considering donating often want to know:

- **How many guests will be attending the event:** businesses like the exposure of contributing to well-attended events.
- **Who else is donating:** No one wants to be the only donor. People like to contribute to winning teams. However, note that some donors don't like being involved in events in which their main competitors are already involved.
- **Item packaging:** Some donors don't want their items packaged with other businesses because they feel their brand is diluted. If a donor articulates this, you will need to respect it.

After a donation has been promised, if you cannot pick it up immediately from the business, make sure you record when you can pick it up and who to ask for when someone arrives at the business to collect the item. To avoid future misunderstandings, fill out the donation form with the business owner on the spot and have him or her sign it. This way, if the owner is not present when you stop in to collect the item later, you won't run into difficulties with other staff members.

What to Solicit?

Selection: One of the keys to a successful silent auction is having a large selection of items for sale in the auction. However, it's important to not have too many items for sale. If you have too many items for the number of guests you'll have in attendance, the price of the items will be driven down. In economic terms: too much supply, too little demand. Make it your goal to have about 1/2 as many items for sale as you have guests attending. For example, if you are anticipating 200 guests, you'll want no more than 100 items for sale.

Try to have a variety of types of packages available as well. Think "something for everyone." Some guests might be interested in jewelry, others in gift certificates to restaurants, still others in travel. Generally, at an auction, people are looking to have a good time and will be more interested in fun items on their wish list. Practical items like dishes, pots and pans, and other household goods do not seem to sell as well. The one exception to that general rule is tools. Tools donated from hardware stores always sell well.

Items that Sell Well	Items that Don't Sell Well
Hard to get tickets (like football tickets to the University of Georgia v. Georgia Tech game)	Used items
Hotels, Trips, Vacations	Practical household items like dishes, pots and pans
Birthday Parties	Items with significant restrictions or black-out periods
Tickets (ballet, symphony, little theater)	Candles
Family outings (water park, theme park, miniature golf)	Nick Nacks
Restaurant gift certificates	Antiques
Spa Packages (such as massages)	Furniture
Baskets	Art and photographs by unknown artists

This does not mean that you should never include items on the list of things that don't sell well. You might want to include some items from that list. However, it's a good idea to plan your auction and use your auction space to devote primarily to items that are likely to sell well.

Why packages are a great idea: Packaging several items, particularly if you can package several items creatively in, for example, some sort of "basket" is a great way to merchandise your items. In general, items in a silent auction will only garner about 60% of their value. At a silent auction, most people try to purchase gift certificates for less than their face value. Not only does packaging items together in a themed basket make for an attractive display, it also tends

to obscure the exact value of the item, making the value more subjective to the purchaser. This tends to result in a higher rate of return on the item for its value.

You'll also want to have auction packages in a variety of price ranges so that there will be items for sale to appeal to people with many different size budgets. It's helpful to have at least a few large ticket items. Does someone within your network have a beach house or mountain cabin that they would be willing to donate use of for a week or long-weekend? These things make great get-away packages especially when paired with frequent air miles.

Know your market: Think about your guests who will be attending your auction. Do they have particular interests? If so, try to have items to bid on that will be of interest to your guests. For example, if you are having your auction as part of a golf tournament, be sure to have items of interest to golfers for sale such as clubs and free rounds of golf at area courses.

Purchasing Items for the Auction: Many people are tempted to purchase items to re-sell at auctions. Because items at silent auctions are rarely sold for their actual value (are usually sold for less than actual value), purchasing items for a silent auction is a huge risk. You can actually lose money this way. Purchasing items for an auction is discouraged. Accepting items on consignment is also discouraged.

Silent Auction Package/Basket Ideas

Anglin' for Fun: *fishing lures, tackle box, reel/rod, fish cookbook*

Artist Basket: *paintbrushes, acrylic paints, canvases, sketchpad, charcoals, palette*

Back-to-School: *crayons, pencils, notebook paper, hand sanitizer, backpack, kleenex, ruler, highlighters*

Baker's Delight: *rolling pin, cookie cutters, apron, cake/cookie sprinkles, cookbook, potholders, baking pans*

Coffee lovers: *mugs, flavored coffee, gift certificates to Starbucks*

Chocolate lovers: *chocolate cover spoons, truffles, chocolate recipes*

Craft lovers: *child craft supplies-crayons, glue sticks, colored pencils, scissors, stickers*

Family Fun Night: *Collection of board games, dominoes, Monopoly, Candy Land, cards, Trouble, Parcheesi, checkers*

Family Movie Night: *Popcorn bowl, microwaveable popcorn, videos, candy, soda*

Gardener's Delight: *garden gloves, trimmer, seeds, trowel, spade, clay pots*

Holiday themed baskets: *Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, 4th of July. Note: local tree farms will usually donate a Christmas tree which can be packaged with a Christmas themed basket or sold separately.*

Money Trees: *Have members of your committee purchase scratch off lottery tickets. Secure them to a tree.*

Pet Lovers Basket: *Pet dish, gift certificate for pet grooming, pet odor cover candle, pet brush, leash, gift certificate to veterinarian, dog/cat treats*

Scrapbooking: *Decorative hole punches, acid-free paper, 2-sided glue tape, embellishments*

Ticket Swap: *Have another cause in town donate 2 tickets to their auction or other event (and you can donate two tickets to your event next year). This helps promote both of your events and raises money for both causes.*

Tool Time: *level, tape measure, work gloves, tool box, power screwdriver, stud finder*

Wines from Around the World: *Have each member of your planning committee donate a bottle of wine from a different country (France, Italy, Australia, Chile, USA,...) package them on a small wine rack.*

Other Popular Themes:

BBQ Lovers
Chili Lovers
Chinese Food Lovers
Pasta Lovers
Mexican Food Lovers
Book Lovers
Beach Lovers
Car Care
Hair Care

Nail Care
Picnic Basket
Backyard Chef Basket
Tailgater's Special
Poker Night
Martini Lovers
Girls Night Out
Girls Night In
Parents Night Out

Sports Lovers
Cycling
Camping

Step 1: Involving Your Committee in Soliciting and Collecting Items

Depending on the size of your committee, you might like to divide responsibilities for soliciting items in one of several different ways. Here are some suggestions for ways to divide responsibilities:

Geographically: During the prize gathering stage of the auction planning, consider dividing your town up geographically so that you and other members of your committee are not asking the same businesses. For example, one committee member might cover the downtown area. Another might cover the mall. Still another might cover a particularly busy street in which there are a row of restaurants.

Thematically: Another way to divide the responsibility for soliciting items is to assign different committee members to be in charge of different types of items. One member of the committee can be in charge of entertainment (movie theaters, bowling alleys, roller skating, parks, museums). Another might cover service industries (dry cleaners, oil change, car wash). A third might focus on restaurants.

Baskets: You might also consider assigning each committee member to secure 3-4 themed baskets. You can have your committee members indicate which type of baskets they are putting together. Committee members can also approach different people in town and ask for help creating baskets. Involve your work place in creating a basket. Ask your church Sunday School class to create one. Your hair stylist might be willing to put together a hair care basket.

Finally, some businesses require that you write their corporate headquarters in order to obtain a donation. When this is the case, it often has to be done months in advance. Consider assigning one committee member to coordinate a letter writing campaign to ask for donations.

Collecting the items for sale always takes much longer than one thinks it will. Sometimes multiple trips to a business are necessary because an item won't be ready when planned or because the person who has the authority to distribute the item won't be present when you expect. Don't leave the collections for the last minute. Have all items on-hand, collected from the donors, no later than 3 weeks prior to the auction. Call on your committee members to help you pick up donations.

Thank you's: Everyone who donates should receive a thank you note. It's easier if you do this as items are collected rather than waiting until after the night of the auction. This is a task also that can be divided among committee members.

Step 2: Promoting Your Event

While Promoting Your Event is the second step in making your event succeed and it's started after Phase 1 (Soliciting and Collecting Items for the Auction), you can't wait until all items are solicited and collected before beginning to promote your event. If you have great items for sale, but you don't have any one present to buy them, your auction won't succeed.

If your auction is part of another event (like a golf tournament or dinner), you may have a built-in audience for your auction which is great. It makes the work of promoting the event easier. However, even if your auction is part of an event that is already going to draw a crowd, there are several things you can do to promote the auction and ensure its success.

There are many ways you can help spread the word about your auction. Consider creating a website or Facebook page to promote your event. Invite your friends to the event through Facebook. Ask your committee members and the friends you invite to invite their friends as well. Email and social media can make for inexpensive ways to spread the word.

On Facebook (or your website), you can post pictures of your auction items for sale, thank your donors, and hype the items you are offering.

Free Marketing: Here are some other free (or nearly free) marketing ideas:

- Ask businesses that you frequent and that support you to place a message about your event on their outdoor marquee.
- Ask businesses that you frequent to post information on their Facebook pages.
- Ask fast food restaurants to distribute flyers about your event inside the bags they hand-out of the drive through windows.
- Promote the event through the signature line of your email messages and ask your committee members to do the same.
- Ask your child's teacher if you can send flyers home with the students
- Tweet about your event's milestones (thank donors, announce new items for sale)
- Identify people in your community who blog and ask them to blog about the event
- Be sure to check out Cure JM's ["Ten Best Practices for Attracting Local Media"](#) on the CureJM.org website.

Attractions: One of the keys to event attendance is not just about getting the word out, it's about planning an event that is attractive and fun for your community. What kinds of events in your community draw a sizable audience? Is there a speaker that everyone wants to hear? a good band? a local musician? If the event is not a late night event, involving kids is a sure way to get parents to the event. Invite a local dance class to perform or a local children's chorus to sing.

Incentives: Consider offering incentives to get people to buy tickets early. Run a special for a limited amount of time with a buy 1 ticket, get 1 free offer. Alternately, you can enter everyone who purchases their ticket to the auction into a drawing for one of the prizes. Offer to give early bird purchasers extra chances to win.

Have your committee brainstorm other creative ways to draw a crowd.

Note that there is a sample flyer in the auction toolkit online which you can customize. After you have edited the document to include information about your event, print copies of this flyer and ask businesses around town to hang it in their window to help spread the word about your event.

Finally, don't underestimate the value of a personal invitation. Many people will decide to attend for no reason other than that you (or someone else on the committee) invites them to come.

Step 3: Packaging and Displaying the Items for Sale

Several weeks before the auction, you and your committee will want to meet and to begin packaging your auction items. Even if you have collected items for baskets, you may find that you have some stray items. Try to group them together with other items. A \$25 gift certificate for an oil change will sell much better as part of a car care package with a car wash than it will by itself.

Catalogues and Bid Sheets: As you group items and decide on how to attractively package and display, you and your committee will need to write descriptions of each item for your bid sheets. If you are creating an auction catalogue (or program), you will use these descriptions for the auction catalogue as well. An auction catalogue is simply a listing of items that can be given to guests as they arrive and sign in for the auction. The catalogue helps to promote the items. If someone sees a description of an item they are interested in, they can look for it in the auction display. Sometimes auction displays can be crowded and it's easy for guests to miss items without a catalogue.

In your auction descriptions, give the package item a cute and clever title. Describe the items in the package. Be sure to list the item's value. Recognize the item's donor(s). If you made promises to the donor, be sure to honor those.

Prepare your bid sheets well in advance. After you finalize which items are in the package, you can prepare a bid sheet. You need a separate bid sheet for each item. Sample bid sheets are included in this toolkit. Each bid sheet should include:

- Item name
- Item description
- Suggested Retail Value
- Minimum (or Starting) Bid
- Bid increments (amount by which bids must increase)
- Donor
- Lines for bidders to record their bid number and bid (dollar amount)

Minimum Bids: It is recommended that you start the bidding at about 30% of the value of the item. This is, of course, much lower than what you hope to receive for the item. The idea of beginning a little on the low side is that you are likely to have more bidders jump in if bidding starts low and bidders are more likely to keep bidding after they start bidding. Once someone bids, they tend to feel invested. Their interest rises. They're more likely to stick with an item and rebid if they've gotten into the game. Note that about 1 hour in to the auction, you might want to slash minimum bids on items without any bids.

Display: As you package and group your items, consider how you will display the item in the auction the night of your event. Small, colorful items can help the display. A child's match box cars can be added to a "Car Care package." A toy plastic bucket and shovel can be used in a beach outing display. Golf balls and tees can be displayed next to a certificate for a golf outing. A table top Christmas tree, ornaments, or wrapped, empty boxes can be used with holiday items. These small items can help add visual interest to your display and will increase the dollars you raise.

Be sure to stagger the height of items you sell. Many people organizing an auction for the first time will arrange all items for sale flat on a table. Not only is this visually unappealing, it also results in people walking around, looking down and getting cricks in their necks. You can use empty cardboard boxes (which can be wrapped in colorful tissue paper or in fabric), risers, and shelves, clay pots turned upside down, and tons of other things to give your displayed items some height.

Be sure to give your items for sale plenty of space. Do not cram too many items into too small of a space. There needs to be room for two people at a time to stop in front of an item and look at it and bid.

Spreading items out some also helps to avoid confusion. Items that are too close together can result in people accidentally placing their bids on the wrong bid sheet.

Plan to stagger the tables you use to display items. You don't want to simply line the walls of the room. People's eyes glaze over if they're asked to walk in circles repeatedly to see the auction items.

Have your item arranged so that similar items are displayed near one another. All jewelry can be on one table. All sports items on another. All family fun packages on a third, etc. This is a good way to divide responsibilities also. Separate committee members can take responsibility for creating the display for different themes of items.

Certificates: If you can't have an actual item at the auction to display (for example, a trip to Las Vegas), you can create a display certificate to print. A Dollar Store sells simple black frames inexpensively and a frame can significantly enhance the appearance of a gift certificate.

Consider whether you want to display actual gift certificates or if you want to create something to represent a gift certificate. Sometimes actual gift certificates are not especially attractive. Many are printed on plain paper with lots of text. A picture that depicts the item and has the pertinent information from the gift certificate will probably sell better. Not displaying actual gift certificates also helps with security.

Along with the sample flyers in this toolkit are sample gift certificates you can use to describe your items.

Step 4: Running Your Auction

The night of your auction, you will need to arrange for guest check-in, the conduct of the auction, and guest check-out procedures.

Guest Check-In: As people buy tickets for the event, list their names on your check-in sheet. There is a template of a check-in sheet in this auction toolkit in the Microsoft Excel file. Before the night of the event, sort the Excel list alphabetically so that as guests arrive, you can find their names and whether or not they have already paid for their tickets very quickly. You will need more than one person at the check-in sheet. Have each volunteer working the check-in table have a printed copy of the check-in sheet.

For those who will attend the event whose names you don't have in advance: make sure that all of the check in sheets that each volunteer has, has some extra lines at the bottom of the page with pre-assigned bid numbers. Make sure that no two volunteers have the same unassigned bid numbers at the bottom of their list. This way, if someone comes to me and they are not already on the list, I know which bid number to give them without consulting with the other volunteers.

As guests check-in, they need to be given their bid number. There are several ways to do this. You can give each guest a sheet with their bid number printed on it. If you are going to distribute an auction catalogue or program, you can write the bid number on the back of the program. However you distribute bid numbers, make sure that you have a record of who has which bid number (recording this on the guest check-in sheet is the easiest way to do this).

Some auctions collect a credit card imprint of each guest at check-in. This facilitates the check-out process. Guests are asked to allow their card to be imprinted so that if they are the winning bidder, they will be charged. If they are not the winning bidder, their credit card will not be charged. While some people like this process, many people are uncomfortable offering their credit card up when they are not certain if they will be charged and you can encounter a lot of resistance to this. If you decide to take credit cards in advance, you might wish to offer guests a choice so that no one feels forced to surrender his or her credit card.

The Conduct of the Auction: Silent Auction Procedures

It is recommended that you give all guests a copy of your silent auction rules and procedures. If you are printing a program or auction catalogue, the procedures can be included in that program. If you are not printing a catalogue, you can print these procedures separately. Following are rules and procedures that are recommended:

All of the items in the auction are donated and sold "as is." No exchanges or refunds can be offered. The descriptions that follow are made in good-faith, but cannot be guaranteed. Any and all announcements made from the podium will take precedence over the printed descriptions.

Items purchased this evening must be removed from the premises at the close of the event.

To place a bid on an item before that time, simply write your bid number and bid amount on the line below the previous bid. Initial bids must be at or above the indicated minimum.

The silent auction will close promptly at _____ p.m. The winning bid is the highest bid recorded. Winners will be announced at _____ p.m.

If you wish to purchase an unsold item after the auction closes, please take the blank auction form to the checkout station.

You may pay for your items with cash, check, Visa, or Mastercard. Checks should be made payable to "XXXXXX."

Unless otherwise specified, all items must be used within 1 year of purchase.

Security: Have trusted volunteers watch your cash bag or box, awards, gift certificates and door prizes, and silent auction items at all times. From time-to-time, items are stolen from silent auctions. Occasionally, people are confused by closing procedures and/or are confused about which items they have won and people pick up the wrong item to take to check out. You might want to especially be careful during the closing of the auction.

Telling the JM Story

Your event will be more effective and successful if you tell the Cure JM story. Juvenile Myositis (JM) is not a disease that is well known. It will help people to know about JM and about why you have become involved with the Cure JM Foundation. Many JM families have devoted some time during their events to include a slide show or video about their child and his or her experience with JM. If you don't wish to tell your own child's story, you are welcome to use information from the Cure JM website. A very effective Cure JM video that you can use if you wish can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAAdqkpoojE> This video tells the story of Parker, the son of Cure JM Co-Founder, Shari Hume. Showing a video or slide show is a great way to help people understand the cause they are supporting through your auction.

Closing the Auction

Ending an auction and checking-out all of your guests can be the most difficult part of a silent auction. The close of an auction is near the end of your event. Many people will leave after the auction closes so lots of people will want to check out and leave at the same time. It's very important that this part of the auction be very well thought out.

Last Call: If you've ever bid on ebay, you know that almost all the bidding happens at the end of an auction. Similarly, you may see a flurry of activity at the close of your auction. It's important for the ending to not sneak up on people. Give people multiple warnings before closing the auction. Plan on having an announcer let people know when there is about 15 minutes left before the auction closes. Then, again, about 5 minutes before the auction closes, give a final call for bids.

Closing the Auction: At the designated closing time, have volunteers ready to collect all of the bid sheets. It is also helpful to have the auction items themselves collected. If you do not

collect the auction items, you will find that your guests will go and pick up the items they think they have won. Guests can be mistaken about which items they have won. This can lead to problems. It is recommended that you and your volunteers collect the silent auction merchandise as well as the bid sheets.

Sorting Items and Calculating Totals: It is helpful to have a large room somewhere near the check out table to sort the auction items. It is recommended that you sort the bid sheets and auction merchandise by winning bid number so, for example, all items won by the person with bid # 1080 are together.

In order to sort the bid sheets and auction items swiftly, you will need several volunteers. If alcohol is served at the event, it is important that these volunteers be sober.

These volunteers need to be familiar with the auction items so that they do not become confused about which item is which. During set up, if there is any risk that items might be confused, it is helpful to tag the actual item with a sticker or label that has its auction item number on it.

One set of volunteers can sort the bid sheets by winning bid number and create a subtotal for each bidder. The Excel check-in sheet that has been sorted alphabetically for the check-in process, can be sorted by bid number to record the amount due for the check-out process.

Another set of volunteers can package in shopping bags the auction items by winning bid number. A large magic marker can be used to write the winning bid number on the outside of the shopping bag.

Announcing the Winners: You can announce the winning bids. Alternately, you can post the winning bids and bid numbers on a poster board or chalk board.

Check-Out: When guests are ready to check out, they can collect their merchandise as they pay for their items. It is extremely helpful to have several volunteer runners who will go to the room where the merchandise is located and bring back the items for the departing guest.

It is also helpful to have some strong, handled shopping bags to sort merchandise into. You can usually get a local merchant to donate some shopping bags for check out.

Credit card readers should be set up in advance. Because some credit card readers require internet connections, it's good to test your credit card reader system before the night of the auction. Cure JM has a Square credit card reader that works with any mobile device (including an ipad) that is available to Cure JM families for fundraisers. Contact fundraising@curejm.org for information about the Square.

If you have swiped guests' credit cards as they have checked in, you can avoid taking payment at the end of the evening. Alternately, you can have two check-out lines: one for those who have left their credit card on file and one for those who have not.

Auction software: There are a number of silent auction programs that can automate your check-out process. These programs calculate the totals for each guest. There are fees for these systems. If you have a very large auction with more than 100 items to sell, you might want to consider an auction software package.

Supplies

Credit card reader

Credit card receipts/swiper

Pens

Bid Sheets

Shopping bags

Cash to make change

Cash Box

Laptop(s) to use Excel

Calculators

Planning Timeline

9-12 Months in Advance

1. Complete your Cure JM Foundation Third Party Fundraising Application found at http://www.curejm.org/teamjm/fundraising_guidelines.pdf and send to fundraising@curejm.org or fax to 760-230-2243.
2. Recruit a planning committee.
3. Choose a venue location. You will likely need to sign a contract and put down a deposit.
4. Set the auction date.
5. Set the price for tickets.
6. Set sponsorship levels
7. Brainstorm possible sponsors to solicit and coordinate among volunteers who will approach each potential sponsor.
8. Begin soliciting sponsorships

6-8 Months in Advance

1. Brainstorm items for silent auction sale.
2. Make plan to solicit items.
3. Develop database of auction items for sale and auction guests.
4. Send out "Save the Date" Announcements to potential guests (use email to save postage).
5. Develop a website to help get the word out - there are lots of free options for doing this like a Facebook page or Blog
6. Keep selling sponsorships
7. Begin soliciting and collecting silent auction items

4-6 Months in Advance

1. Determine menu if food will be served
2. Plan other event attractions (will you need music or live entertainment?)
3. Determine if you need other liability insurance coverage and, if so, secure.
4. Design and print tickets for the dinner celebration.
5. Keep selling sponsorships.
6. Send out at least-one reminder message to potential guests each month. Each reminder message can have fresh content as you announce new sponsors, new items for sale, and incentives to purchase tickets. Remember, people need multiple reminders.

2-4 Months in Advance

1. Consider auction logistics. How will you be accepting credit cards? Do you need parking or directional signs?
2. Apply for any permits you might need (for example, if you are serving alcohol, you might need to apply for a permit to serve. Whether or not you need one will depend on your local ordinances and whether or not you are working with a licensed caterer.)
3. Begin recruiting volunteers.
4. Identify photographer.
5. Keep sending out email reminders to guests. You can also announce and promote things like items in your silent auction or entertainment.
6. Keep posting to facebook.

7. Keep soliciting and collecting items for auction.

6 Weeks in Advance

1. Arrange and schedule volunteers. Make sure you communicate with all volunteers, giving them detailed directions on what time to be present, where to report, what their duties the day of the event will be, and what they will want to wear and bring
2. Order all signage.
3. Meet with the venue representative and review expectations and plans. Make sure there are no surprises.
4. Final push to solicit and collect auction items.

3 Weeks in Advance

1. Make final collections of auction items.
2. Determine item packaging.
3. Make catalogue list with package names and descriptions (even if you are not going to print the catalogue)
4. Confirm guest numbers with caterer if food is catered.
5. Arrange for final payments with venue and restaurant/caterer.
6. Secure shopping bags for auction items.
7. Print auction catalogues, bid sheets, auction rules/procedures, bid numbers.
8. Review volunteer assignments with volunteers to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities the day of the auction.

Day Before Auction

1. Print out hard copies of guest check-in sheets for check-in table (Alphabetical list of guests recommended).

Day of the Auction

2. Arrive Early (Plan to spend 4-8 hours setting up the auction).
3. Set up check-in/check-out table
4. Post signs (sponsorship, check-out)

Within 1 Month Following the Event

1. Thank your sponsors.
2. Submit your proceeds to Cure JM Foundation.
3. Convene your committee to celebrate and evaluate your event.
4. Send a thank you email to your guests and report on how much money you raised.