



Third Party Event Guide

This Do-It-Yourself Fundraising Kit will help you make your event a success!

So where do you start?

Thank you for your interest in hosting an event to benefit Almost Home! In order to assist you in preparing for your event, Almost Home has prepared this Do It Yourself Fundraising Kit to get you going on your way to a successful event!

The options are endless, but what we recommend is doing something you enjoy and invite your friends, family and co-workers to join you in making a difference to our young moms.

Please read this kit, and think about what you would like to do to help Almost Home. Then complete the third party event registration form.

Tips to make your fundraiser a success!

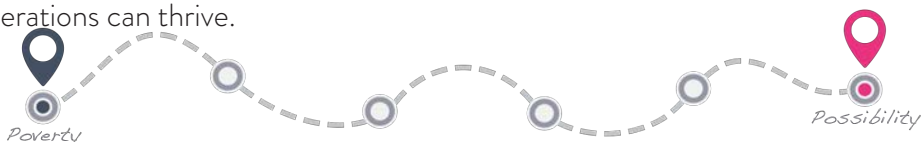
1. Get to know Almost Home

OUR MISSION is to empower young moms to become self-sufficient and create a better future for themselves and their children.

OUR VISION is to end the cycle of poverty two generations at a time.

At Almost Home, we believe that self-sufficiency for our clients is about more than employment and income. It's about truly standing on their own two feet. In addition to being able to support themselves and their children, it's about having confidence in their future, believing they can affect change in their lives, and knowing they've established their own safety net of resources and relationships to allow them to be successful and responsible parents. It's about knowing they've chosen and worked for a better future that will last, through which future generations can thrive.

Our programs



We have a continuum of targeted programs that give highly motivated young moms the support and roadmap they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Clients can begin receiving services at different points of our continuum of services depending on their specific needs. Almost Home's integrated service delivery starts with the Foundation to Success Program (FTS) which provides up to two years of housing and services for 12-20 year old pregnant or parenting young women and their children. The next level of our service model is the one-year Creating Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program for 18-28 year old low-income moms. The final level of support is provided through our Alumni Support Program (ASP) which offers up to 8 years of ongoing support services for any graduate of our FTS or CEO Programs.

As you plan your fundraiser, we encourage you to schedule a tour with us so you can learn more about how Almost Home serves our clients and how your donation will impact the community for generations.

2. Do something you enjoy & make the event your own-here are a few ideas to get you started!

BABY SHOWER	DINNER PARTY	RELIGIOUS EVENT
BAKE SALE	EASTER EGG HUNT	SKATE PARTY
BINGO NIGHT	FASHION SHOW	SUPER BOWL PARTY
BOWLING EVENT	FISHING CONTEST	TAILGATING PARTY
CAR WASH	GARDEN WALK	TALENT SHOW
CASUAL FRIDAYS	GOLF TOURNAMENT	TENNIS TOURNAMENT
CHILI COOK-OFF	HOUSE TOUR	TRIVIA NIGHT
COMEDY SHOW	JEANS DAY	VIDEO GAME TOURNAMENT
CONCERT	LOOSE CHANGE OR PENNY DRIVE	WALK/5K RUN
COOKWARE PARTY	PET SHOW	WINE TASTING
DESSERT SOCIAL	RECIPE BOOK SALE	

3. You should also think about who you want to invite and what they would also enjoy...

BOOK CLUBS	FAMILY & FRIENDS	PROFESSIONAL SERVICE GROUPS
BRIDGE CLUBS	FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES	ROTARY AND CIVIC CLUBS
CHURCH MEMBERS	GIRL SCOUT/BOY SCOUT TROOP	SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS
CO-WORKERS	PARENTS	WORKOUT PARTNERS
CURRENT & FORMER	HOLIDAY CARD LIST	
CLASSMATES	NEIGHBORS	

4. Here are a few more things to consider...

Should your event have a theme?

Where and when do you want to host your event?

Do you want to host your event on a specific day/time or will you exclusively use social media.

Do you need help? Which of your friends will help you make your event a success?

5. Now that you have thought about what you want to do, make sure you let us know. [Fill out the form] or email emccrary@almosthomestl.org or call 314-771-4663 x 403.

**Once you've figured out the logistics, you can
get started on the details!**

Invitations

The invitation should reflect the type of event you want to host – formal, informal, fun, elegant, etc. A “secondary theme” (Wine and Cheese Tasting, Mexican Fiesta, Hawaiian Luau, etc.) helps guests know they can plan for a fun event as they learn more about Almost Home.

A great invitation...

- ...makes it clear that the primary purpose of the party is to support Almost Home and donations are a part of the event (i.e., “Betsy and Jim Stuart invite you to a fundraising house party to benefit Almost Home”)
- ...provides the Almost Home web site location, www.almosthomestl.org to allow invitees to find out more or make a donation via the web site prior to the party
- ...includes a contribution envelope with the invitation (if invitations are sent by mail)
- ...includes a phone number or email address and RSVP request so guests can tell you if they will or will not attend
- ...includes a handwritten note from the host/hostess letting the guest know you are looking forward to seeing them and hope they can attend
- ...provides a map/directions for those who are not familiar with the location

Virtual Invitations

The internet makes virtual invitations cost effective and efficient. There are several websites to choose from that deliver email invitations to everyone in your address book. Many of these websites do all of the work for you. They collect RSVPs and send out reminders in advance of the event. Many people like <http://www.evite.com> for events, but feel free to use whatever site fits your need.

Regardless of the type of invitation, please be sure to send Almost Home a copy for our records.

Sample Planning Timeline

You can comfortably plan an event in six (6) weeks. Certainly, you can condense the timeline and plan it quicker. It just depends on how much time you have to devote to planning each week and how simple or complex you make it. The following timeline is based on a six week model:

Six Weeks Before:

- Select tentative times, dates, and the location for event
- Contact Almost Home to inform us about your event. Complete and submit the Almost Home Third Party Event Proposal Form. Also confirm that a staff member or board member will be available for the event (if needed).
- Review the Almost Home Third Party Event Guidelines. Complete and submit the Third Party Event Agreement.
- Recruit and have conversations with co-hosts (if any)
- Create task list and volunteers to assist with planning, prep work and tasks at the event
- Determine the theme and how many guests to invite – a rule of thumb is to invite 3 – 4 times as many people as you hope attend

- Decide delivery method for invitations (in person, by mail or via email)
- Gather names, addresses and phone numbers or email addresses of guests

Five Weeks Before:

- Order or prepare invitations. Pre-printed invitations often take up to 2 weeks to be printed.
- Finalize guest list

Four Weeks Before:

- Send out invitations. The host or co-hosts should include hand-written notes.
- Contact Almost Home to check-in and address any questions or expectations either party may have.

Three Weeks Before:

- Invitations should be sent out no later than three (3) weeks before the event.
- Begin meeting with specific volunteers to help with planning and preparation
- Plan the menu and order food and drinks

One to Two Weeks Before:

- Contact everyone that has not sent their RSVP. This is an important reminder for people to show up. Many people forget and appreciate the reminder.
- Purchase any decorations and supplies

Days Before:

- Send a reminder about the event. Emails or phone calls are appropriate.
- Contact your Almost Home representative to let them know how many people you expect to attend and confirm final details.
- Contact volunteers to confirm specific tasks and request they show up early if needed (bringing a dish, creating name tags, offering drinks, collecting coats, set-up, etc.)
- Complete any shopping for food and drinks

Day of Event:

- Volunteers should show up early
- Place a sign or balloons outside the venue as a marker
- Welcome guests at the door and provide nametags as needed
- Relax and enjoy the event!

The Event

It is important to keep track of the people that actually attend the event. You can keep track by making name tags ahead of time and keeping the extras to know who did not attend. Or, have people sign in when they arrive. Sometimes, a sign-in sheet can cause a delay at the door. Unless your venue is large enough, name tags are probably better.

At some point during the event, the host or hostess should thank everyone for attending. He or she

should mention how he/she became involved with Almost Home and why he/she decided to host this event. After questions and answers, the host or hostess should hand out contribution envelopes or tell the guests where they are located. The host or hostess should describe the impact the guests' contributions make to Almost Home. If the host or hostess does not feel comfortable discussing contributions, then ask the representative from Almost Home to do so. This step is very important and should not be skipped.

Sample Script for “The Ask”

“First, let me thank you for coming tonight. Everyone here knows me. You know that I don’t get up in front of friends very often to make speeches, and you also know that I rarely ask for favors. But, tonight we’ve just heard about Almost Home and the great work this organization is doing to end the cycle of poverty for young moms and their children. It’s a cause I care about very deeply and have chosen to support financially and with the gift of my time. Your donations could make the following things happen:

- \$1,000 buys transportation vouchers for 12 moms to get to school and work each month
- \$500 provides medicine for 6 months for our moms and babies
- \$250 buys hygiene products for 6 months for moms and babies
- \$125 sponsors a mom and her baby for one night
- \$85 pays for 15 academic books for moms
- \$30 pays for one mom’s winter coat

I have contribution envelopes for everyone. Please fill it out and give whatever you can afford and is meaningful to you. We’ll take a check, cash, or credit card. If you’ve already contributed via the website or by mailing the envelope provided with the invitation – thank you so much. We can also accept your pledge donation for later as either a one time or monthly gift. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me or <name of Almost Home representative.>

Because of your attendance here I’ve also provided your contact info to Almost Home, so you’ll receive updates on our progress and news about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. If you’d prefer NOT to be included in these, let me know.

Thank you again for your presence and your help. I really appreciate it.”

(Script taken from *The Fundraising Houseparty*, Morrie Warshawski, 2nd edition 2007)

After the Event

After the event, step back and congratulate yourself! It was hard work but well worth the effort. Almost Home thanks you!!

However, there are a few more steps that put the “finishing touches” on your event:

- Review RSVP list and follow up with anyone that agreed to attend or to contribute but failed to do so. You can follow up by phone or email. Most people are glad that you reminded them.
- Send hand-written thank you letters to everyone that contributed. Your friends will appreciate the personal touch.
- Provide a copy of the attendee list and related details to Almost Home so that individuals can be added to the mailing list. (Make a note of the names of any individuals who asked that their contact data NOT be provided.)
- Submit all proceeds and information to Almost Home within 30 working days of the conclusion of the event. Coordinate with Almost Home to ensure accurate accounting of funds.
- Contact another Almost Home advocate and share your success story – perhaps they will be encouraged to host a party of their own!