Fundraising Spotlight: UIUC FIMRC's 5K

How to organize a successful 5K

1) Organize a committee. This is the first and most important step. A committee is able to assign and distribute tasks. Planning a 5K is a long and multi-step process, so having a 10-12 person committee will be critical. Begin sending applications out for a committee at least 3 months before the race.

2) Assign committee tasks. There should be a Secretary to take notes at all 5K meetings. There should also be someone to make the t-shirt design. CustomInk is a good website to start designing t-shirts. Certain campuses might have local apparel design stores. Also, assign publicity tasks (i.e. making a Facebook page for the event, creating a flyer, etc).

3) Create a registration page. The UIUC FIMRC chapter used runsignup. com, which is a convenient way of allowing participants to register online. They offer many features such as automatically assigning bib numbers, creating a coupon code, widgets for websites, and more. You can also customize your registration page. The only downside is they require a processing fee of $2.50, which can be paid by the participant.

4) Pick a date and time. Be sure to pick the date/time at the first 5K meeting or before so that your committee has a strict deadline to meet.

5) Plan event details. The more creative your event is, the better. Try to come up with a theme. A lot of people aren't runners but still want to contribute to the cause, so try and make it fun so people will sign up.

6) Reserve the route. At the University of Illinois, we had to reserve a route through the Registered Organizations Office, and also had to call MTD, the local bus service, to notify them of the race so buses wouldn't run that route.

7) Make necessary arrangements. Reserve tables, barricades, cones etc. for the day of the race. Barricades or cones can be used to block roads so cars won't interfere with the race. However, be sure you notify the school that you're having the race so that you're allowed to place barricades in the streets!

8) Look for sponsors. The goal is to raise money to pay for 5K expenses so that the organization doesn't have to. Make a list of businesses on campus to go to and ask for donations. Be sure to create a sponsor letter explaining what FIMRC is, what you're raising money for, etc. Go to businesses, give the letter to them, and briefly explain why you're there. You'll have to be persistent, as most businesses will require a follow up before they agree to anything. Tell them you'll accept any kind of donation. If all they want to give is gift cards or merchandise, you can use those as prizes. Some places will donate food or drinks. We've had luck with Starbuck's, Panera, and Einstein Bagels donating coffee, bagels, and pastries in the past.

University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign FIMRC organized a 5K in Spring 2015 and raised over $1,000 for the Orphan and Vulnerable Children Garden at Project Bumwalukani, Uganda.

9) Publicize the event. This is probably one of the most important things you can do. Try to reach as many people as possible. Print out flyers and post them around campus and in the community. Announce it at General Meetings and convince members to participate. Post on the Facebook event page.

10) Order accessories. Order shirts, bibs, safety pins, and any other supplies you may need.

11) Assign tasks for day of race. You might need more volunteers to help out the day of the race, depending on how many participants there are. You'll need people to help with checking in, timers, people handling food and water, and people directing participants around the route.

12) On the day of the race: Get there early to set up. Make sure check-in begins at least 45 minutes before race time. It will get crazy, but afterwards comes the relief of being done and feeling awesome about raising money for a good cause!