
Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge



Help Papers Series

Support Materials for Parent/Child Programs

TOPIC:

Selecting and Planning Events

Selecting and Planning Events

FORWARD: The purpose of this help paper is to give you ideas on how to plan and form the basic structure of an event. This generic information is to help you plan the structure of an event, where the activity is open to the large group. Contained in these pages should be most of the “Nuts and Berries” you will need to feed the planning of a successful event from start to finish.

What is a “FUN” event? As in any program event that we participate in, or help in the planning, the overall aim is to create a memorable and fun activity in which parent and child can have a great experience together. Almost any event can be “fun”, no matter whether the experience is playful, competitive, educational, time in nature, prayerful, etc. It mainly depends on the time given to the planing of the event. Longhouse events can be as simple and inexpensive, or as extravagant as you want to make them. Each year is made just a bit more special when you have a good balance of both.

In the basic program calendar, the Longhouse will hold a special event hopefully at least once a month, maybe more depending on the circumstances. These events are not meant to take the place of the small-group experiences within the tribes. These larger events are meant to build a feeling of community within the individual members, and give a sense of belonging to something special. They feed the pride the individual tribe has in being able to show their unique qualities to the rest of the program tribes. By sharing in these “Longhouse” events, all members gain a greater appreciation for their program and it’s overall mission.

We sincerely hope that this information is of benefit to your program. Have Fun!

OUTLINE OF KEY ITEMS AND TOPICS

(Not necessarily in exact order)

1. Select the event(s) / activities. Having a good balance. Research basic details.
2. Is this a repeat event or a special one-time event?
3. Select events that are right for your group.
4. Is there a specific theme?
5. Set a budget for the event.
6. Assign the sponsoring tribe, committee, or people. They plan all details and gather all supplies. Staff involvement.
7. Set the dates. Make reservations. Send any necessary deposits.
8. Release calendar dates and promote the event to the Longhouse at large.
9. Release sign-up information, forms, details, costs, any deadlines, etc.
10. Final release of information, where to meet, what to bring, what to expect.
11. The day arrives, have a great time and create new memories with your child.
12. Arrive home exhausted, but feeling great about what you just shared in with your child. Spend time with those who stayed home.
13. Collect your thoughts. Share your thoughts. Critique the event. How to improve it for the next time.
14. Awards for the event.
15. Keep good records, and archive them.



Additional attachments:

Event ideas. Just to scratch the surface.

Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

1. Select the event(s) / activities. Having a good balance. Research basic details.

- 1.1. Prior to the calendar year for the program, the planning officers or committee should be looking at ideas for events for the upcoming year. You can never start too early. Major event planning should begin at least 6 months advance. This is dependent upon the need for advance reservations of facilities, and allowing enough time to properly set the planning wheels in motion.
- 1.2. When considering what events to plan for the coming year, remember that a good balance of activities will help build enthusiasm within your program. What this means is, don't have too many expensive or large events back-to-back. Try to space a smaller, simpler event such as a roller-skate party, which only requires a few hours one evening, next to a major outing such as a Pinewood Derby or a traveling overnighiter, which require the better part of a complete weekend. Many people are sensitive to overly taxing participation expenses. Most people's schedules won't fit too many large events to close to each other. This balance will be especially effective (and necessary) if a Longhouse is scheduling events every 2-3 weeks.

2. Is this a repeat event or a special one-time event?

- 2.1. Repeat events such as Campouts, Pinewood Derby etc. are always very special events for programs, and are usually highly anticipated and well attended. Even though these are repeat events, and basically may follow the same structure and schedule year-after-year, there is still a great need to pay attention to detail for repeat events. The organizing body should begin planning by first looking at how to improve upon last year. What subtle or major changes are required? How can we change things just enough to make this time unique and special?
- 2.2. Special "one-time" events require extensive attention to detail from the start. Since you would be planning this sort of event from the ground up, you cannot afford to "drop-the-ball" so to speak, or the event will struggle to succeed. An example of a one-time event would be a traveling overnighiter to a special out-of-town historical museum. Just think in your own mind for a moment just how many details would require planning for such an event.

Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

3. Select events that are right for your group.

- 3.1. Consider some of the following points in selecting an event.
 - 3.1.1. The event should be fun for all the ages of children who would be attending. Most Longhouses have a wide range of ages. The event must hold the interest of a 5-year old as well as a 9-10-year old child.
 - 3.1.2. The event should feature some sort of interaction (hands-on activity) for the children so they don't become bored.
 - 3.1.3. If the event is open to both boys and girls, will the event fit boys as well as girls?
 - 3.1.4. Be sure not to set the price or select an event that would be too costly for a large percentage of the group to afford. If the event is expensive, is their money in the Longhouse budget to help offset some of these costs?
 - 3.1.5. Does the Longhouse budget money to sponsor one or more free events per year for its members. This is good P.R. with the membership at large.
 - 3.1.6. Is the travel time to the event within reason?
 - 3.1.7. Will the event be open to families, or will it be strictly a parent-child event. *It is a good idea to plan a few "family" events spaced throughout the calendar year.*
 - 3.1.8. Is the group size to be of consideration when selecting an event? Be sure that your group will fit.
 - 3.1.9. Have you ever considered an event where the children could "bring-a-friend"? This could be great way to warm-up some possible new recruits.
 - 3.1.10. Consider a fundraiser as a major event. One example, a spaghetti dinner could be planned as a gathering of all the families, friends, and neighbors, plus be a great fundraiser.

4. Is there a specific theme?

- 4.1. Sometimes, the planning committee may choose a specific theme for a special event. For example, a theme might revolve around a holiday. You may choose to have a special theme for a campout. A special phrase or saying might be chosen to represent the event. It can be the spiritual tie to bring all the components of an event together. The sponsoring group might be the people who decide the theme if it has not been chosen ahead of time.

Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

5. Set a budget for the event.

- 5.1. It is important that a budget be set ahead of time for a major event. The sponsoring group can determine what is necessary, and what resources they may need to pull together to accomplish the task. One way to determine a budget is to estimate ahead of time what the fee charged per person would be to attend the event along with an estimate of how many might attend the event. This way, the planning committee / group can determine how much of the overall budget needs to be set aside above the estimated income of the event. Do not allow the sponsoring group just to spend what it feels like to put on the event. Even a fund-raiser event should have a budget if expenditures are necessary.

6. Assign the sponsoring tribe, committee, or people. They plan all details and gather all supplies.

- 6.1. Depending on the size and complexity of the event, the planning committee (council) may choose a sponsor(s) for the event in a number of ways.
- 6.2. Those groups must understand just what they are responsible for in specific detail. This includes all parts of the event. Give the sponsors plenty of time to brainstorm the event, and plan it properly.
- 6.3. The overall size of the Longhouse may also affect how a sponsor is chosen.
- 6.4. Here are some sponsoring possibilities.
- Large Longhouses (about 15 tribes) might have one or two tribes (sponsor / co-sponsor) plan the whole event.
 - Smaller Longhouses may divide up the duties. Have a number of tribes each sponsor a specific part of the event.
 - The officer's council may act as sponsors, planning and carrying out the duties.
- 6.5. Sponsoring an event can be a special time for a tribe or group. This gives those individual members a chance to contribute ideas and grow stringer as a tribe or group. Give the young ones a chance also to contribute ideas. They will always surprise you with their creativity. They know what would be fun for them.



Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

7. Set the dates. Make reservations. Send any necessary deposits.

- 7.1. Pretty self-explanatory, but keep in mind some of the following that may apply...
 - 7.1.1. Select your date choices as far in advance as possible when facility reservations are necessary. Some facilities will not lock your date until they have received your deposit.
 - 7.1.2. Make sure any necessary paperwork, contracts, etc. are signed. Keep copies for your records.
 - 7.1.3. Proof of liability insurance may be necessary. Obtain these certificates.
 - 7.1.4. Remember that many groups may be competing for use of the facilities. It usually is first-come, first-served.
 - 7.1.5. Remember to make sure that the event fits within the seasonal calendar. A canoe trip planned for March probably won't sail very well.
 - 7.1.6. When planning the calendar, be aware of how the event dates fit around all of the holidays, National (government) as well as religious holidays.
 - 7.1.7. Keep the summer schedule light. So many people, parents and children, are on vacation and involved with other summer activities.

8. Release calendar dates and promote the event to the Longhouse at large.

- 8.1. As soon as the official calendar dates are set, release the information in the program newsletter. Promote the events in special articles. Talk it up! The more in advance that members know about upcoming events, especially the dates, the more likely they are to attend an event.
- 8.2. Release the Longhouse schedule of events at least 6 months in advance whenever possible. Even give basic cost information whenever it is known. This gives people time to set aside money for those more expensive events.

Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

9. Release sign-up information, forms, details, costs, any deadlines, etc.

- 9.1. Release this information in your newsletters or at Longhouse (council) meetings in advance as the time frame for the event requires.
- 9.2. Remember that 1-2 months is barely enough time to get the information out to everyone, and get the responses back, especially when your asking for money.
- 9.3. Use sign-up forms, and pay-in advance whenever possible for special events. *Events that are pre-paid generally will have better attendance*, since the members have already forked over the cash to attend the event.
- 9.4. Refund policies should be clearly stated.
- 9.5. Try to hold people to the deadlines that have been set. This avoids confusion, especially in bookkeeping.

10. Final release of information, where to meet, what to bring, what to expect.

- 10.1. As the time for the event draws close, release as much detailed information as possible. With newsletters, timing is everything. Don't assume that people know the details. A phone chain of reminder calls just prior is also a good idea. People appreciate the information.
- 10.2. Some important details that may apply....
 - 10.2.1. Maps of how to get there.
 - 10.2.2. Announce any central meeting places, times, etc.
 - 10.2.3. How long is the travel time. If driving in a car caravan, are there any planned stops? A trip itinerary may be a good idea.
 - 10.2.4. Give an idea of all incidental costs that the event plans may not be providing. Stuff like souvenirs, shirts, eating stops, etc.
 - 10.2.5. Encourage carpooling if this applies.

11. The day arrives. Have a great time and create new treasured memories with your child.

- 11.1. Enough said.

12. Arrive home exhausted, but feeling great about what you just shared in with your child. Spend time with those loved ones who stayed at home. If you can get away with it, leave the unpacking until tomorrow.

- 12.1. Enough said.

Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

13. Collect your thoughts. Share your thoughts. Critique the event. How to improve it for the next time.

- 13.1. Shortly after the event has concluded, the sponsoring tribe or group should fill out a critique form or at least write down their thoughts about the event. Record the good as well as the not so good. How can we improve it?
- 13.2. Share this review, or the highlights of it, in the next edition of your program newsletter.

Other items:

14. Awards:

- 14.1. Awards may or may not be a part of the planning for the specific event. Let people know the schedule of events that awards are earned for. Awards may be given out at the event or at a later time, whenever the person(s) coordinating awards may chose
- 14.2. Many camps, museums, farm-parks, nature places, etc. have their own souvenir shops and may sell their own patches. Let people know if these patches are available, especially if there is no other remembrance being given by the Longhouse for this particular event.

15. Keep good records, and archive them.

- 15.1. The sponsoring tribe or group should keep a detailed account of where all supplies are acquired, costs, expenses and receipts, attendance records, masters of the paperwork that was created, etc. Once the event is over, and the critique is completed, these records should be filed away in the Longhouse archives. If this is a repeat event, these records can be extremely helpful in planning for the event next year.

Great Lakes Region - Help Papers Series - Selecting and Planning Events

Program Events Ideas for Parent/Child Programs

Here are just some event ideas, some of which your program may already do. But just in case you haven't thought of one of these, you just found a new idea.

Consider your geographic area. The natural resources and surroundings in your area alone probably can give you a lot of possibilities. Contact your state and local tourist bureau's. They will send you free information.

OUTDOOR/NATURE ACTIVITIES

- Bike Hike
- Canoe Trip
- Canoe Races
- Cookout / Campfire / Sing-along
- Family Picnic with or without organized games & activities.
- Outdoor Olympics with prizes.
- Hayride
- Pumpkin Carving
- Back-pack overnighiter
- Orienteering
- Treasure Hunt
- Beach Party
- Nature Hike (contact your local park service to receive information on all the services and activities offered).
- Fishing Derby
- Sled Riding / Toboggan Slides
- Kite Flying (Contest)
- Turkey Shoot
- Corn Roast
(August Native Moon-the Green Corn Moon)
- Horseback Riding



ANNUAL ACTIVITIES & IDEAS

- Campouts: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer.
Many use traditional cabin camps
Many programs conduct a tent campout in the warmer months, late Spring-Early Fall.
- Pinewood / Pinecar Derby
- Rocket Derby
- Rain Gutter Boat Regatta
- Fun Nights/Swimming/Overnighters
- Christmas Party
- Halloween
- Parent-Child Dance
- Parent-Child Banquet (awards)
- Bowling Party
- Roller-skating Party
- Winter Carnival



SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

- Nature/trail/community clean-up
- Tree planting
- Visits to elderly care facilities
- Organized Aid to the less fortunate (most cities have their own aid organizations).
 - Toy Drive
 - Food Drive
- Tribal Service Project Challenge:
All tribes create and carry out their own project. Awards for all and special recognition for the most creative/effective project. Impartially judged by Y-staff.
- Organize emergency disaster relief.
- Aid to Native American Organizations/Reservations

MUSEUMS & EDUCATIONAL FUN

- Science Centers
- Aquariums/Marine parks
- Caves
- Rail Museums & Excursions
- Farm-Parks (interactive)
- Historical Centers
- Shipyards/Military/Historical
- Indian/Native Historical Centers
- National / State / Local Parks
- Zoo
- Fire Station
- Police Station (just to visit)



JUST PLAIN FUN

- Major and minor league sports teams
- Water Parks
- Amusement parks
- Indoor Amusement Centers & Arcades

FUNDRAISING

- Spaghetti Dinner, Pancake Breakfast
- Bake Sale
- Candy, Popcorn & other product sales.
- Cash Raffle
- Donated Prize Raffles
- Kiddie Carnival
- Pumpkin Sake
- Christmas Tree sale

