



AUCTION SOLICITATION HANDBOOK

Online

Friday, March 16, 2012

www.sfschool.org/auction

Live & Silent Event

Saturday, April 14, 2012

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco

The San Francisco School Auction Needs YOU!

ALL families are asked to find ways to most effectively and uniquely contribute to the auction. Some families will contribute vacation homes, some will offer frequent flyer miles, some will develop unique items to donate and some will give generously of their time. Others will solicit merchants that they frequent.

ALL families are expected to solicit/donate at least 5 items for the auction. Plan to start early on this project. Key upcoming dates:

Friday, February 24th - Donation & Catalog Advertisement Deadline

Friday, March 16th - Online Auction Opens

Saturday, April 14th - Silent & Live Auction Event

Mid-April - Online Auction Closes

These guidelines provide auction information and can help you solicit items. Although it can be daunting to ask for donations, even for a cause as worthy as tuition assistance at The San Francisco School, it helps to understand how donors benefit. It can also help to know effective strategies for approaching people.

Need Ideas for Auction Items?

Often the most sought after items are things that only you can provide because of a special talent or relationship. Examples of these might include (but are not limited to):

- Faculty Fun: Outings and exploration, story time or tea with teachers
- Travel: Vacation homes in Sonoma, Tahoe, Montana, NYC, Tuscany, frequent flyer miles, hotel points or stays, resorts, spas, getaway packages
- Dinners/Food: Catered dinner parties, parent-created special events such as a beach bash or cocktail party, a gourmet picnic basket, custom-baked cake, cooking lessons, beer or wine tasting
- Restaurants: Gift certificates to anything from pizza to five-star restaurants!
- Art by Kids: Items made by our children at school - one of the most popular categories - have included furniture, art, calendars, jewelry and class projects
- Outings: Children's day outings, sailing on the Bay, private tug boat ride, wind surfing lessons, hikes, trips to the zoo, museum passes
- Lessons/Crafts: Works of art, custom needlecraft or lessons, floral arrangements for a year, music lessons, one-on-one soccer coaching, picture framing, portrait painting or sketches
- Professional Services: Financial, architectural, landscape, design, medical, legal, massage, home repair, computer service/repair, babysitting
- Sports/Cultural Event Tickets: Your season tickets to cultural performances or sporting events
- Fantasy/Luxury Items: Use of a private plane, celebrity-related items, backstage passes, be-

ing cast as a movie extra, private tours of zoos, museums or private art collections, training camp packages, a one-year parking space in downtown SF, a car lease

Items to solicit from merchants include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gift Certificates – for restaurants or services
- Food Items – wine, gourmet food items, cooking lessons
- Children's Items – clothing, toys, DVD/CDs, books or birthday parties
- Personal Services – spa days, massage, haircuts, facials, private chef
- Practical and Professional Services – auto detailing, yard services, house painting

For more ideas, please contact Emily Garlock (415.239.1475, egarlock@sfschool.org) for a copy of last year's auction catalog.

Reasons to Ask Merchants for Donations

- If you have personal relationships with businesses, you have a far higher rate of success. If you know the proprietor or staff, don't be shy about asking for contributions!
- Many merchants welcome the opportunity to give to their community and valued patrons.
- Some merchants plan their annual budget to include tax-deductible donations. They may contribute if their yearly quota has not been reached. If we do not ask them to donate, another school or organization will.
- The beginning of the calendar year is when many merchants have donation money available - tap this resource before it runs dry!
- Nothing ventured, nothing gained. The only way to get a donation is to ask!

If you have ideas for a donation but require help soliciting, or would prefer to have someone else solicit, please contact Emily Garlock (415.239.1475, egarlock@sfschool.org).

Auction Items By Category

This year, donations will be auctioned in 3 separate categories: the Online Auction (March 16 through Mid-April), the Silent Auction (at the April 14th event) and the Live Auction (at the April 14th event).

The deadline for all auction items, regardless of category, is Friday, February 24th.

ONLINE AUCTION

March 16, 2012 through Mid-April, 2012

All bidding and closing of these items will be online and anyone is welcome to participate in bidding, regardless of attendance on April 14th. This is a great way to get family and friends, both near and far, to participate in the auction and help raise funds for tuition assistance at SFS.

Categories that will be in our Online Auction include: Services, Items for the Kids, Health, Beauty & Fitness, Entertainment, Sports, Fashion, Home & Garden, Food, Outings, Getaways and Restaurants.

SILENT AUCTION

Saturday, April 14, 2012

Some of our most popular and top-selling categories will be available for bidding in our Silent Auction on the night of the event. You can also preview many of these items in our Online Auction prior to the event.

Categories that will be in our Silent Auction include: Kid-Sponsored Outings, Community Dinners, Faculty Fun, Art by Kids, Wine and Fine Art.

LIVE AUCTION

Saturday, April 14, 2012

The event on April 14th will also include a Live Auction, featuring many fabulous 'big-ticket' items. You can preview many of these items in our Online Auction prior to the event.

Top Live Auction items in the past have included: outings with teachers, week-long stays at vacation homes, getaways and travel at home and abroad, hotel, resort and travel packages, celebrity-related items, catered group dinner parties and parent-created special events.

Catalog Advertising

A merchant or professional unable to donate an item may be willing to place an advertisement in our print or online auction catalogs. Anyone who donates auction items can receive ad space in our catalog at a discounted price, as well as a direct link from our Online Auction. Don't forget to ask for advertisements from merchants giving donations — they may want to contribute both ways!

Past advertisements have included those for realtors, attorneys, physicians, restaurants, barbers, plumbers, painters, dry cleaners and many other local businesses and professional services.

Contact Emily Garlock for more info on how to advertise in our catalog (415.239.1475, egarlock@sfschool.org).

How to Solicit Merchants

- Capitalize on familiarity. You will get close to 100% success with merchants you know and frequent. Also, face-to-face solicitations yield higher rates of success than mail or phone solicitation. If you do use mail, be sure to FOLLOW-UP with a phone call!
- Make sure you speak with someone who can make a decision. If the manager or decision-maker isn't present, find out when they will be available and try again.
- Explain what The San Francisco School is and why we are holding the Auction. Bring your auction donation and advertising forms as well as SFS literature.
- Write down in advance what you'd like to say to a merchant. For example:
"Hi, you may remember me. My name is _____ and I really enjoy your restaurant. My family and I eat here regularly. My child's school is having its annual auction to benefit tuition assistance. The San Francisco School is a non-profit Pre-K through 8th grade independent school in the Portola District that's very committed to serving an economically diverse school population. All proceeds from this auction go directly toward tuition assistance programs and make the school's excellent academic, arts and other programs available to children who would otherwise not be able to attend. I'm hoping you will help us by donating a dinner for two."

Additional relevant talking points:

- One-third of students at The San Francisco School receive tuition assistance.
- Tuition assistance makes roughly 18% of the school's annual operating budget.
- Help the donor fill out the auction donation forms on the spot or encourage them to donate directly online. If they ask you to leave the form to be filled out and mailed later, be sure to FOLLOW-UP!
- Thank the merchant equally whether or not they donate, and whether their donation is \$20 or \$200. They will be more likely to donate next year if their experience with you is pleasant. If they do donate, make yourself a note to send a post-auction thank you and tell them how successful the auction was with their support.
- If the merchant cannot or does not donate, consider whether you still want to highlight this merchant by buying a gift certificate to donate yourself, in order to engender goodwill for future auctions. Next year, this merchant may enjoy a better business season and remember your support.
- If you prefer to send a letter, make it as personal as possible. On the following page there is a sample solicitation letter you might customize* (*an editable, word document of this sample letter can also be found at www.sfschool.org/auction*). If you have a relationship with a merchant, add personal details such as the last time you were there and what you enjoyed about it.
- As a reminder, donation and advertising forms and other solicitation materials can be found at www.sfschool.org/auction.

*PLEASE NOTE: If a business or merchant requires a solicitation letter on official San Francisco School letterhead, please contact Emily (415.239.1475, egarlock@sfschool.org).

Thank you in advance for your solicitation
efforts on behalf of
The San Francisco School Community!

**SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER
2012 SFS AUCTION**

January 1, 2012

*RESTAURANT
1234 1st Street
San Francisco, CA 94111*

Dear *Mr. Doe*:

My family and I have had the pleasure of dining at *[BUSINESS NAME]* on many occasions. In fact, we were there last month and thoroughly enjoyed the food and hospitality. I am writing to ask if you would please contribute to a tuition assistance fundraising auction on April 14th for my child's school, The San Francisco School.

The San Francisco School is a preK-8th grade independent school in the Portola District. Its mission is to cultivate the intellectual, imaginative and humanitarian promise of every student. The school's annual auction is the primary fundraiser to support the tuition assistance program. One-third of children attending the school receive some amount of aid. Thanks in large part to the support of establishments such as yours, our annual tuition assistance program allows the school to continue to foster each student's promise regardless of ability to pay.

I am writing you to ask for your help by donating to this exciting cause. We would like to gratefully acknowledge *[BUSINESS NAME]* donation in our Online Auction and in our printed Auction Catalog. Together these provide you with exposure to more than 350 parents, staff and friends who are always looking for a terrific night out in our community.

I hope you will consider donating *[DONATION SUGGESTION]* and/or *[PURCHASE ADVERTISEMENT SPACE]* in our catalog.

Enclosed is further information about The San Francisco School, as well as an auction donation form. Please complete the form, keep a copy for your records, and attach a gift certificate. Be sure to specify any applicable restrictions and expiration dates. Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

I will follow up with a phone call in a few days to inquire whether you are willing to donate to The San Francisco School's 2012 Auction. Thank you very much for your consideration and generosity. The children, parents, faculty and staff of The San Francisco School thank you too.

Sincerely,
YOUR NAME & CONTACT INFORMATION

The San Francisco School • 300 Gaven Street • San Francisco, CA 94134 • 415.239.5065 • Tax exempt #94-1629702

**** Please note: If a business or merchant requires a solicitation letter on the school's official letterhead, please contact Emily (egarlock@sfschool.org or 415.239.1475).***



33rd Annual Auction for Tuition Assistance
The San Francisco School
www.sfschool.org/auction