

# A Save the Children Ball

Balls are a great event to unleash your creative side as you could hold so many different types including themed balls, black tie and special occasions like Save the Children Week. Balls are events everyone loves, as we all enjoy getting dressed up, and it's a great way to introduce new supporters to Save the Children.

Merton Branch held a 90<sup>TH</sup> Birthday Ball for Save the Children which raised £5000 and brought in a whole host of new supporters. Nithsdale Branch has held their Ball every second year for over 20 years, with their first Ball raising £1000 and it now raises over £12,000 for Save the Children.

## Step-by-step guide

### Step One

Do some research. Know the area in which you are planning to hold your ball and who you would be sending out invites to. Merton Branch suggests sending out questionnaires to groups of contacts to gauge the support. This should be done 12 months before your event.

### Step two

Form a group to manage the event and nominate an event co-ordinator. Building a group to hold the event can be fun as you all develop fantastic relationships with great camaraderie.

### Step three

12 months before your event find the location for your Ball and set the date and book your venue. Nithsdale Branch recommend using your contacts and local knowledge to try and get a good deal on the location. Merton Branch suggest thinking about the various benefits of different venues for example kitchen facilities, inclusion of tables, chairs, cutlery etc. Merton Branch held their Ball in a church hall as they wanted to save money by using their own volunteer caterer.

### Step four

Now for the fun part, decide on the type of Ball you want to hold and what you will be including on the night; three course meal, band, auction or raffle. Once you have worked out your costing, approximate your ticket prices. The ticket price should reflect the expenses you may incur, Nithsdale Branch suggest if you are having a drink on arrival, three course meal, band and an auction on the night you should charge around £60 per ticket. This should be done nine months before your event.

### Step five

Eight months before your Ball book your band and use your local contacts and recommendation to find the best possible deal. Have a group meeting at this stage to decide on the tasks different members of the group will action. Work to each others strengths and decide on who should be responsible for tickets sales, raffle prizes and sponsorship. From this meeting formulate an action plan and circulate around to everyone with dates and deadlines. Start looking for sponsorship straight away so they can sponsor your programme, invites and any other costing. You can approach local companies and to entice them you can add their logo/advert on to your marketing materials. Remember if you don't ask you don't get!

### Step six

Six months before the Ball ask a Save the Children staff member to attend and talk about the work of Save the Children.

## Quick points:



This event can raise anything from £1000 – £5,000 depending on the scale you decide to run the Ball.



You need a group (around 10-15) to plan the event. On the day ask all your friends and family to help out as you will need around 30 volunteers.



You will need a good group of volunteers, creative thinking and good planning.



You will need to start preparing for your ball a year before the event.

### Step six

Get creative and design all your marketing materials; posters, flyers and invites (go to <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/brandguidelines.html>, username: brand, password br@nd for all the latest Save the Children brand elements). Design your ticket application and a newsletter to explain all about your Ball.

### Step eight

Three months before your Ball the event co-ordinator should visit the venue with the caterers and band to check through all the details for on the night. Plan the menu with the chefs. Merton Branch found placing a cold starter on the tables before the guest are seated is a simple and easy , followed by a hot main course and for dessert, a fresh fruit salad or chocolate tart.

### Step nine

Three months before your Ball send out your ticket applications and newsletter to all your contacts. Nithsdale Branch believe the best ways to sell tickets are by selling them by tables. Encourage local companies to buy tables, not only their staff but their contacts. The corporate tables are more likely to spend more money on the auction as well.

### Step ten

If you are holding your Ball in a hall like Merton Branch did, two months before your event you need to recruit waiters, extra helpers for the kitchen and order your linen and napkins, champagne and wine (which you can sell separately). Start recruiting friends and families to help on the night.

### Step eleven

One month before your Ball have another site check and make your table plans. Make a plan of action for the day of the event giving different jobs to group members and extra helpers.

### Step twelve

On the day of your Ball set up tables with centre pieces and name tags. Ensure everyone is prepped and ready to go.

## **Balls are a favourite event to put on and everyone really enjoys planning and holding this type of event.**

Merton Branch says 'the most important aspect to ensure your Ball is successful involve volunteers as much as possible. We could not have raised £5000 if we had used outside caterers. We really enjoyed preparing and running this event because we were able to recruit new volunteers with specific skills and reached new groups of supporters. Everyone had a wonderful time and it was a true celebration of 90 years of Save the Children.'

Nithsdale Branch who has held their ball every second year for 20 years says 'everyone pulls together and works hard on building the event throughout the year. We always have great camaraderie with one another. You get a real sense of achievement when your evening is over and you have raised a great amount of money for Save the Children.'

Nithsdale Branch top tip for running a Ball would be 'to make sure there is a real feel good factor about the evening with a short introduction and film to Save the Children. It's important to raise awareness but not to over do it. Everyone should feel they are getting good value for their money and that is of course a very well worth course. This will ensure that they will be back at your next event.'

If you would like any more information or advice on running a Ball Chrys Chalk, who is the Chair of Merton Branch, is more than happy to chat with you. You can email her on [chryschalk@hotmail.com](mailto:chryschalk@hotmail.com).