



The California 4-H Foundation

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Tips for Conducting a Successful Silent Auction

- **Get all items donated.** Get items that mean something to your community. Schedule a meeting with your volunteers who will be soliciting items to brainstorm and generate ideas about hot items to target. Encourage volunteers to explore their personal networks for possible donations and sponsors.
- **Group items together** to create one-of-a-kind offerings—such as a movie night package with popcorn, movie tickets, candy, and a DVD. This is a good way to add value to small or “odd lot” items
- **Have items attractively displayed** and arranged for easy viewing. For example, assembled gift baskets should not be wrapped in cellophane since it decreases the ability to identify items in the basket. Display items creatively to create excitement. Set up a bowl with tropical fish and some sand and shells to promote a certificate for a donated hotel stay near a beach.
- **Number each item.** Have a sheet for each numbered item with an interesting, but brief description—a sale’s pitch. Also include the donor’s stated value of the item.
- **Gather important information.** Each sheet should have a sign-up section for the person’s name and contact information including e-mail address.
- **Have a minimum bid amount** that is equal to 50% of the value of the item. (This is a fundraiser and not an opportunity to bargain shop – selling donated items for greatly reduced prices is disrespectful to item donors and may influence their willingness to donate the following year) Plus, you will raise more money.
- **Designate minimum increments** so that each successive bid is in the amount of \$5.00 or more.
- **Direct people to the silent auction area.** Post signs and announce/encourage people to come to area. Have food and drink stations by the auction area.
- **Make the connection between their purchase and 4-H.** Post pictures of 4-H kids doing 4-H activities around the auction items to remind people why they are there and that their bid on an auction item is helping your program.
- **Arrange to take credit cards**, if at all possible.

If you have ideas, comments, or questions about fundraising please contact:

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For more information check out our website at: <http://www.ca4h.org>