

The Show (House) Must Go On! – Fundraising in a Time of Pandemic 2020



OKCPHIL and Oklahoma City Orchestra League

Project Category: Flexibility/Adaptability

Group 3 – Metropolitan Population 1.39 million

Project Overview: The Oklahoma City Orchestra League planned to host our annual Orchestrating Excellence Luncheon (Gold Award 2019) in the Spring, but the limitations COVID-19 posed in our city, made it impossible to gather in large groups and socialize. With this fundraiser no longer an option, the League put all its efforts into reworking our signature fundraiser. A staple in the Oklahoma City Metro since 1973, the Symphony Show House is something generations of families have looked forward to annually, and this year was no exception – except for a world-wide pandemic. After months of planning, the designers completing staging of the \$2.25 million house, and putting off the open for over a month, it was decided that if we were to open at all we needed to make changes. Following CDC guidelines for physical distancing, masks, hand and high-traffic sanitizing, and limiting the number of guests in the house at one time, proved to be less challenging than first anticipated. However our typical volunteers for Show House fell into the high-risk category, so we had to adapt with less volunteers, including our House Chair. That led to an OKCPHIL staffer becoming the “House Manager” for the two-week long event.

The newest addition this year was an HGTV-styled video that could be purchased with an online ticket. This video was produced with the help of our Public Relations staff at the OKCPHIL who used some of her budget to help offset the costs of professional videography and editing. Interviews of several of the designers highlighting their spaces and discussing inspiration for their designs, with a “reveal” of the house at the end gave viewers the sense they were special guests to the house. This video enabled us to not only engage our “high-risk” membership, but also gave people outside of the area an opportunity to “tour” the house.

We also updated our point-of-sale system for designer sales. Dedicated volunteer members went piece by piece through the house, before opening day, to take pictures of items for sale, added descriptions, and purchase pricing. All the information was uploaded into Square POS allowing us a “touchless” way to sell the items online along with our traditional in-house sales. Our pop-up boutiques utilized their own POS systems and cut us a percentage of the sales. Surprisingly people wanted to buy, and the new set-up made the process more streamline. And while we may not have raised as much as traditional Show Houses of our past, this event allowed us to continue to make an impactful annual contribution and support the OKCPHIL educational efforts.

Volunteer Involvement: Strictly limited – As the event date approached and it became clear we’d be running on a skeleton crew, everyone pulled together to make sure all the bases were covered. Our Show House Chair even did her part coordinating our efforts remotely, as she too fell into the “high-risk” group. Two small shifts a day consisted of volunteers who helped man the front desk, a “floater” who helped the Show House Manager make sure surfaces were wiped down and sanitized, and our dedicated designers who took turns manning their rooms and keeping our guests informed about the house and the through process behind their designs. At the close of day a volunteer would come in and count the money and secure it for transport back to the OKCPHIL offices.

Planning: Began in August 2019 for original opening date of May 9, 2020. Updated opening was June 13, 2020 and tours ran daily through June 21, 2020.

Goal: Carryout a 2020 fundraiser that would support our ongoing commitment to the OKCPHIL. With some strategic planning, lots of compromise, and an amazing commitment from our Show House Committee, OCOL members, local designers, OKCPHIL staff and board we were able make this a fundraiser to remember – pandemic or not.

Total Revenue: \$88,263

Total Expenses: \$23,147

Net Income: \$65,116

For more information about this project:

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Video Link - <https://vimeo.com/video/426837485/7aab3cd177>

