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Hospitality Shindig Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event: Success and Challenges

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Introduction

Special events such as fundraising activities are types of events that individuals typically attend to participate in the festivities and enjoy with friends, family and colleagues (Smith, Sargent, Causin & Olle, 2019; Causin & McCarthy, 2017; Causin et. al, 2010). According to Smith, et. al (2019), fundraising in higher education has been around for hundreds of years. In the early 1900's, the driving motivator for fundraising was to provide funds for students specifically for scholarships, housing expenses, books and food. Fundraising is the process of seeking and gathering voluntary financial contributions by engaging individuals, businesses, charitable foundations, or governmental agencies typically done by non-profit charitable organizations. Some examples of charitable organizations include [student scholarship](#) merit awards for [athletic](#) or [academic](#) achievement, [humanitarian](#) and ecological concerns, [disaster](#) relief, [human rights](#), [research](#), and other social issues (Wikipedia, 2019).

The Fundraising Project: A Themed Event

The Advanced Event Operations course implemented the fundraising project which was named, Hospitality Shindig with the theme, Kentucky Derby. The professor decided on Kentucky Derby theme because it was never done before in Nacogdoches, TX and SFA. Since the theme is Kentucky Derby, the students had to plan and execute the event based on the theme - from decors, table set up, menu, music, drinks and attire. Designing the poster (Figure 1) was the first thing that the students did. Committees were created and students were assigned as committee leaders and members. The students learned so much about being an events professional as well as faced lots of challenges before and on the day-of-the-event. One thing is certain, the fundraising project boosted the confidence of the students in terms of event planning and execution.



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