



American Girl Fashion Show Committee Minutes
Meeting, January 25, 2015
Panera, Glenmont, NY

Members present: Lisa Walters, Danielle Holley, Tabitha Novosat, Gretchen Wilber, Sarah O'Brien, Carol Crummey, Barbara Gaffuri, Caitlin Monjeau

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 AM. Three additions were made to the agenda. A discussion of advertisements available in the Event Program, an update on model applications, and a brief discussion of event logistics were all added.

The committee briefly reviewed the event's finances, and discussed the fixed costs associated with the event, including advertising, printing, and the stage and sound systems. A review of the finances showed that the expenses of the event run to approximately \$12,000. With a ticket price of \$35 and food and gratuity costs at approximately \$14 per ticket sold, the committee noted that over 570 tickets must be sold, out of a possible 828, before the event breaks even. This figure does exclude income associated with merchandise sales, the doll hair salon, the photo booth, the girl hair salon, advertising, and sponsorships. The committee discussed the need for underwriting support from sponsors given the costs associated with the event. The committee agreed that 3 sponsors for a total of \$1,500 in underwriting support is a good goal for the committee this year, given that last year only a single sponsor, Keybank, underwrote the event for \$500.

Sarah O'Brien and Barbara Gaffuri met during the previous week to gather contact information and contact potential sponsors for the 2015 show. Some responses have begun coming in. The committee agreed that the contact information, notes about the exchanges had with the sponsors, and the outcome of the discussion should be saved in a spreadsheet to ultimately add to a donor database for the Junior League of Albany, and to reduce the burden on next year's committee.

The Sponsorship subcommittee asked how flexible sponsorship requests could be in terms of what is offered to potential sponsors, and the committee agreed that we should accommodate sponsors' requests whenever we can. Advertisements, raffle donations, and the sponsorship of a pair of tickets for a child and guest as part of our community project can be offered to sponsors. Ad prices for black and white ads have been set at \$25 for a quarter page ad (2.5" wide by 3.5" high), \$35 for a half-page ad (5" wide by 3.5" high), and \$50 for a full-page ad (5" by 7"). High-quality PDFs are required for ads. The community project costs approximately \$232 to offer to girls, and the committee suggested that sponsors be offered this package for \$250 including discreet recognition in the Event Program, including an ad.



The committee discussed the advertising and publicity plan. The committee is soliciting newspapers to write a feature story on the Delaware Library DIAD, and is also looking to run a ticket giveaway promotion with a radio station. We are approaching news stations as well to possibly run a promotional or feature piece on the show. At the suggestion of another nonprofit employee, the committee is considering pursuing news reporters in the region and offering them pairs of tickets to the show to boost awareness of the event and the Junior League generally. Caitlin Monjeau will pursue this.

Invitations were sent to the printer during the previous week, and will be mailed during the week of 1/26. 6500 addresses were chosen from the mailing list of 15,500 provided by American Girl. Far-flung addresses were eliminated, and addresses from closer areas were cut down proportionally to get a cross-section of local communities, including western Massachusetts. 2,500 invitations were sent using the nicer-looking folded invitation, and 4,000 were sent using the postcard. The addresses sent each of the items were kept and will be reviewed against purchases after the show to assess whether the quality of the invitation made a difference to response rates.

We received a suggestion to contact grandparents and organizations that grandparents are associated with as a target for an event like this. The committee considered the Ft. Orange Club, AARP, grandparent blogs, senior centers, meetups, and Silver Sneakers as possible targets. The committee believes that Bridget Graber is associated with Silver Sneakers, and Caitlin Monjeau will follow up.

Ticket sales are ahead of the benchmark for this time last year, and are on par with sales as of 2/8/2014. Because the show is two weeks later this year, we can estimate that sales are as much as 4 weeks ahead of last year's sales. The 5:30 show still lags in sales, and the committee discussed arranging for a raffle package unique to that show to boost sales. The committee also discussed returning to the show themes for the 2016 shows if the themes do in fact boost attendance.

Raffles should be collected from members who donate them in as complete a state as possible, and the committee discussed offering an additional point for raffle donations if they are packaged in a pretty way suitable for the show. Caitlin Monjeau will follow up with the board of directors. The Raffles committee will review last year's solicitation letter and coordinate with the Sponsorship committee (whose membership is the same) to solicit raffle items. Because Grace Thomas, the Girl of the Year, is a baker, the committee discussed a large raffle package that is cupcake or baking-themed. The committee further discussed soliciting raffle items that are French and baking-themed to help boost 5:30 PM attendance. The Raffles committee agreed to solicit raffle items in this way. Raffle items should be collected at Sectionals and at the March GMM at the latest.



The Community project is underway, although our partners have been slow to suggest girls to us. We ask that they give us the kind of American Girl doll the girl would like by March 1 so that we can order the doll. We could possibly order a little later, but would like to leave time for shipping before the event. Tabitha Novosat agreed to follow up. There is interest in donations from sustainers and others to cover the cost of the community project, and possibly other tickets might open up.

The committee agreed that the Girl of the Capital Region contest should be open to all girls aged 8-14 who submit an essay of 500 words or less that responds to this prompt: "If you were an American Girl Doll, what would your story be?" We would like to offer the option for the girl to send a photograph of herself, possibly including an American Girl Doll, which we could use to promote the event. The prize winner would receive 2 tickets to the 2:00 PM show, a complete 2015 Fashion Show doll outfit, the girl hat and shirt, an American Girl Doll of her choice, a Day of Beauty at Rumors, a Grand Raffle ticket, the announcement of her name at the show, a special chance to Walk the Runway, and her photo and name in the event program. Caitlin Monjeau will coordinate this with Rumors. We suggest that Rumors choose the winner by March 1 to allow us to coordinate logistics.

Logistics were discussed, including the need to do more decoration of the space this year to promote the JLA and enhance the overall experience of the show. The committee would like to offer a candy bar, and discussed that Albany Country Club likely has glassware that could be used to display candy. The committee would like to offer incentives to members to donate Valentine candy for the candy bar, as we estimate that guests will take home up to half a pound of candy each. We will need plastic bags and twist ties, but have scoops. We will also investigate donations from drug stores and other stores for Valentine's candy after Valentine's day.

Caitlin Monjeau agreed to email Megan about event sound, and ask that she volunteer to run sound on the day of the event, or train a successor to do the same. The committee briefly discussed assignments at the event as well.

The committee scheduled the following month's meeting for Sunday 2/22 at 1:30 PM, possibly at Tala.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:45 PM.