



NAA Foundation Best Practices:
NIE Fundraising and Sponsorships
Pet Calendar Contest

Submitter's Contact Information	
Name	Laurie James
Job title	Regional NIE Coordinator
Newspaper's name	The Evening Sun (Hanover), York Daily Record, York Dispatch, Public Opinion (Chambersburg), Lebanon Daily News
Newspaper's circulation	ES – 21,000, YDR – 53,000, YD – 25,000, PO – 17,000, LDN – 19,000 Daily
Newspaper's street address	ES – 135 Baltimore St., Hanover, PA 17331 YDR and YD – 1891 Loucks Road, York, PA 17408 PO – 77 N. 3 rd St., Chambersburg, PA 17201 LDN – 718 Poplar St., Lebanon, PA 17042
Work phone	(717) 767-3522
Work e-mail	ljames@ync.com

Fundraising Best Practice	
Project name	Pet Calendar Contest
Goal	<p>This is the BEST way not only to raise funds, but also to get the community involved and interacting with your newspaper.</p> <p>Advertising can benefit from this contest by selling ads for either or both – the newsprint calendar and the glossy calendar.</p> <p>All voting proceeds go into the NIE account to cover the cost of newspapers requested by teachers. Any prizes or donations must also be taken from those monies. Some years, this contest has raised enough funds to cover up to half of our yearly needs!</p>
Target Age/Audience	All ages/entire circulation/pet lovers! Even teachers and students get involved in this one.
Tactics	<p><u>Phase One:</u> We started the contest by running a half-page, full-color ad soliciting readers for photos of their pets. We ran this ad about five times. Winners were based on voting results (25 cents per vote).</p> <p>Photos were either mailed in or e-mailed to me (if e-mailed, I would advise sending a confirmation e-mail to the sender). If the owner enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope, I returned the photo.</p>

<p>Tactics</p>	<p>I kept a list of each pet's name, type, owner's name, phone number and anything that would individualize the photos (in case things got mixed up). Photos and e-mails were saved in one file (art department). Each pet was saved in the file by this procedure: dog.lady.perkins (the type of animal, the name of the animal and the owner's last name). Photos were scanned and given numbers, as opposed to putting the names on the voting pages.</p> <p><u>Phase Two:</u> The contest began with the first round of voting. We did not know how many entries we would receive, so we made a judgment on how to vote down the entries based on how many we received. We decided that voting down to 50 was reasonable.</p> <p>Each vote was received and counted by me. I kept records of how many votes and how much money was received each day. We had cash and check donations, and some calls were made to make credit-card donations.</p> <p>First-round voting lasted about two weeks.</p> <p><u>Phase Three:</u> Round Two (top 50 pets) also lasted about two weeks. This was to determine the top 25 pets.</p> <p>Again, I counted each vote and donation. The votes were cumulative, so they were carried over from the first round. I felt this was fair to everyone.</p> <p><u>Phase Four:</u> Round Three (top 25 pets) ran in full color on three different days. The number of votes the pet had received in the first and second rounds carried over. Voting lasted about 2 weeks. Names were used under the pets' photos instead of numbers for this round.</p> <p><u>Phase Five:</u> Putting the calendar together! After it was formatted, the calendar was printed in-house. It was inserted for all home-delivery customers. An outside company also printed glossy calendars to sell to customers requesting them. (Please note that this past year we did not print a newsprint calendar for home delivery customers. This was a cost cutting measure.) Try to have as many preordered as possible. These are sold just to cover costs.</p>
<p>Resources Required (including staffing and number of hours)</p>	<p>This is not a particularly tough project to tackle, but it is somewhat time-consuming. It begins in August with developing a timeline, requesting and design of ads and scanning and cropping of photos. Working with one person in the art department is probably the best-case scenario, since too many people in the mix may cause confusion. The collection of photos, the counting of votes and money on a daily basis, fielding phone calls from pet owners, proofing pages to make sure each entry is accounted for, and finally mailing the calendars to those that have requested them . . . yes, lots of time. But worthwhile! Not only will you raise needed funds, you will communicate with many generous people in the community, and hear many heart-warming stories!</p>

<p>Results (including revenue generated)</p>	<p>In the first seven years we held the Pet Calendar Contest in Hanover, the funds raised stayed fairly consistent each year, with the highest amount in 2004 at just more than \$12,000. This past year was the lowest (by far), bringing in only \$5,600. This could be a result of the state of the economy, or it could be an indication that the community is tired of this contest. Next year will probably tell us which it is. However, the contest was also held at our York papers for the first time. We received 400-plus entries and netted just more than \$20,000.</p>
<p>Lessons Learned (Would you do it again? If no, why not?)</p>	<p>Well, yes, I'm sure we'll do it again! Be ready to meet people and pets. Each year, we try to change it up a bit. Winners get prizes, the pet of the year is used in promo ads, I've added cute quotes to the calendar, we have employees choose their favorite photos, which are added to the calendar ... it's important to keep evolving.</p> <p>Be prepared for some people who believe their pets should win – just because. Be aware that some people are memorializing their beloved pets. Be aware that some people will get angry when the friend of a friend of a friend heard that the only reason so-and-so won is because the owner spent a lot of money.</p> <p>Also, taking part of the proceeds and donating them to the local SPCA or Humane Society goes a long way in bringing people in. And of course, make sure you're ABC-compliant if you're an ABC paper.</p> <p>One thing that is bound to change next year is the ability to post photos and do online voting. It's still important to have photos in the paper, but online adds another dimension – and ideally more money!</p>