

HOSTING THE CONFERENCE

The GCYPAA Experience

GCYPAA was formed to keep the miracle of sobriety continuing by carrying A.A.'s message of Recovery, Unity and Service to A.A. members throughout the state of Georgia. The Conference weekend is the heart of GCYPAA. For many of us, it marked a profound turning point in our sobriety: the moment we realized we could indeed enjoy a new freedom and a new happiness. The Conference weekend is the primary vehicle by which we carry the message of recovery to those in need and very often the time that AA members unite to help carry on the Conference. For all these reasons, hosting the Conference is a special responsibility.

Your Turn to Carry the Banner

Every year since GCYPAA began, a new Host Committee has carried the Conference banner, which means doing the work necessary to organize and outreach the annual Conference. This is a substantial responsibility. It is an opportunity to carry a message of hope to those in need. It's your turn at the wheel – there are many AA members who will share their experience with GCYPAA with you and help you along, but your Committee should exercise its autonomy and work as a group to organize and outreach your Conference in order to carry the message to those in

need.

Resources Available

The Host Committee enjoys both substantial autonomy and the support of an established community. Though a Host Committee may feel that it is small in number and geographically isolated, it should take stock of the resources available to it:

- The immediate past Host Committee – should be contacted for any supplies and material it can donate, also a source of information;
- The GCYPAA Advisory Council – the custodian of the Conference experience, we can help outreach your Conference in the cities we represent;
- GCYPAA Archives – contains examples of past programs, Conference graphics and flyers.
- Seed money from The Advisory Council;
- Any city bidding to host the Conference.

It is our experience that a Host Committee should quickly accept and embrace the fact that it is not acting alone in the world of AA. There are many AA groups, service committees and dedicated individuals trying to carry the message of recovery to alcoholics who still suffer who will gladly help your Host Committee if provided the opportunity to do so.

Host Committee Responsibilities

Host Committee Responsibilities are suggestions from the Advisory Council for the new Host Committee. They are based on previous Conference experience. Like the Bid Requirements, they should not be viewed as an arbitrary list, but rather some useful suggestions for effectively carrying the message to those in need through GCYPAA.

The full text of the Host Committee Responsibilities is contained in the Appendix to this Guidebook.

Composition of a Host Committee

Host Committee Responsibility #1 suggests:

This Conference does a greater job of carrying the message to young alcoholics when the conference planning committee is comprised of members 40 and under, with a minimum of one year's sobriety. This committee should be comprised of 15 to 21 members but no one should be excluded.

It is our experience that a small group of committed AA members can host a successful Conference. The 2005 Valdosta Host Committee did a fine job with small numbers. It is also our experience that older AA members can make great contributions to a Host Committee so long as they don't dominate a Host Committee as "bleeding deacons."

Involving AA newcomers in the service through the GCYPAA Host Committee is an essential part of carrying the message to alcoholics in need.

Host Committee Positions

A Host Committee should elect Trusted Servants to undertake certain specific responsibilities with the good of the group in mind. These are not chores or unwanted duties. The main reason for designating specific responsibilities is that often things don't get done if everyone in the group thinks someone else is just as responsible for getting things done.

It is suggested that the number and description of officer positions be flexible to accommodate the unique make-up a particular Host Committee. In Atlanta, for example, we had a relatively large number of Host Committee members, so rather than having one "Outreach Chairperson", we elected a Local Outreach Chairperson, a State Outreach Chairperson as well as members to specifically outreach to other Young People's Conferences, the AA Service Structure, and Treatment Centers. When the Conference was hosted by Valdosta, that Host Committee effectively organized fewer members without as much specialization. There is no right answer on the number of positions, but we can suggest that a Committee do its best to get people effectively involved.

It is suggested that the qualifications for some

positions include a certain length of time sober in AA.

Chairperson: Shall arrange for and announce the agenda for business meetings. Shall open meetings and maintain meetings in a reasonable order. Maintain consistent contact with various officers so that the group works as a whole, an individual may need help or have opportunity to help others meet group's goals. Chairperson should have perspective on group's goals which develop in business meetings and issues/concerns of group throughout year. Important to follow-up with other officers to see work commitments are being carried out. Needs to keep positive attitude, give credit, accept responsibility and focus on solutions. Have at least two years of sobriety.

Co-Chair: Assist and support the Chair in responsibilities as requested. In absence of the Chair, shall accept the full duties of the Chair. Shall carry out various duties assigned by the Chair.

Secretary: Acts as a custodian of all materials. Keep minutes of all meetings. Maintain current contact information of Committee members, also contact information for outreach. Spot issues of old business for meeting agenda, disseminate minutes to keep Committee members informed in the events they are unable to attend meeting.

Treasurer: Keep accurate financial records of all transactions. Submit a financial statement at each meeting. Have in his / her possession at the meetings; all bank statements, deposits and checkbooks, in order to be prepared to make deposits and disbursements. Deposit funds promptly to account, reimburse expenses; should be aware of fundraising goals and able to forecast expenses; requires checking post office box regularly. Have at least two years of continuous sobriety.

Facilities / Hotel Chair: Will have the responsibility to complete negotiations with facilities, expressly for the purpose of hosting GCYPAA, as deemed appropriate by the Committee. Work with Conference hotel to meet space and special needs; responsibility for Conference decorations, signs, fuzzies, set-up needs and layout, speaker recording, literature tables at Conference, hospitality room. Coordinate clean-up during Conference. Site coordinator should be able to plan ahead, work closely with Program Coordinator and expect to be very busy during Conference weekend.

Outreach Coordinator(s): Shall have the responsibility to disseminate information about the Conference and service opportunities on the Host committee functions within the Twelve Traditions of AA. Represent Committee at A.A. events like round-ups; should be familiar with Conference registration to sign-up attendees while representing at events, might be responsible for handling some money. Might plan trips to AA meeting to disseminate information about Conference. Should be aware of service opportunities to encourage other young people to participate in service on

Host Committee or in other A.A. activities.

Some Host Committee have divided the Outreach Chair positions into local and state positions. Outreach is a great area to add new positions to focus particularly on other Young Peoples' Conferences, treatment centers, special interest communities, the AA Service Structure and Al-Anon.

Registration Chair: Maintain accurate information on pre-conference registration; consider creating display to attract registration at events, be able to report progress of registration at business meetings. Would be responsible for registration table during Conference. May be responsible for handling money; requires checking post office box regularly. Sobriety time is usually required to handle significant amounts of money.

Program Chair: Responsible for Conference content, including speakers (including their travel arrangements), arrangement for marathon meetings, entertainment, greeters, may coordinate pre-conference event, consider banquet or alternative. Should address special needs of Conference attendees.

Archivist: Responsible for preserving a record of group activities, including all publications and merchandise, taking event photographs.

Merchandise Coordinator: Responsible for ordering and coordinating the selling of Committee-approved merchandise. Important to have responsible person keep

track of t-shirts to avoid loss or damage between events.

Events Coordinator(s): Primary responsibility for planning events for the Host Committee leading up the Conference. Should coordinate event concept (e.g. dance, movie, workshop), a date and time, location with ample time for outreach. May designate additional event coordinators on an event-by-event basis, but should stand behind planning of all events so that events run smoothly from start to finish; may need to collect money and receipts at events if the treasurer is unable to attend event. Not all events are intended to raise money, but fundraising is necessary to host GCYPAA.

Some Committee have divided the Event Chair position into Local and State Events.

Hospitality Chair: Primarily responsible for the Hospitality Room at the Conference where snacks and drinks will be freely served during the Conference weekend.

Elections

Because some may feel that elections are popularity contests where there are "winners" and "losers", it is suggested that a new Host Committee conduct elections in a fair and efficient manner. We wish to emphasize that the primary purpose of electing Committee members to various offices is to create a basic organization so the Committee

can be of maximum service in carrying the message to those in need.

At the outset, it is suggested that a Committee decide how it is to elect its members to various positions. The Committee should decide in advance what officer positions are needed and the order they are to be elected. Generally, a position is called and individuals are nominated by others or themselves. It is helpful to have written descriptions of what a position entails and how much sobriety time is suggested. If one is nominated for a position they don't want, they should decline the nomination to give someone else the opportunity to be of service to the group.

The Committee may use a Third Legacy voting procedure or simple majority. The Committee may want candidates to briefly share their qualifications and interest in a position before casting ballots. A Committee may vote by show of hands, but it is suggested that secret written ballots be used so elections do not appear as a contest of personalities.

Some Host Committees have invited a local AA member who is not part of the Host Committee or Advisory Council to facilitate their elections meeting.

Get People Involved and Committed

Experience has shown that individual members of a Host Committee are more likely to actively participate if they

have a specific position and clear responsibilities so it is suggested that the number and description of officer positions be flexible.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for one Committee member to hold more than one position, particularly if the responsibility of one position is primarily limited to the Conference weekend. There is also nothing wrong with electing more than one person to certain positions, such as events or outreach, as "co-chairs", particularly where group effort is helpful.

A Host Committee should keep in mind that an election is not an end in itself, but rather a means of internal organization to help the Committee do service work. No matter who gets what particular office, Committee members should support one another and try to work together for the good of the still suffering alcoholic.

Help from All Ages

In an effort to convey to all AA members that GCYPAA is not exclusively for young people, but rather for all who want to stay sober and help the alcoholic who still suffers, in 1996 it was decided by the Advisory Council to have GCYPAA stand for the Georgia Conference by Young People in AA (not for Young People in AA).

Those who serve are hosting an annual Conference for all to share in this happy, joyous, and free life we have

been given the gift of sobriety.

Tips for Effective Business Meetings

Conducting an effective business meeting can be very challenging. Business meetings can be conducted in a number of ways effectively. One benefit of having experience as a Bid Committee can be to develop some business meeting experience.

It is our experience that it is helpful to conduct meetings at a set time and place. For example, the Atlanta Bid for GCYPAA held its business meetings at the Galano Club in Atlanta on a set time on a Sunday each month. It may have changed our meeting time once or twice because of a holiday conflict or to meet before an event, but otherwise it maintained a regular schedule. When this Committee changed its meeting time and/or meeting place, we attempted to give members plenty of advanced notice. In the long run, you'll save time by deciding at the beginning where and when to meet, if that's up for discussion every meeting, you'll waste a lot of time during the year. Most Committees meet monthly; more frequently, close to the Conference.

Another suggestion is to agree upon some basic operating procedures: Everyone should have a chance to participate, be courteous to one another (don't interrupt or call names), take cell phone calls outside, have an idea how long the meeting will last and whether they will be a cigarette

break. It's also a good idea to encourage Committee members to have something to write on to make personal notes – sometimes it's hard to remember to do something unless you write it down.

It might be wise to designate a person to record minutes of a business meeting if secretary is unable to attend; co-chairperson might be a good choice because he or she should be aware of items on meeting agenda.

One potential pitfall for Host Committee business meetings is “micromanaging” decisions. For example, if a Committee decides to throw an event where food and beverage will be served, someone needs to decide what to serve. It may be helpful to delegate these kinds of details to a subcommittee or individual member, particularly if the Committee has elected an Events Chairperson. It may be sufficient for the full Committee to agree upon basic outline of what, when, where and how much to spend, but delegate to an event subcommittee or individual member the right to decide how to carry out all the particular decisions.

At the same time, it is not necessary to create a Subcommittee or new position to carry out all the Committee's work; it may actually be more time consuming to split up work for later decision rather than simply take care of it.

The Committee may follow “parliamentary procedure” and do its work by making motions. The site www.robertsrules.org is a useful reference. On other

occasions, the Committee may proceed more casually. Sometimes, the Committee will want to discuss a matter a length and articulate a careful plan of action; at other times, it may be more preferable to proceed on a quick show of hands or nodding heads.

Another potential pitfall is having a Committee's discussion of an issue drag-on. Sometimes, people speak to be heard without adding a new or different viewpoint or opinion. It can be appropriate for a Chairperson to limit a rambling discussion and call for a vote. Chairpersons are encouraged to use tact, common sense and rely on spiritual principles.

Sample Business Meeting Agenda

A basic meeting agenda is useful to outline the discussion. The agenda shouldn't be used to dominate the discussion, rather to direct it effectively.

A simple, effective agenda may go something like this:

- Opening prayer,
- Introduction of new members,
- Review of the prior meetings' minutes,
- Reports from Committee officers,
- Consider the old business,
- Consider new business,
- Announcements,

- Closing prayer.

Some very organized Committee Chairs have prepared printed meeting agendas to pass out to members at business meetings.

Operating from a simple agenda can help the Chairperson steer individual energies in an effective manner. For example, if a member is inspired by a brainstorm to suggest an idea tangential to what you're discussing, you can say: "That's an interesting idea that we can discuss as new business."

The Chairman can help Committee members who may miss a business meeting by arranging for a substitute report, that is a report delivered in the absent member's place at the business meeting. When this situation arises, it's good to ask the absent member ahead of time what they wish to report and whether they have any proposals for the Committee's consideration and decision.

Keep a Calendar

Maintaining a calendar of Committee activities and AA events generally is extremely helpful. An inexpensive paper calendar that can be brought to all business meetings would suffice. A calendar can help avoid scheduling conflicts and take advantage of opportunities to outreach at other AA events. It's great to know what events are upcoming, what days holidays fall on and what weekends are open to plan

events. A lot of AA events, like the State Prepaid Convention and the State Service Assemblies, fall on set weekends and can be put into a calendar at the outset of a Committee's work. It's a great way to get a big picture perspective and stay organized.

The Host Committee should be aware that some cities throw annual events in support of the Conference. For example, Big Mike in Byron has hosted annual events – a Warehouse Anniversary party in the fall, a Spring Fling and a New Year's Eve party – in support of the Conference and a Host Committee should take note of these dates in order to attend and take advantage of the support these cities offer. The Host Committee should take care to coordinate events with supportive cities.

Make a Budget

Some budgeting work can help a Host Committee plan a successful Conference.

A good starting point is to determine how much the facilities will cost. As a general rule of thumb, it is good for the registration fees from Conference attendees to pay for the facilities cost. The Host Committee can raise funds to cover other non-facility expenses.

Consider, for example, how much money can be made available to cover Conference speaker expenses, the initial order of merchandise, and the hospitality room at the Conference.

Experience has shown it is extremely important to limit the amount of money spent on hotel provided coffee service. Coffee from a hotel is very expensive and GCYPAA attendees consume an incredible amount of it. If you do not limit the amount of hotel coffee served, it will become the biggest expense of the Conference. Our suggestion is to budget a generous, yet reasonable, amount for coffee service during the Conference and ration the coffee for greatest enjoyment, such as before the main speaker meetings.

The Host Committee Treasurer can help the Committee by outlining a budget for the Committee. This is not to suggest the Treasurer alone determines how the Host Committee spends its money, but rather that the Treasurer can help the Committee coordinate its spending and make the most of what it has. Very often, plans can be adapted to fit a budget – the important thing is to make a budget and stick to it.

It is our experience that Host Committees should be cautious about overly optimistic forecasts of Conference attendance and merchandise sales.

Meeting with Advisory Council at GSSA

The Host Committee meets with the GCYPAA Advisory Council at the Georgia State Service Assembly (GSSA). We've found that this is a central, convenient meeting place and many of our members attend GSSA

anyway as representatives of their AA groups. These meetings provide an opportunity for the Host Committee and the Advisory Council to exchange information and ideas about the Conference. It's also a fun experience. You may consult the Advisory Council Section of this Guidebook for more information on the GSSA meetings.

GSSA presents a great opportunity for the Host Committee to outreach its Conference. Typically, we have been provided a table in the lobby of the GSSA hotel to pass out flyers and let people know about GCYPAA. Hundreds of active AA members will come to this table during GSSA, many of them are looking for event information to take back to their groups throughout Georgia. At the same time, this should not be treated as an opportunity to sell registrations and merchandise as GSSA is an altruistic event.

Finalize Facility Arrangements

Should a Host Committee begin its work without having had the opportunity to obtain site proposals, they are advised to read the section on obtaining commitments from appropriate facilities in the Bid Committees section of this Guidebook. It's not an unprecedented or unmanageable situation, but securing an appropriate facility for the Conference requires prompt attention from a Host Committee.

Ideally, a Host Committee obtained some site proposals before being selected to host the Conference and

it decides, in consultation with the Advisory Council, which site offer to accept. The accepted offer should be outlined in a written contract signed by a representative of the site as well as an Advisory Council member representing the Conference. The Advisory Council plays this role in final site negotiations in order to preserve the Conference's modest resources.

Experience has shown that the final, signed hotel contract must limit the amount of money that GCYPAA will spend on coffee service during a Conference (see the Budgeting and Hospitality room sections for more thoughts on Conference coffee service). The final, signed contract also needs to be based on prudent assumptions about how many hotel rooms Conference attendees will rent.

After a site contract is signed, the Host Committee's site planning turns to making sure the actual facility suits the Conference. For example, a Site Coordinator would want to designate rooms for meetings, hospitality, an area for registration and make sure audio equipment and tables are in place when called for by the Conference Program.

Conference Merchandise

Traditionally, the Host Committee has made a Conference t-shirt with its theme and graphics available prior to and during its Conference. Some years, Host Committees have also made coffee mugs and hats available. In later years, these are pleasant memories of the GCYPAA

experience.

When ordering merchandise, we strongly suggest that Host Committees not be overly optimistic about how much merchandise will be bought. Not everyone who attends the Conference will buy a t-shirt or coffee mug. It's better to run out of merchandise than to have too much – you may be able to order more merchandise later if necessary. If you order stuff early on, you'll have more opportunities to raise funds with it during the year.

Remember, the peach logo should be incorporated into all Conference merchandise.

Host Committee Responsibility #4 relates to merchandise sales at the Conference:

At the Conference, wherever the main registration is located or the center focal point, we urge that nothing but A.A. Conference Approved Literature be sold. Experience has shown that a "Flea Market" can develop and those unaware of our endeavor can be misled, especially by the press, radio and film. Keep the 12 Traditions in mind at all times.

It is our experience that GCYPAA has not attracted a "flea market" of questionable goods. If a Host Committee has merchandise, a Host Committee should sell its merchandise at the Conference. Generally, the Conference has invited the AA Grapevine to set-up a table at the Conference and has provided a table for the Conference

tapers.

What to Do When People Drop Out

GCYPAA service is voluntary. No one gets paid to do it. It should come as no surprise that some people who initially express interest in serving on a Host Committee don't follow through to the Conference.

Sometimes, people miss business meetings because of the temporary demands of school, a job or family. Other times, people leave the Host Committee permanently. In either case, the primary purpose of the Conference remains carrying the message to alcoholics who still suffer and the Host Committee should do its best to serve its primary purpose despite its changing personalities.

Tactful and direct communication between the Chairperson and the affected member(s) is often the best solution. Sometimes, people just forget when meetings take place and what they agreed to do, a friendly reminder often does the trick. It may help to deliver a substitute report and getting some volunteers to fill-in the short term. It's suggested not to burn the absent members' bridge back to the Committee – they may return and make great contributions to the Committee.

In some cases, a member's absence keeps other members of the Committee from doing their job effectively. For example, the Committee may be waiting on an absent member to make flyers. In these cases, we would suggest

appointing a “co-” officer to help out or getting a volunteer to pitch-in temporarily. This solution avoids the uncomfortable situation of voting someone out of their position. Hopefully, the absent member will return and help out – there will be plenty of opportunities to serve during the year. Take heart that new members join to help out, particularly as the Conference weekend approaches.

Managing Group Conflicts

The inherent challenge of working as a group can be even greater among groups of alcoholics. There are bound to be differences in lengths of sobriety, service experience, maturity, enthusiasm and style in any group. Diversity can be a source of strength as well as a basis for conflict. Obviously, the AA program provides alcoholics a wonderful basis to join together to try to carry AA’s message to still suffering alcoholics.

Disagreements can be healthy and useful when they enhance the group’s perspective, but when they spill over into personal attacks and rudeness, they can harm a group. Following principles and procedures can help channel and resolve disagreements. The suggestions in this Guidebook about effective business meetings and what to do when people drop out of the Committee might be helpful to address some sources of tension in your group.

We would suggest that a group experiencing some internal conflict try to keep in mind the primary purpose of GCYPAA which is service to others. Because hosting the

Conference is a year long commitment, there should be plenty of opportunity to try different ideas and share responsibility. Some groups have found it helpful to take inventory of their group defects – a spot check to clear the air can also help get a group on track.

Take Your Show on the Road

Events before the Conference provide the Host Committee the opportunity to raise funds for the Conference, awareness of the Conference and an opportunity to unite in service.

The authors of this Guidebook have participated in many AA events and hope to share some ideas that will make a GCYPAA Event Coordinator’s job more enjoyable and less frustrating.

We would suggest that the Event person embrace the role of *coordinating* Committee events, rather than creating events singlehandedly. You should be aware of events that others in AA are planning and work with them, sometimes you just need to know where and when to go.

Remember, some of the main reasons to have events are to raise awareness of the Conference and to have fun, so simply getting your Committee to meet at an AA Club at a certain time to caravan to some other group’s event can itself be a great event. Bring flyers to the other event, wear your t-shirts, have fun and let others know about GCYPAA.

Fellow AA members who have helped host GCYPAA in the past would like to help current Host Committees by planning events in their area. These out-of-town events present the Host Committee great opportunities to raise funds, outreach their Conference in a different area and have fun in cities like Marietta, Augusta, Atlanta, Byron, Savannah and Albany.

With respect to events planned by fellow AA members who have helped host GCYPAA in the past, the Host Committee's role is to show up and help out. Plan to show up early to help set-up, understand the event plans so your Committee can help out and not get in the way, and plan to stay late to help clean up after the event is over.

Often, the key to making a road trip event successful is not dwelling on what your group "must do" but taking advantage of opportunities of things you can do. For example, you may be able to set-up a table at a Round-Up or Convention to outreach your Conference – it's a great way to talk to lots of active AA members about your Conference and fun if you get into it. You might get invited to party where the admission at the door is going to an AA Club or another service committee, but if you ask their event planner, your Host Committee can conduct a raffle or "pie-in-the-face" auction. It will require some calling and planning ahead, you may even get turned down or have to modify your plans, but it's a lot easier than planning events from scratch and you can raise some money, outreach your Conference and have fun at the same time.

Tips for Fundraising Events

If you are planning an event from scratch, it's very helpful to get event basics planned in advance. What is the event? When does it happen? Where does it take place? How much does it cost to attend the event? Do you need to budget any money ahead of time for the event? This is what the Host Committee needs to decide ahead of time to make flyers – as a general rule, we'd suggest having flyers ready at least one month before the event.

For example, you might propose: "I'd like us to host a special speaker meeting on Founder's Day, June 10th, at the Methodist Church. We wouldn't charge for the meeting or coffee but we'd pass a basket and have a bake sale to raise some money. I talked to the Church already and they're okay with us starting at 7 but need to clean up and leave by 10. We'll need to fill in some of the details and I'll need help with this, but I'd like to get the Committee's approval on this so I can make a flyer that we can start passing out." Depending on the situation, you might add: "I'd also like us to budget \$30 for this in case we need to pay for flyer copies and baked goods to sell, we may not need it, but I'd like some budget just in case we do."

After your Committee has agreed upon the basic outline, there are plenty of details to fill in. Who's the speaker? Who chairs the meeting? Who's bringing a basket, who is making coffee? What kind of coffee? What kind of baked goods? How much are they going to cost? Who is going to sell them? What about diabetics? Who is

going to set up the chairs? Who is going to clean up? Who is going to clean ash trays? Et cetera. Often, you can work out these details close in time to the event. You don't need to plan everything in a Host Committee meeting; micro-management is a waste of time and takes the fun out of event planning. You need to take suggestions and accept help from others but you're the Event Chairperson and a trusted servant. If you do a good job with the basic outline of the event, have a good flyer out and the support of your Host Committee and AA friends, the details have a way of "magically" falling into place. If you haven't enjoyed this experience first hand, trust us.

A few more suggestions, largely born out of our own trials and errors:

Be conscious of what else is on the AA Calendar as well as major holidays. Cooperate and don't compete with other events on the AA Calendar. Some holidays make for good events, like New Year's Eve and Halloween, but other holidays, like Christmas Day and Mother's Day, do not.

Keep it simple, especially when you're Committee is gaining experience working together. Great events can take place on very simple plans.

Plan months ahead. Most Clubs and Churches are happy to allow your Committee to use their space but the Board which needs to approve your proposal may only meet once a month, so you may need to talk to the right person months ahead so the Club or Church can make the space

available, your Committee can approve the event and you can have a flyer ready with enough time to let fellow AA members know about the event at your District meeting, Intergroup meeting, etc. A little bit of work at the right time can save a lot of helpless frustration later on.

Pace yourself and effectively delegate. You don't need to put on events from scratch every week, every other week or even every month. Be conscious of what's going on in AA and take advantage of opportunities that other create and help that your fellow AA members want to give you. Create an AA calendar, fill in the three annual Service Assemblies, the Pre-Paid Convention and regional events. Note where the holidays fall, when the Superbowl, Academy Awards, American Idol Finals are on television. Contact current and past GCYPAA Advisory members to talk about open dates on the calendar and see if they can help fill it in with an event in their area in support of the Conference. You'll probably want to plan a few local events of your own when opportunity and inspiration meet. Hopefully, you're starting to see how you can put together a great calendar of events for your GCYPAA Host Committee that will allow your Committee to raise funds for the Conference, let other AA members know about the Conference and have fun together without completely exhausting yourself.

Often, an "event" is an Event because there are people there, not because you've come up with some dazzling entertainment idea. For example, you can hang out and watch a movie, or you can have "Movie Night at the AA Club with Free Popcorn and Door Prizes!" The difference is

how many people are there (and how attractive it sounds).

Outreach is key to having a successful event and requires group effort. Some event ideas outreach better than others – people need to understand what’s going to happen in order to look forward to it. For more suggestions on outreach events, see the outreach portion of this Section.

Raise Funds Responsibly

The Host Committee should attempt to follow AA Traditions in all its activities, including its fund raising. Along these lines, Host Committee Responsibility #7 suggests:

“The Host Committee should be directly involved with any activity from which funds may be generated.”

The Committee should not take outside donations. We would also suggest planning events that are “good clean fun” not degrading or exploitative.

Raffles

Organizing a raffle is a reliable way to raise funds for the Conference. Most office supply stores sell rolls of raffle tickets that could probably last all year. We’d suggest keeping the cost of raffle prizes low, AA books work well, and give everyone in the Committee a strip of raffle tickets to sell.

Pie in the Face Auctions

A “pie in the face auction” is a traditional fund raising method for the Conference in which event attendees are given the opportunity to bid to put a plate of whipped cream in someone’s face. Often, event attendees will bid against each other to avoid getting a pie in the face. Only a limited number of pies are sold so each one should be fairly valuable.

A little bit of advanced planning helps the pie in the face auction go smoothly and serve as an effective fundraiser. Decide how many pies will be sold and who will auction them in advance.

Be sure to use non-dairy whipped cream. Dairy whipped cream begins to smell sour – someone with this sour smell on their skin and in their hair may think negatively about GCYPAA and that defeats the purpose of having events. Some groups have brought trash bags so people can protect their clothes from the whipped cream. Most of the time, getting a pie in the face is no big deal, it doesn’t hurt, it usually means people like you and it makes a funny picture.

Tips for Conference Outreach

Outreach is a continuous process of creating awareness and excitement about your Conference. Because people take in information differently, it’s important

to try a variety of means of outreach.

Most people make plans based on what others are doing. This means a lot of people will decide whether to attend GCYPAA based on what other people tell them about it. So direct, personal outreach by members of the Host Committee who are going to attend the Conference is probably the most effective way to outreach GCYPAA.

There are many ways that your Host Committee can increase awareness and excitement about your Conference:

Take advantage of events that AA members are going to attend, like the Prepaid Convention and GSSA, as opportunities to let other know about your Conference;

Consider having multiple outreach coordinators in order to focus on your immediate vicinity, the rest of the state, and special interest communities;

Maintain a good supply of registration flyers so the members of your Host Committee can distribute them to anyone they meet who is interested in the Conference.

Those who attend other state young peoples' conferences may enjoy attending GCYPAA – out of town attendees help meet overnight room commitments to hotels.

Contact local treatment centers and invite them to attend some or all of your Conference, they should be offered free registration and are a great audience for the

Conference message;

Inform the Advisory Council webmaster about events to put on the gcypaa.org web site. The internet is becoming an increasingly significant source of information and communication. Perhaps your group can develop an emailing list and effectively circulate information on the internet. Be sure to do so in a manner that maintains anonymity.

Consider attending your local AA District meetings along with your local AA Intergroup meeting (if your city has an Intergroup). Sometimes, these service groups have a system for distributing flyers.

Take advantage of AA publications – the AA Grapevine will publish event information for free. Georgia's Message, which is a statewide publication, will also publish your Conference information in a calendar. Some Intergroup offices also have newsletter. The key to getting these publications to carry your Conference message is getting your information to the right person before their publication deadline.

It's great to post your flyer on a Club bulletin board and make announcements at meetings, but it's our experience that passive, group announcements need to be reinforced and followed-up with direct, personal outreach. If you say "find me after the meeting if you want to register" odds are, no one will, but if you talk to people individually about the Conference after such an announcement, the odds

that your outreach is going to be effective dramatically increase.

The Advisory Council should have a mailing list of past Conference attendees, please work with us to take advantage of this resource.

Web Site Information

The Conference web site is www.gcypaa.org. Maintenance of the web site has traditionally been the responsibility of the Advisory Council webmaster.

The Host Committee is encouraging to provide the webmaster information about its Conference, including graphics, flyers, event details so that the webmaster can incorporate it into the site.

In recent years, the Advisory Council has attempted to diversify the Conference web presence and enable the Host Committee to more effectively represent itself on the internet. GCYPAA has a Myspace profile. The Myspace profile is private and confidential. Password protected editing tools have been incorporated into the gcypaa.org site to allow the Host Committee to edit sections of the site on its own. We have recently enabled online Conference registration through PayPal which allows attendees to register on the web site and pay with a credit or debit card. We hope this is a useful tool.

Conference Program

The Conference program is an outline of the activities at the annual weekend Conference.

The content of the Conference program is entrusted to the Host Committee. It's the Host Committee's responsibility to pick speakers, workshops themes, entertainment, etc. The Conference program is printed so it can be handed out to Conference attendees so they can make the most of their weekend at GCYPAA.

Sample programs can be obtained from the Advisory Committee. We suggest consulting past programs to get ideas about what can be done and how Conference activities can be organized.

In addition to the regular conference activities such as marathon meetings, open speaker meetings, panel meetings, topic discussions, service workshops, dances and the banquet, the Conference includes a number of special sessions and announcements involving the Advisory Council.

Creating the Conference Program is helpful to organizing your use of the facility – what rooms will be used for what purpose at what time(s). We suggest creating a rough outline of the Conference program months ahead of time. Some details can be filled in close to the time of the Conference but having at least a rough sense of timing and movement is a great benefit to Conference planning.

There are numerous Conference traditions: the sobriety countdown, fuzzies, singing Amazing Grace at the end of the Conference, chanting. These traditional features of GCYPAA give the Conference character and are enjoyed by most, but they are not required elements of the Program which should be set by an autonomous Host Committee.

We suggest reviewing the “Conference Checklist” portion of this Section before the Conference as it contains many useful ideas for the Conference Program.

Cost of Registration

The cost of registration should be kept as low as possible. We believe the low cost of registration is a strength of the Conference – it allows more needy young people to attend the Conference and is a reason GCYPAA has historically made a substantial effort to raise funds for the Conference during the year. At the time of the writing (2007), the cost of registration was only \$15.

Traditionally, those still in treatment have been allowed to attend the Conference with free registration.

Typically, the cost of registration has increased slightly closer in time to the Conference and at the door – this is meant to encourage early registration.

Selecting Speakers for Conference

Host Committee Responsibility #2 states:

“Many alcoholics travel great distances to hear and meet with other young alcoholics and to learn how the young alcoholic achieves sobriety. With this in mind, the council recommends an endeavor to obtain 75% of speakers in the 40 and under age group.”

It is our experience that this requirement generally has related to Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning speakers, not panelists.

It is also our experience that demographically diverse Conference speakers enhance the Conference experience.

Cover Speakers’ Expenses

Host Committee Responsibility #3 suggests:

To comply with 7th tradition guides, the Council feels that speakers should receive registration, room accommodations and any other expenses deemed appropriate by the Host Committee.

Also, if the Host Committee invites an out-of-state speaker to speak at the Conference, the Committee should pay his or her airfare or gas mileage.

Plan for Advisory Meetings at Conference

Host Committee Responsibility #5 states:

“Schedule the following meetings on your program: “How to Bid for GCYPAA” Q&A at 11:00 pm on Friday and a bid session at 9:00 am on Saturday. A room must be made available for use by the Advisory Council for it’s meetings throughout the weekend.”

In addition, Host Committee Responsibility #8 advises:

“Save time for announcements by the Advisory Council at the end of the Saturday night meeting.”

Generally, the Advisory Committee announces where the Conference is going to be held the following year at the end of the Saturday evening meeting.

The How to Bid Session and The Bid Session should be included in your Conference Program.

Pass Banner to Next Host Committee

Host Committee Responsibility #6 states:

“Before closing the Conference, present the banner to the new Host City and invite the attendees to the next Conference.”

This generally takes place at the end of the Sunday morning speaker meeting.

Hospitality Room

Conference attendees have typically enjoyed a “hospitality room” where they can find free coffee, drinks and snacks throughout the Conference and socialize with one another.

We can offer some suggestions for a Host Committee member who is responsible for the Hospitality Room at the Conference:

Make sure there is an appropriate space at the Conference site for the Hospitality room. A sink is important for making coffee. At many Conferences, a hotel suite has been used for a Hospitality Room.

Ask home groups to donate food or drinks for the Hospitality room. Two cases of bottled water makes a great group contribution. Perhaps an AA Group would like to contribute a meal to be served out of the Hospitality Room. When we hosted the Conference in Atlanta, a local AA Group served our Conference breakfast on Saturday morning – it was great, particularly because we were running a little ragged at that point.

Some people may have connections for donations. GCYPAA should not accept donations from outside

enterprises (like a restaurant) but it can accept donations from an AA member who works at a restaurant. Some AA members will welcome the opportunity to show off their cooking skills if you ask for their help.

You are not expected to feed the Conference through the hospitality room – people are going to go out for meals.

Coffee service through the Hospitality Room is very important. AA members drink a lot of coffee at all times of the day. Most AA members know how to make coffee and will do so if you make the supplies accessible. Hospitality Room coffee is a great alternative to relying on a hotel coffee service which is very expensive – the more coffee attendees drink in the hospitality room, the less they should drink from the hotel which can save the Conference thousands of dollars.

Make a budget before buying food and drinks. You should know how much you have to spend and plan to make the best of your budget. If you know what's being donated you'll be better able to allocate your spending.

It's also helpful to have sign-up sheets for periodic Hospitality Room clean-ups.

Fuzzies

Fuzzies are yarn necklaces that have been worn by Conference attendees to facilitate greetings and introductions

at the Conference. If you plan to distribute fuzzies to Conference attendees, the last Host Committee may have a supply of fuzzies to get you started. If you don't know how to make fuzzies, it's a pretty simple project that many people who have participated in GCYPAA can help you with. We would suggest storing fuzzies carefully so they don't get tangled.

Tapers

ADK Tapers have taped GCYPAA a number of times. Typically, the Host Committee pays the Tapers' expenses for attending the Conference and provides the Taper a table where attendees can purchase Conference speaker tapes.

Conference Checklist

We have compiled a checklist of items that are often forgotten. Some of these items are optional and are for your consideration.

- Enough t-shirts and coffee mugs
- Name badges
- Ribbons for Host Committee, Advisory Counsel, Speakers, Voice, Volunteers
- Gifts for speakers
- Gifts for conference attendees (in registration bags)
- Enough fuzzies

- Room reservations for speakers, the taper
- Grapevine representative contacted to attend Conference
- Put announcements for Conference in Grapevine, The Message, etc.
- Budget and plan for food for hospitality (good idea to price before at bargain store)
- Ask different home groups to donate specific items for Hospitality Room
- Have a sign-up list for people to chair marathon meetings
- Have a sign-up list for people to supervise Hospitality Room
- Have a sign up list for clean-up shifts in Hospitality Room as well as at end of Conference
- Have a sign-up list for volunteers to sit at registration table
- Have format and readings printed out for marathon meetings
- Appoint some Conference Greeters
- Designate a 'Voice' for Conference
- Assign people to chair speaker meetings and read readings (how it works, etc.)
- Keep contact information for Conference attendees to add to database
- If you are doing 'combined sobriety time' for all attendees, have someone appointed to be in charge of adding sobriety time
- Have a copy of the hotel contract at Conference – make sure you know what times

you have rooms available.

What Happens to the Money?

Host Committee Responsibility #9 states:

“The Host Committee Treasurer is responsible to provide the Advisory Council Treasurer with monthly financial transactions reports and balance sheets. The Host Committee will have 90 days from the conclusion of its conference to forward a financial statement and bank statements and check registers to the GCYPAA Advisory Council Treasurer. It is the responsibility of the newly elected Advisory Council Members to ensure that these tasks are completed within a 90 day period. The Host Committee Treasurer will be prepared to sign the Federal Tax Return covering their conference activities upon request.”

This requirement is meant to assure that each Conference will contribute to the ongoing mission of GCYPAA to carry the message of recovery to those in need, particularly young alcoholics in Georgia.

Rolling on to The Advisory Council

The Host Committee should elect 3 of its members to roll on to the Advisory Council before its Conference as well

as 3 alternates. These new advisory members should attend the Advisory business meetings at their Conference.

Continued service to GCYPAA through its Advisory Council is a special responsibility. For more information on the Advisory Council's work, please read the next Section of this Guidebook.