

Share & Reapply: Spotlight on Success

Inspiring Excellence in AFP Chapters

At AFP Berks Regional Chapter, we believe in the power of sharing success stories to inspire and elevate our community of fundraising professionals. One of our proudest moments from the previous year was the successful implementation of our NPD Breakfast.

About the NPD Breakfast: Our NPD Breakfast recognizes outstanding philanthropists, community groups, volunteers, youth, corporations, foundations, and fundraising professionals for their contributions to the local Berks County community. Here's a brief overview of what it entailed:

- **Objective:** The primary goal of the NPD Breakfast was to recognize members of the community who are making a difference and raising awareness for philanthropy in our area.
- **Key Strategies:** We employed the following key strategies to achieve our goal:
 - **Adapting the Event to Meet Changing Needs:** Prior to COVID, we continued to use the postal service for save-the-date cards, award nominations, sponsorship solicitations, invitations, and thank-you letters, and the use of technology during an event was limited to a slideshow of photos. In 2020, however, we had to pivot to a completely digital format, including our celebration, which was pre-recorded and distributed electronically that year. Since then, all communication, with the exception of sponsor solicitation, has been handled electronically. For us, the use of technology during the in-person event has become less arduous – more easily embraced. In 2022, we honored the “Anonymous” Donor and asked three local nonprofits to self-record their stories regarding an anonymous gift that had a large impact on their organization. Those stories were incorporated into the breakfast and were well received by the morning’s attendees.
 - **Significant recognition of our award recipients:** AFP Berks Regional Chapter sends out a request to its membership, as well as the nonprofit community, asking for nominations via electronic form. All categories have board-approved descriptions and qualifiers for considerations, with special consideration to those nominations that meet the needs of, and represent, our diverse community. An ad-hoc committee of volunteers is selected each year to review the submitted forms and make recommendations to the board. Once recommendations are approved and winners notified, the awards are announced via social media and through a press release to the local news media. These awardees are honored at the event with a hand-made bowl and an opportunity to be presented the bowl on stage. Additionally, our nonprofit partners also have the opportunity to be “Friend Sponsors” at the event for \$500 and honor a volunteer as a “Distinguished Honoree” who is awarded a plaque. All awardees receive on-screen recognition at the event and in the program book.
- **Results:** The NPD Breakfast delivered remarkable results, including:

- In 2023, we honored a Youth in Philanthropy recipient, six-year-old Colton Brady, for his 'Raisin' Kindness' initiative. The Berks County Community Foundation contributed \$1,000 at the NPD breakfast to his kindness campaign.
- Including flyers about Be the Cause on the tables generated donations for our chapter.

Why our NPD Breakfast Matters: The NPD Breakfast is significant because it celebrates the spirit of philanthropy and recognizes individuals and organizations making a difference in our community. By highlighting their contributions, we inspire others to get involved and make a positive impact.

How You Can Replicate our NPD Breakfast: We believe that the success of our NPD Breakfast can be replicated by other AFP chapters. Here are the key steps to consider:

1. **Assess Your Chapter's Needs:** Identify specific needs or challenges within your chapter or community that a similar event could address.
2. **Create an Engaged Committee:** Our NPD event is co-led by two active board members who oversee a seven-person committee, consisting of both board and community members. The committee is responsible for all aspects of the event from award nomination solicitation and selection, to sponsorship solicitation, to invitations and day-of logistics. The board president, vice-president, and chapter administrator also assist as needed and have key roles day-of. An ad-hoc award selection committee of community members is engaged to help review nominations for the selection of awards. We have found that for our chapter and community, this structure works well. Many of our colleagues within the fundraising sector are happy to lend a hand with last minute, day-of requests – whether that be videos to share at the events, photos of their constituents, or testimonials of impact from funds raised – all to tell the story of how philanthropy plays an important role in Berks County.
3. **Resource Allocation:** As a small chapter, we work diligently to ensure that our NPD event is profitable so that we can support future educational events and scholarship opportunities for our members. We do not have an exhibitor area, but our breakfast has an average of 25 sponsors each year with sponsorship levels ranging from \$500 to \$2,500. We average between 200-225 guests, with the majority of those coming from sponsors. The success of the sponsorship often has a direct correlation with their relationship to, or as, the award recipient. We noticed that companies who are being honored usually contribute at a higher level that year and return to their previous level in subsequent years. Approximately 70% of sponsors return on an annual basis. We also have developed partnerships to encourage in-kind contributions from vendors such as the event center/hotel and the AV production company.
4. **Engage Your Community:** Over the past few years, we have tried to make our NPD events more interactive by providing activities that encouraged guests to become more engaged in their community. In 2022, we honored the "Anonymous Donor" during our annual NPD breakfast. We invited three area NPOs to speak to how anonymous giving impacted their organizations – one of the gifts being the largest anonymous gifts in Berks County. And we invited attendees to then pay it forward by sharing 'Acts of Kindness' cards. We also awarded the Youth in Philanthropy Award to Maddie Campbell, whose family owns Baldwin Brass in West Reading, PA. Maddie had designed a peace ornament, manufactured by her family's company, of which 100% of the

proceeds went to Safe Berks, a domestic violence and sexual assault support organization. At the end of the event, Maddie sold out of all of her ornaments and had created a waiting list.

5. **Share Your Success:** Once you've achieved success with your event, share your results, best practices, and lessons learned with other chapters and the AFP community.

Get Started Today: We encourage you to consider adopting a similar event to our NPD Breakfast to make a positive impact on your chapter and community. Together, we can continue to elevate the fundraising profession and create lasting change.

For more information or to contact our team for insights and guidance, please contact afpberks@gmail.com.

Let's share success, inspire change, and make a difference together!