



Midwestern Ohio Association Uses Grant to Turn Pig Roast and Auction into Successful RPAC Fundraiser—January 2013

When you're small, it helps to be resourceful, creative, and well-connected. It also doesn't hurt to have access to a few pick-up trucks, professional auctioneers, and someone willing to roast a pig. The 460-member Midwestern Ohio Association of REALTORS® (MOAR) proved this in 2012, by parlaying an RPAC Fundraising Partnership Program grant from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® into three-times the amount, which accounted for 70 percent of its total RPAC contribution for the year.

Jennifer Zeller, MOAR's Executive Officer, explains that the association's board had set a goal to increase RPAC receipts in 2012. "We serve a mostly rural membership, which held flat last year, with many members just hanging on paying their dues, so it felt pretty ambitious. But we're proud of our record of meeting our RPAC-contribution goals, and we're always promoting its importance." When she applied for and received a \$2,500 grant from NAR's RPAC Fundraising Partnership Program, she knew that every penny had to pull its weight.

"We simply don't have the budget to absorb any event expenses at all, whether it's a holiday party or a political fundraiser. An auction gives us the biggest bang for our buck. People enjoy the festive, competitive atmosphere; plus, they get to come away with something – all for a good cause. We could never attract enough folks to a dinner party with an expensive band, to make it work."

To keep expenses down, the June 2012 auction was held outdoors in a lakeside party pavilion at a state park, central to the six counties that MOAR serves. Guests were asked to bring desserts. The funds from NAR paid for the venue, the picnic-style food (including the hog, roasted off-site by a helpful member,) decorations, and 3'x5' American flags for all who attended the Flag Day event. In the past, MOAR had put all ticket-sale revenue toward the event cost, but thanks to the grant, it was able to count the \$10 ticket sales as pure profit for RPAC.

Donations were solicited from members and affiliates, and ranged from a gas grill to bottles of wine. With the remaining funds from the NAR grant, MOAR bought attractive high-bid items like iPads and Kindles, as well as a few 7' high "Open House" yard signs and plenty of Ohio State Buckeye paraphernalia. A \$50-and-under silent auction table assured that there'd be something for everyone, and the rest was auctioned off compliments of the members who volunteered their professional auctioneering services. "We had about 50 items," notes Zeller, "about two hours of live auction, which was great entertainment for the nearly 80 people who came. The electronics that the grant enabled us to purchase really drove the numbers up fast; that, and of course, anything in Ohio State colors!"



When the dust had settled, the auction had raised \$7,680 -- \$2,200 more than the previous year's receipts.

Zeller admits that a do-it-yourself auction is a lot of work. Hours before the event she led a convoy of pick-up trucks packed to the gills with donated items, bottled water, and a whole lot of pulled pork, on a delivery run to the state park -- stopping along the way to pick up ice. Yet, her MOAR board met recently to discuss fundraising for 2013, and unanimously decided to do it again, in the same location. "We're brainstorming themes," she laughs, "Crazy Hats? Something fun, anyway, and we'll waive the local dues for the best one, to up the incentive."

To learn more about how the REALTORS® of Midwestern Ohio increased their RPAC receipts and had fun doing it, contact Jennifer Zeller, MOAR's Executive Officer, at Jennifer@MOARRealtors.com or 937-335-8501.



Top Left: Connie Strobel ,Brenda Cavinder, Tammy Lewis and Nancy Eubanks enjoy picnic while supporting RPAC.

Top Right: Jon Hall, 2012 MOAR RPAC Chairman and auctioneer for the event.

Bottom Center: Richard Brownlee receives his REALTOR® Emeritus award.