

Fundraising Event Manual

Dear PAGER family, friend and supporter:

On behalf of everyone at the Pediatric Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux Association (PAGER), we would like to extend our sincere thanks for your interest in helping us boost our awareness and fundraising efforts. Whether you have been a PAGER member for ages or are new to the gastroesophageal reflux community, your active participation means the world to us.

We've compiled the Fundraising Event Manual to help us work together to make your event a success. It is based on a manual called Participation Matters, produced by the Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy. We greatly appreciate their permission to modify their manual.

Are you planning an “Event” or a “gathering of friends”?

Your fundraiser is an “event” if you can answer yes to any of these questions:

- Are you going to be advertising the event?
- Is the event going to be open to the public or will you be asking the public for donations?
- Are there going to be people attending that you don't know?
- Does it involve any high risk activity like sports, or activities requiring a license like gambling, raffles?
- Will you be asking local businesses to donate merchandise?
- Are you expecting to be reimbursed for any expenses?

If you are just going to have a small fundraiser involving your friends and family, we don't consider this an “event” and you don't need to do the whole application. Just follow these simple rules:

- Make sure your event is tasteful and safe.
- Donations should be made directly to PAGER and never be deposited into any bank account other than PAGER's account. (It's illegal.) If you gather cash, purchase a money order and put the name and address of the donor on the money order before you mail it to PAGER.
- Send the money soon. Banks often won't take checks older than 60 days.
- Consider sending PAGER a short news item about your event for the newsletter. Photos are good.
- Write Thank You Notes – PAGER is designing some.
- You can still notify the press – AFTER your event.
- Have fun.

So you decided to host an Event

Wonderful! Together we can help children and families with GERD understand the disease so that the children get diagnosed and treated quickly. You can make a difference!

We ask that you carefully review this booklet and keep it handy. It contains important legal procedures that are necessary to follow when hosting an event on behalf of PAGER Association.

Sorry about all the rules

PAGER Association is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. This nonprofit status is crucial to our ability to work toward our mission and violating fundraising rules can cause us to lose our tax exempt status. You can help by following the rules in this booklet.

Brainstorming your event

The first step in hosting an event is to come up with an idea that excites you. If have trouble deciding what type of event to host, give us a call. We will do our best to offer suggestions. Choose the type of event that best reflects your personality, is rewarding for you and one that you have the time and the resources to manage. What about a dinner for friends? A “house party” where you invite a band? Your bookstore or library may have books with descriptions of fun events. You might find some interesting ideas on the internet. Try typing in the name of your favorite hobby or sport and the word “fundraiser” or “charity.” What about a non-serious sport like whiffle ball or kick ball?

Choose a name that reflects three things: the kind of event you are having, the family it is benefiting and gastroesophageal reflux. For instance, “The Smith Family Mini Golf Tournament to wipe out GERD” or “Bike for Mike and GERD.” (Names like “Michael’s Challenge,” or “Race for Tim” are vague and may be confusing to first-time event attendees.)

Form a Team

Events can be overwhelming. Form a committee or team to help you plan, coordinate and execute your event. PAGER Association often works with families who try to organize their event alone. It can be done, but it certainly adds a lot of pressure on that one family, to do everything. We have had times when a family member has an emergency and the event falls apart.

We suggest gathering a group of family and friends that you can trust and depend on (for deadlines, assistance, honesty, etc.). Sharing responsibilities also makes everyone more invested in the success — and fun — of the event!

Once you have determined who will be on your event committee, organize a kickoff meeting to review the timeline and delegate tasks. By making these decisions early, you help give everyone involved an idea of what you expect from their participation.

Ideally, you should try to organize your committee with real “go getters.” It takes a certain type of fearless person who is committed to the cause to solicit auction items, sponsorships and donations. This

is also a great opportunity to involve those family members and friends who always ask, "What can I do to help?" By inviting them to be on your event committee and by assigning them tasks, you empower them to create change in the GERD community.

Before you do a lot of planning, CONTACT us

The next step is to inform PAGER Association about any event you want to carry out in its name or under its logo before you get started. You do this by filling out an application that describes the event you want to host. By providing PAGER Association with this information in advance, we will be able to better assist you as you begin planning your event.

Within two weeks, the PAGER Association staff will check the rules in your state and see if we need to pay registration fees or purchase licenses before you can hold your event. Many states allow small events without requiring registration fees. Some states require significant fees that make public events costly. The PAGER Association staff will also check with our insurance company to see if they are willing to insure the event and if there will be any cost for the coverage.

Request PAGER Materials

After you've called us to discuss your event idea and have an organized plan, please contact us to discuss what materials might help you promote, publicize, or support your fundraising efforts. Our materials range from brochures and fact sheets to banners, flyers, buttons, etc. We offer materials free of charge to help you promote our mission and to help raise awareness of pediatric GERD. Our only request is that you return any unused items. This helps us maintain a healthy supply of materials and reduce the cost to produce them.

We offer "swiss cheese" documents that you customize by filling in the blanks. We are developing templates for press releases, donation letters, thank you notes, flyers, etc. We can help you design anything else you need.

Before you print any materials, please send a draft copy of invitations, tickets, programs, press releases etc., to the PAGER Association office. We need to approve these materials and will offer suggestions.

Always use the entire name of our organization: "Pediatric Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux Association" PLUS our web site "www.reflux.org" at least once in all of the printed materials and publicity. Gastroesophageal Reflux also needs to be fully spelled out at least once. After the first time, you can use abbreviations.

We will also supply you with materials about GERD to put on an educational table at your event.

Using the funds

PAGER is committed to using part of the funds you raise in your local community. Think about how you would like to see some of the money used. Would you like to arrange a lecture by a local doctor? Some donors may ask you about this. A large portion of the funds goes to PAGER's operating/outreach budget.

ACCEPTING DONATIONS

PAGER Association has a legal responsibility to accurately report its income using generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) for nonprofits. Please follow the guidelines listed below to help us keep track of proceeds from your event.

Please ensure that all checks and donations are made out to: "Pediatric Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux Association" or "PAGER Association." Clearly note your event name somewhere on each check. You can also note the name of the fundraiser or "In honor of..."

PAGER can also provide you with Credit Card Information forms that will allow you to take credit card donations at your event. We do not send actual credit card processing machines. Please fill the forms in completely. The correct name, address and zip code are ALL needed or the charge might be rejected.

If you receive cash donations, please go to your local bank or grocery store and get a bank check or a money order issued to PAGER Association for the total cash amount. Turn this in with all the other checks. You must record the full name and address of the donor on the money order or bank check.

Please bundle your donations together and mail them to PAGER all at the same time if possible. Make photocopies of all checks and event-related correspondence. For safety reasons, you should not keep copies of credit card charge slips – make a list of the charges without the credit card information. When you collect donations and in-kind items for your event, please use the carbonless copy forms and mail one set to PAGER's Maryland office. Keeping copies for yourself will provide a cross-reference, if there are any problems, and will also provide you with a list from which to write personal thank-you notes.

If you deposit a check made out to PAGER Association into your bank account, this is considered "co-mingling" funds which is not allowed. If your donors make a check payable to you, then they haven't actually made a "donation" to PAGER Association and won't get the tax deduction. Opening an account for PAGER at your bank is not legal.

Please keep track of how much time your whole team puts in. On our yearly financial documents, each hour of volunteer labor counts as \$19.51 "donation."

Submit

Please mail donations, donor information and any additional event correspondence to PAGER Association's office within 30 days after your event. Our address is PO Box 486, Buckeystown, MD 21717.

If your donors wish to mail their contribution directly to the PAGER Association office, please ask them to write your family's name somewhere on the check.

The donor's information is entered into PAGER Association's database with a note that they made a contribution via your fundraiser. The donor's information is not shared with any other individuals,

organizations, or corporations. Individuals in our database may receive information directly from PAGER Association in the future, including information they have requested or information about other PAGER Association events and activities in their area. We won't send them much and they can easily get off our mailing list.

Expense Reimbursement

PAGER Association recognizes that hosting an event often means spending some money. If you don't need to be reimbursed, please tell us what you spent and we can give you a "donation" letter for your taxes. You may also be able to deduct mileage for event related travel. Ask your tax professional.

If you want to be reimbursed, we can reimburse you for up to 30% of the total donations. Foundations and corporations look at our fundraising expenses when they are considering making a grant or donation. Any expenses which exceed 30% of the donations can't be reimbursed.

Once the checks you collect clear the bank, PAGER Association is happy to reimburse you for event-related expenses. All expenses must be reported on PAGER Association's expense reimbursement form and submitted with corresponding receipts. For more information on expense reimbursement, please contact Beth Anderson at 301-213-9533 or gergroup@aol.com

Send Thank You Notes

One phrase commonly used in the nonprofit sector is "thank before you bank." This phrase simply underscores the importance of sending tax receipts and thank-you letters in a timely fashion after an event.

All tax receipts must be issued from the PAGER Association corporate office in order to comply with Federal Law. However, we also encourage you, the fundraising host, send a personal "thank you." In your note, you may want to include a sentence that states, "Keep an eye out for your official tax receipt in the mail from PAGER Association." Once donations are received in the PAGER Association's office, we input each check and issue "thank you" letters and tax receipts. This process usually takes anywhere from 1-3 weeks.

Getting Event Announcements in the Media

Hosting a PAGER Association fundraising event in your community is a terrific opportunity to get media attention. Announcements give you the chance to invite more people AND raise awareness about pediatric gastroesophageal reflux (GER) in your community. Articles can appear before or after your event and raise awareness of the disease.

You don't have to be a seasoned public relations professional or publicist to capture the attention of editors and reporters. However, you have a better chance of getting your event "covered" if you know more about how the process works.

Editors and reporters receive LOTS of event announcements. It often takes lots of friendly follow-up and persistence to break through the clutter in a newsroom. Your biggest strength is your passion and enthusiasm for — and accurate knowledge of — pediatric GERD.

As with any form of communications, know your audience. Before you even start contacting the media, compile an accurate media list. Find the names of editors and reporters who report on related topics, such as community-, health- or science-related topics. In other words, find out their "beat." You can often find their contact information (phone, fax, email) and instructions for submitting a story idea online or in a hard copy of the publication.

Here are some reporters most likely to cover your story:

Newspapers – Features Editor, Calendar Editor, Health Reporter, Metro Desk

Television stations – Assignment Desk, News Desk or Health Reporter

Radio news stations – News Desk

Newsletters – Editors of newsletters that focus on a hobby/sport related to your event

Create a Pitch

A “pitch” is used to make an editor or a reporter sit up and take interest in your story. It is usually an extremely short version of your story. One way to think of a pitch is to imagine that a reporter asks you about your event and they only let you have the microphone for 30-45 seconds. How can you make it sound interesting in that short time? Some organizations call this your “elevator speech” – short enough to tell a stranger in an elevator.

Focus on the event and the disease rather than the time and place of the event. For instance, why would your event or your personal story be of interest to their readers? Why are you hosting a fundraising event? The two most important things to remember: keep it brief and give them a compelling reason why they should cover your story.

Prepare a Press Release

Writing press releases is not an exact science. You can write your own, or you can use the “swiss cheese” version of the press release on the next page. Just fill in the holes and replace the word HOMETOWN with the correct information. Keep it short – under two pages total.

Pediatric/Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux Association, Inc.

**PAGER
Association**

P.O. Box 486
Buckeystown, MD 21717-486
(301) 601-9541 message center

<http://www.reflux.org>
gergroup@aol.com
501(c)(3) # 52-1800883



Press Release

For Immediate Release: [Date]

Contact: [Your name,
Phone,
Email]

[catchy headline like:] **HOMETOWN FAMILY HOSTS A PUT OUT THE FIRE™ CHILI COOK-OFF**

or **HOMETOWN FAMILY HOSTS A [EVENT TYPE] TO RAISE AWARENESS OF ACID REFLUX IN CHILDREN**

(HOMETOWN NAME IN CAPS, STATE ABBREVIATION) – [A bold statement with your child’s name and age. For instance:] Five-year-old Brandon Smith is a fighter. And the name of his toughest opponent is acid reflux.

[Insert 1-3 sentences about how it affects your child. Use his name. Be specific. Add a sentence about how it affects the family.

On [event date], [your son’s name] family and friends will host a [type of event] at [event location] to raise awareness of acid reflux in children. The family hopes to inspire the [your city/town’s name] community to come out, have fun and make a generous contribution in support of children with acid reflux.

[Use a quote something like this:] “We want everyone to know more about GERD in children,” said [your full name]. “Our [type of event] is a fun way to raise awareness, but the purpose of the event is very serious because many parents do not recognize early signs of reflux in children. Without awareness, children don’t get a proper diagnosis or treatment and they continue to be in pain.”

[Consider a quote from a local doctor. Sometimes it works best if you help if you ask them to say something specific and then have them put it in their own words. What can they say that will add to the story and add credibility at the same time?]

Event Details

Who: [your family name & any other community partners]

What: [name of event]

Where: [address, intersection, location and directions, if needed]

When: [day, month, date, year, time frame]

Why: [To raise awareness of pediatric GERD and encourage parents to discuss symptoms with their doctor . . .]

Additional info: [Ticket price, bring lots of dollar bills to vote, what food and activities are available, etc]

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About Pediatric GERD

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is estimated to affect 7 million children in the United States. Nearly 2 million children in the US are on prescription medications for GERD. GERD is excessive backwashing of stomach acid into the esophagus and mouth. The most common symptoms are: constant 'colic' or sudden crying; a need to be held upright most of the day; poor sleeping habits; night waking in pain; throwing up, spitting up, sour burps, sour breath or almost vomiting; picky eating; poor weight gain; stomach ache above the belly button, pain behind breastbone, pain in the front of the neck, heartburn; babies may arch backwards from pain.

About PAGER Association

Pediatric Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux Association (PAGER) is a national nonprofit organization started in 1992. Their website, www.reflux.org, has 300 [check] information pages, 61,000 [check] searchable postings by families and takes 2.1 million hits [check] per month.

Interviews Available

[Your family's name], PAGER Association executive staff, and experts on GERD in children are available for interviews. [Only list doctors with their permission and only if they seem enthusiastic. They will probably only want to talk about the disease, but you can give them permission to talk about your child.]

When you think you are done with the press release, have somebody who is a good writer critique it. PAGER staff also need to review it and put it on letterhead. Can the reader find all the essential facts quickly? Does the event sound fun? Does the disease information and personal story make you care?

Sending the Release

After you've personalized your press release and had it approved, you're ready to send it via fax or email to the contacts on your media list. Be mindful of publications' deadlines. In some instances, they need to be notified six weeks before the event in order to be included in the calendar listing.

After you distribute your press release to your media list, be sure follow up. Editors and reporters are typically under deadline and have a lot going on, so give them a few days to get to it. Then pursue your first round of follow up with a call or email.

The first task is to learn whether they even received the release. "Did you receive the press release or do you need another copy? Can I answer any questions about the event or the disease?" Gauge their interest in covering your story and stress that you're available to help. Be friendly, yet persistent. Never be demanding.

Don't be discouraged if it takes you several attempts to reach an editor or reporter. Follow-up, whether it's the first-round or third-round, is a great opportunity to stay in the reporter's mind and build a relationship. Sometimes just a friendly, 30-second conversation can go a long way.

Tips for talking to reporters

Start a notebook with a clean page for every media outlet. Leave lots of room for scribbling names of alternate reporters, e-mail addresses and fax numbers as well as deadlines

When you have an actual conversation with a reporter, here are few things to keep in mind:

- If a reporter calls you, try hard to talk without having to call back. If you really can't talk at that moment, ask the reporter if they are on deadline. Try to arrange a time to talk later that day if possible – before they move on to another story and you lose their attention.
- Know the five "Ws" of your event: who, what, when, where, why (and how).
- Have list handy with the things you hope the reporter will mention in addition to the 5 Ws. Make your key points as simply and as possible.
 - It is very common. Example or fact here.
 - It is very easy miss. Example or fact here.
 - It is VERY hard. Example or fact here.
 - It really impacted our family. Example or fact here.
 - It is very painful. Example or fact here.
 - Treatment helps. Example or fact here.

- What else do you want the reporter to know? Example or fact here.
- Have engaging examples or anecdotes to tell your personal story. Can you tell your favorite “how stressful was it” story in 60 seconds? Would you rather walk on broken glass than hear your baby cry? What is a typical day like? Can you tell it so the reporter really “gets it”?
- Make your event sound fun. Invite the reporter and their family. Offer free tickets and FOLLOW UP. Do you want to set up an escort or interviews during the event? Key people can wear “interview me!” badges during the event.
- Be familiar with the publication and its audience. Kids? Adults? Local? Regional? Cooking?
- Be truthful and direct. If you are simplifying an answer, mention this so you don’t sound like you are lying when you are really just editing out confusing details. If your child has other medical issues in addition to reflux, don’t let this muddle the story too much.
- When you’ve made your point, stop speaking. Don’t feel like you have to keep talking. People often speak nervously to fill the silence, which may dilute their original, well-articulated point. Give the reporter a chance to make notes on what you just said!!
- If you can’t answer a question, admit it and offer to get the information for the reporter as soon as possible. (Be sure to follow up!)
- Be confident and relaxed. Your experiences really do make you an expert on GERD.
- A successful interview is often a conversation, not an inquisition.
- Be sure you understand the question before you answer. If you’re not sure what the reporter is asking, say so. It’s OK to ask a reporter to back up or rephrase a question.
- Be aware of saying things “off the record” There is no such thing - what you say can be quoted.
- Never say ANYTHING bad about any doctor or hospital. If somebody missed the diagnosis, don’t give their name or facility. It is better to avoid this topic or gloss over it so you don’t sound bitter. And remember, PAGER needs to be seen as constructive and helpful, not destructive and whiny.
- Try to say at least one positive thing about how reflux has affected you or your child.
- If you can’t discuss certain topics or issues, give a reason why and be as nice as you can.
- There are many ways to give a “non-answer” answer. You can redirect the conversation by saying, “I don’t know about that, but what I can tell you is ...”
- Don’t be afraid to show emotion. This is a very emotional topic for you and your family. Emotion helps other families out there really connect with your message and be inspired by your story.

Press Placement

PAGER Association would appreciate receiving a copy of all press coverage you receive, so we can keep our media records as accurate and up-to-date as possible.

Please do not be discouraged if your press releases and story ideas do not get placed. For whatever reason, many press releases slip by the wayside and never make it to print. Your efforts are still worth it, and we appreciate all the time you've spent. And the reporter may call you to do a story in the future when there is a slow news day.

Third Party Fundraiser Application

If you wish to hold an event to benefit PAGER Association, please complete this form and return for approval. PAGER Association, PO Box 486, Buckeystown, MD 21717

Contact Name: _____

Name of Organization/Company (if applicable) _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Event Name: _____

Describe Event:

Event Date: _____ Rain Date (if applicable): _____

Event Hours: _____ Event Location: _____

Projected Attendance: _____ Is the event open to the public? YES NO

How will funds be raised? Ticket prices? Auction? _____

Fundraising Goal: _____

Sponsors (potential or confirmed): _____

Any other planning details you would like to share:

Names, address, phone and e-mail of two other key team members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I understand PAGER’s guidelines for third party fundraiser and agree to abide by them.

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: APPROVED DENIED

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions about completing this form or about your event, contact Beth Anderson at 301-213-9533 or gergroup@aol.com

Materials to develop: Auction item solicitation letter, form to keep track of phone calls to reporters, cute thank you notes, some timeline ideas. How to create an effective banner/shirt/flyer. Miscellaneous ideas list like having key people wear “interview me” badges. We need our new logo on letterhead and need to develop specific Press Release letterhead.