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LET'S GET TOGETHER — MAYBE?

By Rosemary Keane, Communications Director, Schuylkill River Greenways

Non-profits depend on in-person events to reach donors, extend the reach of their mission, and attain a level of respect and recognition in their communities. While most events have been cancelled or transitioned to remote or hybrid over the last two years, getting together in person is back.

But it's not the same. Organizations cannot just pick up where they left off. Here are some ways to make your back-to-in-person event a success:

- Make it worth their time (and money): People have realigned priorities post-Covid. They are working remotely, working hybrid, or just enjoying more autonomy and flexibility in their work life. They expect the same in their free time. After two years of "showing up" in pajamas, many people need coaxing back to in person events-so make them attractive and exciting.

- Make it safe: While in-person events are generally considered safe since vaccines and boosters, it's important to be mindful that some of your attendees may feel differently. Offering low-contact food options, requiring vaccinations, and allowing for social distancing are all good

ways to show that you are concerned for the health of your audience.

- Make it affordable. Companies and people have tightened their belts and budgets in the last two years. Once it became obvious that travel, events, and conferences weren't a necessity, budgets for those items were slashed. A \$250 a head gala might need to become a \$75 cookout to ease attendees back to events.

- Make time to mingle: Networking has been a casualty of Covid and in person events can bring it back. While getting back to small talk may feel awkward, having downtime between planned events can create an organic space for your attendees to have conversations and make connections, something that was nearly impossible to do while logging off their fourth Zoom meeting of the day.

The landscape of events has changed since 2020, but the need for connection and meaning has stayed the same. As we all learn to reinvent and reevaluate the way we gather, keeping focused on the mission of our organizations and the needs of our communities will be the key to success.

For additional information, please call 484.945.0200 and visit www.schuylkillriver.org.

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