

Seattle Prep's Fund-A-Need (FAN) Campaign

Background

"Fund-A-Need" (aka FAN or "Raise the Paddle") and its occasional guest speaker, have been part of Prep's auction for years. In the last 5 years, I added a video, pre- and post-event solicitation of select individuals, inclusion in the online auction, a FAN webpage on the school website, and post-event postcard, creating a "micro-campaign" out of what had been 15-minutes of the live auction.

In the last six years, FAN raised between \$200k to \$450k/year, depending on the initiative and pre-event fundraising. The primary expenses are staff time, video production, printing, postage and credit card processing fees. These are a separate part of the auction budget (excluding staff).

Calendar Overview

Prep's auction is the Friday before Thanksgiving. Parents are the target audience. The FAN campaign starts in early fall with identification of the "need." The majority of video and collateral production takes place in October and early November. The thank you postcard goes out the week of Thanksgiving. The email solicitation goes out the same week, or the week after, depending on the school's participation in Giving Tuesday. Prep does not generally promote Giving Tuesday. The campaign is mostly finished before December.

Selecting the "Need"

The President identifies one initiative or "need" that needs a funding infusion. It can be a line in the operating budget, a new or deferred capital expense, or another school "priority" that might not otherwise be funded in the near future. The FAN strategy works best if this is one-time need for one purpose.

Prep's most successful initiatives centered on beloved individuals (e.g. retiring teachers/priests) and surprise naming announcements (renaming the program/fund after a teacher). Any initiative that appeals to the greater community or "tugs at the heartstrings" should be effective.

Depending on the year, the FAN could even be a need for another less-affluent Catholic school or external school partner. This is a great way to demonstrate the Jesuit ethos of being a community for others.

Ideally the cost of the initiative is within reach of the community's capacity. Advance fundraising helps increase the odds of success, even if the goal isn't published.

Prep's FAN Campaign Snapshot

Year	FAN	Goal & Raised	Announcement / Call to Action	Speaker	Public content
2014	Tuition Assistance	\$100k	n/a	Young alumnae and former scholarship recipient who now works at the school	n/a
2015	Tuition Assistance for graduates of Seattle Nativity School (@ Prep)	\$200k Raised \$400k	n/a	President	n/a
2016	Fr. Paul Fitterer, SJ Endowment and capital expenses for Jesuit terrace	Unofficial goal - grow endowment to \$1.25M for 125 th anniversary Raised \$450k+	This was Fr. Fitterer's last year at Prep. The funds raised honored his commitment to the school and Jesuit education throughout his career.	President	Fr. Paul endowment webpage
2017	Student Support Fund	\$250k Raised \$300k+	The SSF was renamed for Kathy Krueger, the soon-to-retire school counselor who managed it for years. Kathy became the p/t alumni director for the next few years before retiring fully in 2020.	President	Krueger SSF webpage
2018	Learning Resource Center capital improvements and Learning Resource Center Endowment	\$250k Raised \$400k+	The LRC was renamed for founder/teacher Regina Melonson and the LRC endowment was renamed for Regina and her husband Wayne (RIP), a past parent and former board member.	Alumnae who used the LRC in the early days of the program (1990s)	Melonson LRC webpage
2019	Capital improvements for Ohno Field at Montlake	\$350k Raised \$350k	Ohno Field is the school's primary practice field, located at a city park. The turf installed in 2012 needs replacing in order to retain scheduling priority.	Athletic Director and President	Ohno Field webpage

Laying the Groundwork

Prep's gift officers (Director of Development, Director of Individual Giving) build a strategy to solicit members of the school community for donations and commitments in advance. This includes auction

guests (usually parents) who will raise the paddle that night at the highest levels and non-auction guests (usually alumni, past parents and major donors) who will commit to a gift in advance.

*The auctioneer should not mention a giving level to the crowd unless there is at least 1 donor planted in the room at that level. If the donor is not present, a staff person can raise their paddle in absentia.

Advance gifts are focused on \$ raised, not number of donors. They do not need to correspond to giving levels for the night of the auction except for the top level or two. Parities (giving levels) for the event can correspond to specific pieces of the initiative or be generic. Stretch the community, but include a level for everyone. Five to six levels is usually sufficient.

Collateral

Prep's Director of Individual Giving (Katrina Freeburg) is responsible for all content production for the Fund-A-Need Campaign. Samples available upon request.

- Invitation text
- Catalogue page
- Online auction item text
- Webpage and giving form
- Video
- Guest speaker
- Thank you postcard
- Solicitation email
- Text for written FAN TY letters/tax receipts

Timeline

The initial announcement of FAN is made to the parent community through the auction invitation. FAN is sometimes included as an item in the online auction, which is run one week prior to the event. Prep also sends a weekly auction email to parents in the 2 ½ months prior to the event; FAN is included at least once. Faculty/staff also get the pre-event emails and invitation.

FAN is part of the live auction, placed towards the middle of the evening. Logistics are described below.

The thank you postcard is prepared in advance. The day after the event, the graphic designer receives a photo from the event and (estimated) dollar raised. Postcards are printed over the weekend (usually at Office Depot) and picked up by development staff on Monday/Tuesday. Mailing labels are also printed in advance using the auction registration list. Not every auction guest gives to FAN, so not every guest gets a postcard, but the goal is to thank donors as quickly as possible. The gift officers hand-address postcards to pre-event donors and silent auction donors who did not attend the auction.

The webpage is also prepared in advance. The video production team creates a “non-auction” version of the FAN video (deleting the opening and closing slide), which is delivered to the school (webmaster) the day of the event. The webpage with an online donation form goes live the day *after* the event.

An email soliciting segments (or all) of the alumni and past parent community goes out the week following the auction. The email includes a link to the video and webpage, along with any matching challenges issued. (This solicitation follows Prep's Annual Fund by only a few weeks, and precedes the

year-end ask by only a few weeks, so it's not a heavy push.) Social media posts are frequently published the same week.

A button on the website homepage links directly to the FAN page for the remainder of the fiscal year. The fund is also added to the drop-down menu for the online giving form for the remainder of the fiscal year, sometimes longer.

[Auction Night](#)

1. Frequently the President will introduce the FAN from the podium as a way to quiet the room.
2. The video is shown, immediately followed by the guest speaker.
3. If there is no guest speaker, the President, or another well-known individual can make "the ask." If there is a challenge match, or dollars raised in advance, it is mentioned at this time.
4. The speaker cedes the mic to the auctioneer who begins the "bidding."
*See earlier note about giving levels.
5. Following the bidding, the back office runs a quick tally so it can be announced to the crowd 2-3 items later. A second tally is run by development staff after the event for publication in the postcard.
6. The Development team celebrates in the back of the room.

Contact [Katrina Freeburg](#), Director of Individual Giving for details at 206-577-2237.