Tips For Planning Successful Wabash Day Projects

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Thank you for being a Wabash Day Leader in your community. The following are suggestions and guides derived from experience. Each Wabash Day association has a great deal of autonomy except that it must (1) participate on the designated date, (2) avoid sectarian or ideological organizations or projects, (3) coordinate all publicity with the NAWM Wabash Committee or Jim Amidon's office, (4) submit an evaluation of Wabash Day, and (5) perform with the spirit of the resolution adopted by the NAWM.

Start Early

Start early--months before Wabash Day. Form a committee. Get contact information for alumni in your area.

When Wabash Day arrives, you want to have the right number of alumni and projects. You do not want to have too many alumni for too few projects, or too many projects for too few alumni.

Finding Alumni

You can get the names and contact information for alumni in your area from the Wabash website. If you prefer, the NAWM Wabash Day Committee can supply the names to you. The website is not 100% accurate because alumni do not always update their information.

Wabash Day is for family and friends. In 2006, about 72% of participants were alumni. While Wabash Day is open to family and friends, it is not open to the public.

Save-The-Date

Send save-the-date notices to alumni in your areas as soon as possible. You can choose the Saturday, Sunday, or both days of the designated Wabash Day, and your save-the-date notice may reflect that alumni should save both dates.

Finding Projects

Alumni have autonomy to pick and plan their projects. For obvious reasons, alumni should not be involved with a project that is or is perceived to be sectarian or politically ideological.

How do you find a project? Here are some tips. Alumni in your area may work at local non-profits or sit on their boards, or their family members do. Alumni have found those connections to be very useful and productive for finding projects. Many non-profit organizations have experience with volunteers. Call them. See whether they have any ideas for how you can help, or you may have an idea that you can propose to them.

See what alumni have done in past Wabash Days or will do for this year's Wabash Day. You can get ideas from reading your local newspaper or attending community fairs. Call other Wabash Day Leaders, or contact the NAWM Wabash Day Committee for assistance.

Your project should be a stand-alone project. Being part of a bigger event, such as a charity walk, tends to defeat objectives of Wabash Day. The same applies if you would want to be a partner with a business. Keep the projects as stand-alone projects.

Your project should also have a definite beginning and ending that can be completed within one day. Define the time frame for the project. Some projects, for example, may start at 9 a.m. and end at noon or start at 1 p.m. and end at 5 p.m., while others may start at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m., with volunteers working in shifts. Most favor the former type of arrangement.

If your project is to be outdoors, consider a back-up plan in case of bad weather.

If your project will be suitable for children, be sure to state the minimum age for the children, and you should confer with the non-profit about any age or other minimum qualification for volunteers.

Number of Projects.   One project will be best for small populations. Alumni with bigger populations may want to do more than one project or may have to have more than one. Multiple projects can include projects that are kid-friendly as well as projects strictly for adults.

Factors For Projects   Hammers-and-nails and other fix-up projects are fine. Keep in mind that they are not for everyone, and they may not be kid-appropriate. It is recommended that safety glasses be provided for volunteers involved in hammering, and that you take precaution for safety if ladders are used.

Set-Up   This is the physical layout and set up for the day's events. It will vary depending upon the project. If the project will be inside, you must assure access into and within the building.

Find out who at the nonprofit will be present during Wabash Day. That contact person and you should exchange contact information, especially cell phone numbers. You should coordinate the details such as what supplies (e.g., paint, ladders, etc.) the non-profit will provide. Arrangements for parking, traffic control, restrooms, and security need to be tied down.

Your set-up also includes good signage and directions for registration, work spots, pens, name tags, a Wabash banner or sign, and, if necessary, tools and supplies.

Whether inside or outside, you need to make sure ample water is available. A cooler with ice and refreshments is nice. Some non-profits, however, will provide refreshments.

You may want to visit the site before Wabash Day to check out the "lay of the land," determine ideas for the location of signage, etc.

Registration   There must be on-site registration for volunteers on Wabash Day. Name tags and Wabash Day hats need to be distributed. Names of all volunteers need to be legibly recorded, and this information must be turned in to the NAWM Wabash Day Committee immediately after you have finished.

Costs   Each local group of alumni will provide its own costs. No volunteer should have to pay to participate. Wabash Day hats are free.

Publicity   The college will assist on publicity. All publicity should be checked by the NAWM Wabash Day Committee or by Jim Amidon. You should have a committee member responsible for the publicity, who may have a little or a lot to do. Someone should be in charge of taking digital photographs and sending

them to the college immediately after Wabash Day. The photos should include the correct spelling of the name of each person in the photograph.

Social   Some alumni plan a picnic or other social gathering afterwards. These social events work well especially for associations that do not meet regularly.

Wrap-Up   You need to provide a post-Wabash Day report to the NAWM Wabash Day Committee. The Committee will provide forms and guides for your report.

Feel Free To Contact the Wabash Day Committee

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