

Kicking ‘Stache: How To Start and Run a Totally Sweet Mustaches for Kids Chapter. Document revised November 2009.

Overview

Mustaches for Kids is an annual Mustache-growing fundraiser that is held in cities throughout the United States and Canada. Through word of mouth enthusiasm and serendipitous internet searches, many individuals discover our organization and express interest in starting a chapter in their city, town, hamlet, or village. We applaud those who have the energy and motivation to step up and grow with us.

This document articulates a series of guidelines and advice for establishing and running a M4K chapter. We are a decentralized operation, so these instructions should be taken more as a summary of the spirit of our organization and not a firm prescription of how to do things. We always want to allow individual chapters some leeway to tailor their fundraiser to their own communities.

That said, no matter how many liberties you take with the overall organization of your chapter, we ask that you and your Growers strictly abide by the Mustache Growing Rules. This is MUSTACHES for Kids, after all. Not Creative Facial Hair for Kids. Or I-Started-To-Grow-A-Mustache-But-Decided-To-Turn-It-Into-A-Goatee For Kids.

More than anything, Mustaches for Kids is about attitude. Luckily, the type of person most likely to read about M4K and think, “I’ve found my calling” is probably someone who will intuitively understand the spirit of our organization. It is our hope that the following guidelines articulate the necessary nuts-and-bolts to help turn this energy into an organizational framework that allows Mustaches in your community to soar like beautiful eagles. Beautiful eagles with facial hair. Who happen to raise money for charity.

Charity/Fundraising

For the past two years, DonorsChoose.org has been the de facto ‘national charity’ of M4K. DonorsChoose is an amazing nonprofit organization and website that allows public school teachers to post otherwise unfunded classroom projects. Donors can give directly to the projects that interest them, based on criteria such as school location, project content, and students’ economic background. It’s an incredibly innovative framework for making a real difference in your community. DonorsChoose.org also happens to love M4K, and they’ve been incredibly helpful with administrative details, publicity, and Grower recruitment.

While we love DonorsChoose, Mustaches for Kids chapters are free to determine the charity (or charities) to which their donations will be directed. We trust that Chapter

organizers will be able to choose a recipient that best reflects the needs of their own communities and the philanthropic interests of their participants.

Chapter organizers are responsible administering donations. We strongly suggest setting up a PayPal account to facilitate online giving, as it's far more efficient and donor-friendly than collecting cash and checks. As M4K is not incorporated at this time (November 2009), all checks must be made out to the organization that will be benefiting from your efforts. (An additional plug for DonorsChoose.org is that they take care of all the financial and technical details of managing donations.) For donors seeking tax-deduction information, chapter organizers should consult their charities.

Rules

The founders of Mustaches for Kids established a series of Mustache growing rules that stand to this day. We have never seen the need to alter them, as they are comprehensive and just. Most of our chapters post the rules on their websites and chapter organizers are encouraged to cut, paste, and edit as needed. However, please note that our two most important rules—that faces, minus the mustache, must be shaved a minimum of one time per week and that the Mustache may only extend from “corner to corner”—should be strictly observed.

Calendar

Growing Season typically lasts for four weeks, roughly between Thanksgiving and Christmas. We have found that the holiday season, while a busy time of year, is one when charitable impulses are most likely to be acted upon. In addition, the increase in large-scale social events (office parties, family gatherings, etc) and alcoholic consumption during this time period provides a concentrated context for Mustache exposure and the solicitation of donations. We receive many inquiries about running fundraisers during other times of the year. While we always encourage the convergence Mustache growth and charity and will never veto an alternate Growing Season, we would like to emphasize the intangible appeal of following the standard calendar. The we're-in-this-together spirit that comes with having hundreds of partners-in-'stache cannot be replicated during other times of the year.

That said, a typical Growing Season calendar might look something like this:

Week 1: Shaving Day. This is the official kickoff of Growing Season. Per Mustache growing rules, all participants must shave their ENTIRE FACES clean on this day. We suggest providing information packets at this event. Try to include M4K Rules and FAQs (taken from the website and updated/edited as needed), as well as business cards, pledge sheets, buttons, disposable razors, and anything else you think will get people excited to grow 'staches.

Week 2: Checkpoint 1

Week 3: Checkpoint 2

Week 4: Checkpoint 3

Week 5: Sweetest 'Stache Competition

Checkpoints

Checkpoints are weekly meetings at local watering holes that serve both practical and social purposes. Growing a Mustache can be a lonely endeavor, filled with moments of self-doubt. By providing a venue for Growers to interact, Checkpoints play a crucial role in strengthening the hairy bonds that hold us together. They are also used to distribute publicity materials and other paraphernalia and as an excuse to drink beer. By the second or third Checkpoint, your assembled Growers will be a visible presence at even the most crowded bar, and the curiosity of onlookers provides fuel for our hairy fire. Checkpoints may be held at a single bar, or depending on the size of your city and the location of your Growers, they may be held at different locations each week.

'Stache Bash Competition

The 'Stache Bash Competition is the jewel in the Mustache crown, a chance for Growers to strut their stuff under the encouraging gaze of the general public. The Competition should be a festive event whose ultimate goal is to identify and honor the Sweetest Mustache. To that end, we suggest a pageant-like structure, complete with several rounds of competitions that test the Growers' characters and personalities in addition to the merits of their Mustaches. Some ideas for rounds include:

Q&A: Growers are asked open-ended beauty-pageant style questions. "How would your mustache ensure world peace and end nuclear proliferation?"

Mustache Haiku: Each Grower writes and reads a mustache-themed haiku.

World's Strongest Mustache: Attach strong clips to the ends of a string. Growers attach one end to an object and the other end to their 'staches and then attempt to lift the object.

Kissing Booth: Growers find a willing volunteer who agrees to be kissed onstage.

Beer Foam Retention Test: Each Grower drinks a glass of Guinness and is judged on the amount of foam retained by the 'stache.

Pin the 'Stache on the Grower: Like Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Except with mustaches.

We recommend selecting a panel of four to eight judges to adjudicate the proceedings. Judges should be thoroughly briefed about the elusive, and somewhat subjective, standards for determining Sweetness. We strive to find a balance between "the Mustache in itself" and "the Mustache and the Man". Meaning, attention should be paid to the objective traits of the Mustache (size, thickness, etc.) but also to the way in which the Mustache contributes to the Grower's character and demeanor. To that end, many Growers choose to dress in Mustache-enhancing costumes for the Competition.

Logistically, the 'Stache Bash is a challenging event. We want to ensure maximum participation from Growers, but we also want to produce an event that moves along and is entertaining for the audience. As the number of M4K participants has increased, we have found that an elimination structure is most efficient, reducing the number of Growers as the evening proceeds. Several chapters have also experimented with limiting 'Stache Bash participation to the top fundraisers. This strategy both encourages fundraising during the Growing Season and also streamlines the 'Stache Bash event. Needless to say, the decision to limit contestants in this way should be announced well in advance of the competition so Growers have time to step up their fundraising efforts.

It is typical for three awards to be distributed at the Competition: top fundraiser, Sweetest Stache, and worst Stache. Again, individual chapters may choose additional categories for recognition.

Emails

One of the best ways to promote Mustache solidarity and to spread the gospel of our undertaking is through regular emails. Typically, a chapter organizer will send out weekly recruitment pitches starting a month or so before Shaving Day to alert potential Growers and the general public that Growing Season is nigh. That initial email should contain a general overview of the fundraiser and should make it seem totally sweet. Which it is.

Mustaches for Kids is a staunchly word-of-mouth operation, and a catchy email that can be forwarded, printed, or otherwise distributed is the best way to gain support and stir up interest. Chapter organizers should send out one email per week during Growing Season, reminding your troops about upcoming events, updating everyone on fundraising totals, and contributing to general Mustache enthusiasm.

Website & Social Media

Since people seem to really love the internet as a way to get information, we highly suggest a website for your chapter. Members of your community should be able to visit your website to see pictures of growers and to find information about Mustache events and donation options. You have two options for establishing your internet presence:

- 1) Purchase a domain name and hosting plan and design the site yourself.
- 2) Design a page that can be 'parked' under the mustachesforkids.com umbrella site. There are several advantages to this approach. The first is that chapters whose sites are tied to the main site (for example, [mustachesforkids.com/\[city name\]](http://mustachesforkids.com/[city name])) do not have to pay for domain names or web hosting. Seems like a small expense, but if even a small number of chapters can eliminate these expenses, that's a pretty nice amount of additional money that can go to the charities. The

other advantage is that having one national site, with separate pages for each chapter, unifies our efforts a bit, while still allowing individual chapters autonomy in terms of design and information.

Should you be unable to design and set up a web site or convince someone to do it for you, we can provide a handsome WordPress template that can be adapted to any chapter's needs. Here's an example of a site built with the template:

<http://www.m4kvancouver.org/>

We ask that chapter organizers let Mustache headquarters (info@mustachesforkids.org) know how they plan to proceed so that appropriate links can be added to our central site.

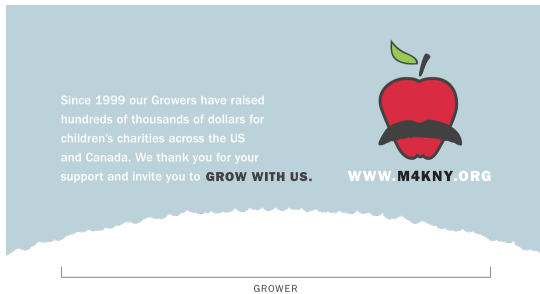
Regarding Facebook, we've been a bit behind the times, but it's undoubtedly a great resource for both Grower recruitment and fundraising. You can set up a group or fan page and use it to familiarize folks with M4K. You can also encourage individual Growers to make frequent status and photo updates and even to shout out donors. Growers can also ask their friends to make M4K-related updates. The more M4K talk buzzing around Facebook, the better.

Publicity & Community Relations

In today's media climate of "infotainment" it is likely that Mustaches for Kids will be an appealing news story in your community. We encourage organizers to distribute press releases, not only to those outlets who publish event or calendar listings, but also to those who might choose to feature M4K in a print, television, web, or radio story. Savvy editors and journalists recognize that M4K provides a rich source of material, from the Mustache-as-style angle to a piece that emphasizes the unconventional-yet-effective philanthropy

Paraphernalia

We suggest that each chapter design, print, and distribute M4K business cards. Our venture, while true and just, is often greeted with a fair amount of skepticism. But even the most dubious naysayer is sure to be swayed by the veneer of legitimacy that a business card can provide. For example:



Furthermore, chapters may also produce pledge sheets for their Growers to use in the field. While we do not formally keep track of donor information, many people are swayed by the thrilling process of writing their name, contact information, and pledge amount on a spreadsheet. We cannot explain this phenomenon, but we do know that, like the business cards, pledge sheets add a certain cachet to our undertaking.

In recent years, several chapters have produced “Ask me about my mustache” buttons:



Growers and donors alike seem to enjoy having a small Mustache souvenir. There are many web sites who provide this service.

Boring Legal Stuff

We have trademarked Mustaches for Kids, M4K, and ‘Stache Bash. In all official correspondence and also at the footer of your web site, please include the following text:

"MUSTACHES FOR KIDS®; M4K®; and 'STACHE BASH® are all registered trademarks and may not be used without permission."

You should also put the funny little ® symbol next to those phrases if and when they appear on printed materials, t-shirts, or other goodies.

Questions

For any points that need further clarification, feel free to contact us at info@mustachesforkids.org.