



#### STEP 4 – Promotion, promotion, promotion

I'm sure every event planner in the world worries about the same thing: what if no one comes to my event?! Here are a few things I did to promote my event:

- For larger businesses, I sent letters describing PBC and asking for their support – either with financial donations or donations of products or services. Then I followed up my letters with phone calls.
- I produced a flyer promoting the event and planned to post it in public areas and with businesses that donated to my event. Unfortunately, I simply ran out of time and wasn't able to distribute my flyers. Again, lesson learned.
- I contacted several reporters at our city newspaper and eventually caught the interest of one who interviewed both my mother and me, photographed us at home and printed a complete profile of our story...all a few days before our event. Not only did this news story boost the ticket sales to our event to 140 (my original goal was 50-60), but it also met my goal of making PBC awareness “less rare”.

If you're thinking about organizing an event of your own and want to bounce off some ideas or get a little guidance, I'd be happy to speak with you. Please get in touch with me at [fundraising@pbc-society.ca](mailto:fundraising@pbc-society.ca).

I hope we can work together to make PBC a less rare disease.

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## HOW TO Raise Awareness & Funds for PBC

#### Estimate how many people might attend

- I started by looking at my family and friends (and my friends' families) and how many of them I might be able to count on for support.
- I estimated that I'd be able to sell 50-60 tickets to people within my own network.
- I created a Facebook Event and promoted it to my friends and family. They shared it with their Facebook friends and family and many of those people supported my event.

**Find a venue** – I chose a local Rotary hall where one of my family members knew the manager who was able to give me a reasonable rental price for the hall.

**Food** – I approached a small, family-run restaurant that I've often visited and they were able to provide me with a low-cost meal, with recognition for their sponsorship.

**Decide on a ticket price** – I figured out how much I'd need to charge for tickets in order to cover my costs (primarily the meal and hall rental) + a little extra for miscellaneous expenses such as table decorations and promotional material.

**Sponsors and donors** – Before approaching potential sponsors and donors, I prepared a short letter describing my personal PBC story. I took this letter with me and literally went door to door, telling my story to many small and medium-sized businesses. Some made financial donations. Others donated products and services for door prizes, raffles and the silent auction. Some even bought tickets and attended the event.



## Hi – I'm Kailey Jackson.

I've planned, organized and hosted many different kinds of fundraising events over the years – from bowling tournaments and car washes to 50/50 ticket raffles.

Now I'm able to use what I've learned to organize fundraising events on behalf of the Canadian PBC Society. I hope by sharing my experiences I can help you organize successful PBC events in your community too.

Here are a few of my lessons learned ... so far.

- **Be clear about why you want to organize an event** – what do you really want to accomplish? Then weigh the different options for doing it.
- **Be realistic about what you're committing to** – choose to organize an event that you can realistically get done with the time and resources you have.
- **Get help!** – have at least one other volunteer (preferably someone with different skills and personal networks) to help you.
- **Have an authentic story to tell** – it's pretty easy to sell raffle tickets or organize a bowling tournament for a cause or organization that people already know something about. But it's harder to ask people to reach into their pocketbooks to support an unknown disease like PBC. People will want to support you if you have a compelling PBC story to tell.
- **Line up speakers right away** – especially if you're hoping to have a doctor or other medical professional take time from their busy schedule to speak at your event.

- **Use your social network** – your personal network is your best friend. It can be the key to promoting your event and making connections with potential sponsors and donors.
- **Boost interest in your event through city and community media** – your personal PBC story is often an interesting human interest story for local media. You may have to pitch your story to many different reporters at a variety of newspaper, radio and social media outlets, but the effort can really pay off.

Here's one example of an event I organized very recently, and the four steps I followed.

### STEP 1 – Why am doing this?

I started by asking myself one key question "*what do I really want to accomplish by organizing a PBC event?*"

I thought carefully about why I wanted to do this and what I hoped to achieve.

PBC is rare and I have a personal mission to make it less rare in terms of people's awareness and understanding of the disease. I also want to make sure that the Canadian PBC Society has the funding it needs to continue its educational and personal support programs for patients and their families. So when I thought about the kind of event I wanted to organize, I had two things in mind.

### ✓ Raise awareness

### ✓ Raise funds for patient support



### STEP 2 – What could I do?

At first I thought about inviting people to an information session simply so they could learn more about PBC. Maybe I could get one or two doctors or a nurse practitioner to come and talk to us.

But then I realized, if I'm going to ask people to come out for an educational event, I might as well raise some money while I'm at it.

So I decided to rent a hall in my local area, sell tickets for a simple lunch or dinner and invite some local doctors to come and speak about PBC. I'd get some prizes donated, sell raffle tickets and hold a silent auction to raise some money to add to the proceeds from the ticket sales. **Easy!**

### STEP 3 – Details, details, details

Even with a straightforward event like the one I had in mind, it takes a lot of time and work. Here's what I did to pull my event together in approximately six weeks. For the record, I made the mistake of trying to do all of this on my own. Lesson now learned.

**Decide on a date** – I chose a Sunday evening in mid-June when families often come together.

**Invite speakers** – I had difficulty getting busy doctors to respond to my invitations. Instead, my mother spoke about PBC from the patient's view; I spoke about the impact of PBC on family and friends; and a representative of the PBC Society spoke about the importance of patient support, effective treatments and searching for a cure. In many ways, this may have been an even more effective way of telling our PBC story. It helped people understand the reality of living with PBC.