

Getting the Word Out

by Ed Van Nuland

Board members and administrators of new ACCS schools have often asked me for ideas that would help them "get the word out" about their school. The standard ways are: distributing a brochure, targeted mailings, a newspaper or radio advertisement or interview, and personal contacts. During the recent Teacher Training program at Logos, I shared an idea with board members and administrators from three schools that were starting their first school year this fall.

If your school has been in business for only a few years, or is brand new, you can host a small scale event with the theme "Truly Beautiful." The theme has multiple meanings in that Truth and Beauty should be hallmarks of a Christian education, especially a classical one. You pick a date – for a new school a good date would be late March or early April. This is late enough in the school year for a new school to celebrate that it's been in business for almost a year, and early enough before end of school year activities and the distractions of the approaching summer break. Schedule the event in the nicest venue you can find or afford. Make the event a fancy dessert or a nice dinner. After the dinner, have a speaker make a presentation about your school. I believe the speech should be fifteen minutes to half an hour – no more than a half hour. Pick a polished speaker who can clearly present your mission in education.

Now for the part that can make money. Include a silent auction before the meal, not a live auction. This is intended to be manageable, especially for a small scale, first event. An art auction dovetails naturally with the "Truly Beautiful" theme. Many businesses can be approached to donate paintings, of course, but many items, if done well, can be included. A local printer can present a display of his finest wedding or graduation announcements, offering a gift certificate for the silent auction. A flower shop can set up a beautiful display, perhaps donate to the decorations, and offer a certificate for the auction. A department store can present beautiful glassware, china, silverware, or crystal. Ask the department store manager to donate place settings, stem-ware, or a beautiful crystal piece to the auction. A fine jeweler is a natural for the event. A photographer could participate. A high quality landscape service is a possibility. Several other possible items may include quilts and other hand-crafted items made out of cloth, high quality woodcraft items, including furniture, antiques, of course, and even some musical instruments. All exemplify beauty. One last possibility you may want to consider would be fine gift items, such as a beautifully bound set of books.

For a brand new school, this is a way of introducing yourselves to your community as you celebrate your first year in business. You can talk about how thankful you are that you have been blessed with a first year, and are looking forward to many more. For a school that is trying to decide on an event, this can be as large or as small as you wish, but it should definitely be manageable. You can get the word out, develop relationships with business people in your community, and raise some money for your school.

I would be pleased to hear about your relationship-building and fund-raising efforts. May God bless you as you labor.

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