

For more than 20 years Troop 547 of Cerritos, Calif., has held only one annual money-earning event—a pancake breakfast.

I spent 15 years as chairman of this activity that is not only profitable but also great fun and easy to organize and run. Any troop or pack can use the plan below that we developed during our years of experience.

Where and when

The first (and very important) step is deciding where and when to hold the breakfast. Many possibilities include running events (10-K, mini-marathon, or full marathon), opening of a youth sports season, a charitable event, or a church-related function.

We hold our pancake breakfast during our city's Fourth of July celebration. That tradition began in the troop's first year when another group cancelled at the last minute and we volunteered to step in. With only two weeks to prepare, we still made \$200 (to this day I haven't figured out how); the troop now averages a profit of between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

Food and utensils

Before purchasing food, you need a simple menu. Pancakes, sausage, orange drink or juice, eggs (optional), and coffee. The quantities below are for 750 servings, our average for the last 20 years.

- batter, 125 lbs.
- eggs, 50 doz.
- syrup, 10 gal.
- butter, 1,600 pats
- sausage, 125 lbs.
- oil (for grill), 1 gal.
- orange drink mix, 6 gal.
- powdered creamer, 1 qt.
- sugar, 2 lbs.
- coffee, 10 lbs.
- salt and pepper
- paper towels
- napkins
- plates, 1,000
- knives and forks, 1,000 each
- coffee cups (8 oz.), 750
- drink cups, 750

Pancakes for Profits



A California troop shares its recipe for a successful money-earning event that can fund a year's worth of unit expenses.

By Michael F. Polak

Your goal is to maximize profits, so don't be bashful about asking for donations. Many major food chains will either donate goods or provide them at cost.

Check the resources within your group. (One of our dads worked for a meat-packing company and arranged to have the sausage donated.)

We didn't include eggs with the basic price because not everyone wants them. Instead, we charge an extra 25 cents per egg cooked to order. When the tickets are taken, a person pays for his egg order, which is written on the back of his ticket and given to the cook.

We went from about 20 dozen eggs our first year to 45 to 50 dozen today—extra income without a lot of extra work.

What do you do with food not used? A good method is to sell the items to troop families at cost, which helps lower overall food expenses. Save utensils and paper products for next year.

Equipment

Rental—two 4-foot griddles (including propane); two 4-foot griddle stands (usually come with griddles); two pancake dispensers; one 10-gallon kettle (for mixed batter); two 100-cup coffee pots.

Purchase or borrow—two hand mixers; two aluminum bowls (to mix batter before pouring into kettle); two 25-foot extension cords; one drip pan for one griddle (to catch sausage grease); 25 plastic syrup containers; two broiler pans (for cooked sausage); one beverage cooler/dispenser for orange drink (some fast-food outlets—notably, McDonald's—will donate beverage dispenser and cups with the purchase of drink mix); barbecue equipment: ladles, forks, sharp knives.

At first, everything probably can be borrowed from within the troop or pack, with the exception of the grills and pancake dispensers. Later, use some of your profit to buy your own equipment. (And remember

when buying, always ask about a youth group discount.)

Ticket sales

Pre-sale—Some tickets sold in advance of the occasion can amount to pure profit since a number of people will buy them but not go to the breakfast.

Try to get a sponsor to donate the tickets. (Ours were provided by a national pizza chain.)

We sell our advance tickets for \$2.50—50 cents less than the door price—which provides our Scouts with an extra sales pitch. And, as an added incentive, we credit each Scout with 50 cents toward summer camp for each ticket sold. Finally, the top three Scout salesmen receive a special award, such as camping gear.

At the door—We price our tickets for \$3 at the door. Experience has shown that anything above \$3.50 will deter the customer.

The best incentive of all

Last, but certainly not least, is people power—maintaining enthusiasm. You need to stress that if (a) everyone does a good job with ticket pre-sales and (b) shows (continued on page 45)

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up on the day of the breakfast to do his part, then (c) the day will go smoothly and fun will be had by all.

And—best of all—the troop or pack will not need to conduct any other money-earning project for the remainder of the year.

The first time might be a little crazy and wild (ours was), but the result will be both fun and rewarding.

Good luck and happy pancake-flipping! ☺

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