

O Grows Farm-to-Table Fundraiser Dinner

This is a tentative plan for the farm-to-table fundraiser dinner to be held at the end of June 2017.

Date:

Having the dinner at the end of June will allow for chefs to use fresh produce from O Grows and from local farmers who participate in the O Grows Farmers Market.

The weather in June is more conducive to an outdoor event in the summertime.

Location:

The dinner will be held at the Southside Cultural Arts Center banquet room. As the community garden and greenhouse are in the back, this will provide guests with an opportunity to tour the facility.

Having the event inside will cut down on costs. Being inside will cut the cost of additional outdoor lighting and the cost of renting a tent. This will also eliminate the need for an alternative location in the event of bad weather. The East Alabama Arts Association has tables and chairs in the building available for O Grows to use, this will also cut down on the number of tables and chairs needed for rent.

Vendors:

By having the location inside the Southside Cultural Arts Center, O Grows will be able to forgo the extra expense of renting a tent for an outdoor event.

O Grows will possibly need to extra tables and chairs to accommodate the number of guests expected to attend. Event Guys is a possible vendor for the tables and chairs.

As AT is located in The Hotel at Auburn University, it has access to serving dishes. Because of O Grows' ongoing relationship with AT it is possible to use these dishes at a reduced cost.

Food:

It would be more cost effective to have a buffet-style dinner.

Chef Leo of AT and Chef Graham of Zazu both have an ongoing relationship with O Grows. This gives O Grows a unique opportunity to have both of them cook the food for the dinner.

As the dinner is buffet-style, each chef will be given different parts of the meal to cook using produce from the community garden and bought from local farmers who come to the O Grows Farmers Market. Each chef will be standing by their dishes as guests go through the buffet line. This will put the chefs in front of the guests and allow them to answer any questions guests might ask.

By having the two chefs providing the meal it will give people a reason for purchasing tickets.

O Grows will also need to ask Leo and Graham about approximate costs for the dinner and see what, if anything, they are willing to donate or charge at cost as a way to cut overhead costs.

O Grows will also need to provide a way for guests to notify them in advance of any “dietary restrictions” they might have. Asking for “dietary restrictions” will ensure that guests will respond to restrictions and not dietary preferences.

Entertainment:

There are several options for entertainment for the dinner.

The East Alabama Arts Association is a community sponsor of O Grows. They can help find entertainment for the event.

The Opelika High School Jazz Band performs for free. During the 30 minute cocktail time, when guests are arriving the band can be playing outside by the garden and greenhouse as guests arrive and have cocktails. This will provide a time for guests to see the garden and greenhouse up close.

By having entertainment, O Grows will need to provide a raised platform for any outdoor entertainment.

Alcohol:

Having alcohol at the event will cause liability issues.

By including the price of alcohol in the price of the ticket, O Grows can provide each guests with a set number of drink tickets. Since no money is exchanging hands, this will eliminate and insurance liability.

O Grows could partner with Opelika Main Street for the event because Main Street does have liquor liability insurance and will allow there to be more drink options available.

It will need to be noted on the invitation and any other information cards about the dinner that alcohol will be available and served.

Alcoholic drinks should be served in a separate bar area for ease of use.

Sponsorship:

O Grows should seek sponsors for the event. This will help eliminate some of the financial burden from O Grows. O Grows should first reach out to their established sponsors and community partners.

O Grows should consider establishing sponsorship levels for the event. For each sponsor that meets the sponsorship levels they will receive a set number of tickets to the event. By having the sponsors O Grows will not have to carry the entire overhead costs by themselves. This will also provide O Grows the opportunity to make a bigger profit from the event.

O Grows should reach out to various civic organizations and other community minded organizations, such as banks, to sponsor the event.

By being a nonprofit organization, receiving a tax write-off for any sponsor will be an incentive to sponsor the event.

Tickets:

Tickets should be between \$50-\$100, the price will depend on the number of organizations that sponsor the event, the number of guests that can be accommodated, the amount of overhead costs, and the amount O Grows wishes to raise.

Tickets will be presold and there will not be any tickets sold at the door. This will help O Grows to be able to prepare. The tickets will be sold online on the O Grows website and in person at the Keep Opelika Beautiful offices.

There will be an option to buy a more expensive ticket for the ability to have dinner with the chefs.

Again, as O Grows is a nonprofit, guests will receive a tax write-off for purchasing a ticket.

Having physical tickets are not necessary but people do like having the ticket in hand. People who purchase tickets online can be given the option to print off a ticket and people who purchase tickets in-person can be given a ticket upon payment.

Each guest will give their name when they purchase a ticket and there will be a master list at the hostess stand. Guests can either turn in a ticket or have their name check off the list. All guests should have their name checked off the list when they arrive to have an accurate number of attendees.

Parking:

By having the event inside the grass area in front of the Southside Cultural Arts Center will be open and available for parking.

Volunteers:

There needs to be approximately 10 volunteers for the event. Because of Dr. Forbes' students doing their service learning project they are an excellent source of volunteers to help with parking and service.