

Event Handbook

If you post it they will come



Introduction – Elements of a Successful Event

For those who enjoy the social aspects of Geocaching, events are the sticky stuff that holds the community together. They provide an opportunity to get to know cachers you have only “met” through logs and hides. Friendships are made and strengthened at these gatherings. Geocaching and socializing are like a Shot and a Beer -- they are great on their own, but you get more out of them when you enjoy them together.

The really fun thing about events is that anyone can host one. To paraphrase the theme of a popular movie, “If you post it they will come.” To post and host a fun geo-event, simply focus on “The Three Fs” – Food, Finds and Fellowship.

For thousands of years, **FOOD** has greased the skids of human social interaction. The Geocaching community is no different. You’ll always feel you know someone better once you’ve broken bread with them. There are limitless options for incorporating a meal into your event. We will be discussing some of the alternatives along with the advantages and disadvantages of each.

FINDS are an important part of any geo-activity and Events are no exception. We *are* Geocachers after all. We want our Smileys and don’t let anyone kid you. Even the most ardent, “I don’t care about the numbers” White Robed cacher still likes logging a find. They don’t call it geo CA-CHING for nothing. We will be discussing a variety of ways to offer your guests opportunities for finds and some of the ways to make in an integral part of your event. With a little imagination, you can organize the activity in a way that

allows for a little fun competition as well as opportunities for cachers to work together and get to know each other. That brings us to the last of the three Fs...

FELLOWSHIP is the most important of the 3 Fs. After all, you can eat and find caches all by your lonesome. At the very least, an event needs to allow time for attendees to mingle, interact and get to know one another. Activities are great, but they are best when they encourage fellowship rather than interfere with it. We will suggest many ways to provide catalysts for fellowship during your event from icebreakers to encouraging teamwork.

As we discuss more of the details of event hosting, it's important not to lose sight of these three essential elements, because they will produce an event that provides the all important fourth F – **FUN**



Chapter I – Guidelines

Before posting your event, you should probably review the guidelines on Geocaching.com at...

<http://www.geocaching.com/about/guidelines.aspx#event>

An event has to meet the guidelines just as any cache does, but don't let this scare you. There aren't really many rules and meeting them is easy if you focus on the Three Fs. Primarily, the event needs to be geo related, and not just be an excuse to get together to go caching. Also, just as with any geocache, it should not be commercial in nature or be a vehicle for promoting a social agenda.

For example, there's an Arts and Crafts Fair coming up, and you'd like to introduce your

fellow cachers to another hobby of yours. If your cache description says only, “The posted coordinates will take you to a fantastic Arts and Crafts Fair. Meet us there and enjoy the fun of browsing through the displays and picking up some tips.” You’ll likely encounter problems getting it published because it really doesn’t have anything to do with Geocaching other than collecting a smiley.

For another example, let’s say you’ve found a very interesting area of a nearby National Forest and would like to get your friends together to do some caching there. If your event description simply says, “Meet at the posted coordinates at 9:00AM and we’ll go find the many fine caches in the area, including several new ones that have been placed for this event.” This sounds like nothing more than a group cache hunt and you will likely encounter problems during the review process.

Let’s try an alternate description:

“Join us in the National Forest for a day of Geocaching and other fun. The day begins at 9:00AM at the posted coordinates where we will be serving up a continental breakfast of Doughnuts and Coffee. During breakfast we will have an icebreaker activity to help everyone meet each other. There will be a travel bug table for trading bugs and coins and we will have maps of the surrounding forest posted for review, questions and discussion of access and other use issues.

We have placed a series of new caches in the area, there will be a prize for the team that gets the most ‘First to Finds’. After the event, attendees may want to hunt some of the many other fine caches in the area. For those interested, there is also an Arts and Crafts Fair going on nearby. We’ve posted the waypoint for the Fair.”

Are you able to see the “Food, Finds and Fellowship” in that description? It also describes an event that is much more than just a group cache hunt. While it includes a reference to the Arts and Crafts Fair, that non-Geocaching activity is not what the event is about. Finally, the event described, is not really a whole lot more work than the events described in the first two examples, but as an event, it’s sounds a whole lot more fun. And it meets the guidelines.

Another pitfall that cachers may encounter is trying to host an event of a commercial nature, or promoting a social agenda. A common problem is attempting a "fundraiser" event. If you want to try to raise money for a pet cause, however worthy you might think it is, you can't use an event posting to do so. However, word of mouth, forum postings (not including the Groundspeak forum) and individual emails can inform people of the efforts. For example, an annual Christmas event can be used to collect "Toys for Tots". You just have to find a means other than the cache page of informing people of the effort. Furthermore, it's all right to have an event that has incidental costs associated with it. For example, the entrance fees for a park or the cost of a meal at a restaurant. But having an event at an amusement park with a \$20 admission charge might be considered commercial.

The guidelines do change periodically, so it's a good idea to review them as you are planning your event.



Chapter II - Types of Events

The variety of potential events is as limitless as the imagination of the host. However, many events can be placed in similar categories based on their location and format. Don't let this categorization limit you and do not think that this is an exhaustive list. It's just a basic explanation of several common event types to help organize discussion in later chapters.

Meet and Greet - This is the simplest event, both to host and to attend. It consists of getting a group of cachers together for a meal and socializing. It's very long on Food and Fellowship, but short on Finds. That may be remedied by placing a number of new caches in the area, giving guests a chance to hunt them before and/or after the event. These caches may even be hunted together, offering more opportunity for fellowship. A common location for the Meet and Greet is a restaurant. While this type of event is simple and easy the location, and available time, limit the potential for other activities. As with most things, you get out of an event what you put into it. However, it's a great way to throw together an event at late notice and it might be a nice experience for someone hosting their first event. It is also appropriate when the event is being held for a specific purpose, such as a farewell, a birthday or anniversary or otherwise honoring a fellow cacher.

Park - This type of event is similar to the Meet and Greet but in a park, backyard or other outdoors venue. It is also a fairly simple event to host, although there is the added issue of providing or arranging for Food. There is usually more space available and you can get

use of that space for a longer period of time. This makes it possible to add many additional activities offering greater opportunities for incorporating Finds and Fellowship into your event.

Campout - Just as the name implies, this type of event involves getting together with your fellow cachers for camping. Talk about opportunities for Fellowship! The campout is the pinnacle of events when it comes to fellowship. It offers the potential of an entire weekend of eating and living in close proximity to your fellow cachers. Food is as important a part of campouts as it is any event and there are numerous ways to include opportunities for Finds when you've got a whole weekend to work with. Even those not camping will enjoy it and your event may entice some non-campers to step out of the box and give it a try. This type of event involves more work and planning for both the host and the guests, but the benefits can be extensive.



Competitive - This is both a type of event and something that you can do in combination with the events noted above. A competitive event is one in which there is an organized activity, usually involving Finding caches. Keeping in mind the importance of Fellowship, thought should be given to structuring activities in a way that encourages fellowship, rather than sending a bunch of individuals off on their own on a quest to win. One way to do this is to encourage the formation of teams. Nothing leads to Fellowship like joining forces in the mission of victory. There should also be an opportunity to socialize while enjoying some Food before and/or or after the competitive activity. This can involve a great deal of planning for the host and for guests, but it can also provide for a lot of fun.

Adventure/Role playing - This can be the most elaborate type of event, but also the most fun, and can be done in combination with the types of events above. It can include anything from theme caches requiring creative logs to finding hints to solve a mystery to having to solve a puzzle just to find the event. With imagination, Food, Finds and Fellowship can be a part of the adventure itself. It can require more work and planning from the host and greater participation buy guests, but it can be worth it.

This incomplete list of event types should provide a basis for further discussion, but at this point the reader should be able to see how The Three Fs play a role in each type of event and which events provide the greater opportunities for each. Perhaps you are even envisioning the type of event you might like to host.

Chapter III - Location, Location, Location...

Restaurants - For the Meet and Greet type of event, restaurants are the simplest and easiest solution when it comes to location. There are usually no additional charges other than the food and no clean up afterward. However, having an event at a restaurant limits your event in many ways. There is less space for activities. In some restaurants even securing a table for a travel bug exchange can be problem. Also, once your group has finished dining, you'll soon wear out your welcome, so you only have the space for a limited time. But for many event's it is the most appropriate venue.

If you decide to have an event at a restaurant, there are several considerations. First of all, unless your are expecting a very small group, you should contact the location ahead of time to let them know your are coming and reserve some space. A group of a few dozen people can require a lot of additional labor for a small business, but if they know you're coming they can be sure to have staff on hand to handle your guests. Many restaurants have areas, or even separate rooms available for groups. There is usually no charge. All it requires is reserving the space in advance.

It's also important to consider the choice from your guest's point of view. You may love Sushi, but it's probably not a good choice for a large group of people who may or may not even know what Sushi is. It's a good move to try to choose restaurants with a wide ranging menu that can suit most palates and with a price structure that can be afforded by most budgets, including those with children.



Pavilions - If your event is a park or other outdoor type, it's best to select a spot that includes picnic tables. It's even better if you have a shelter or pavilion to protect from the

sun and, possibly, rain. Most cities have a wide variety of options available. Consider the number of guest you are expecting and attempt to secure a location of appropriate size. Some other considerations are proximity to playgrounds (if you are expecting any children) and availability of restrooms.

The protocol for pavilions and shelters may vary from city to city and even from park to park. Some shelters are first come first serve but don't assume that is the case without confirming it with the park's managers. If the shelter you choose is first come first serve, you should have plans for yourself, or someone else, to get there early to secure the spot. If you're relying on being first, it's also a good idea to have a nearby alternative in case you're not. On a nice day, a few picnic tables in the shade might work out as well as a pavilion.

Pavilions that require a reservation or permit will vary in cost from zero to as much as \$20 or \$30. Often the most difficult part of getting these spots isn't paying for them, but getting your reservation in on time. For busy weekends in great locations, the pavilions may be reserved as much as a year in advance. So if the date and/or location of your event is inflexible, it's important to start planning early.

Campgrounds - There are a wide variety of campgrounds that offer amenities that run from a shovel in the woods to hot showers. Costs vary from nothing to the cost of a cheap hotel room. Group camping areas tend to offer the best format for Fellowship, but individual sites can work well too if they are in proximity to each other. Traditional campgrounds, whether privately operated or part of a park system are generally easy to find either in the yellow pages or a Google search. However, many of the best Group camping areas can be difficult to find. They are not advertised or promoted and are often only available to organized groups. It can take some investigative work to find them. Any given area will have a number of different entities that manage land available for public use. For example...

- National Forests
- State Forests
- US Fish and Wildlife
- State Fish Wildlife Management
- Water Districts
- State, City and County Parks

Sometimes you can find information on group camping on the entities' web site. Sometimes it may take a visit or a phone call. Even if there is no formal group camping area, group camping may be allowed by permit. You sometimes only need to ask. Finding the right camping area can lead to a very successful event and many times they are available at no charge.

Areas - Competitive and Adventure/Role playing events may be held in a single park or campground or in a central location. However, it is possible to host such events in a broad geographic area, sometimes covering hundreds of miles, such as with a road rally.

Giving thought to the area you are using can help shape the activity and vice versa. An important consideration is whether the choice of the area gives certain guests an advantage (for example, is 4 wheel drive needed) and can the conditions be adjusted to help ameliorate this. It can also add to the fun to purposefully structure the activity to introduce people to new areas they haven't been to before. That is, after all, at the heart of Geocaching.



Chapter IV - Choosing a date

One thing that all event hosts should avoid is trying to come up with an event date that will make everyone happy. Though it might not be apparent at times, Geocachers have lives. No matter what date you choose, it's likely that someone you hoped could attend will have to work, will be out of town, will have prior commitments or for some other reason will be unable to attend. The starting point for selecting a date for any event should be what is most convenient for the host and others who will be helping with the event and what date will allow enough time for planning and preparation.

Some conflicts you should avoid however are, first of all, other Geocaching events. Before finalizing your date, check to see if any other events in the area are already scheduled for that date or close to that date. You don't want to compete with another nearby event and it can even be a problem to have one event scheduled within a few days of another event. If your area has a local Geocaching forum, you may also want to check there to see whether anyone is planning an event they haven't posted yet. Sundays are also a bad day for events due to church and other family functions and commitments. Finally, it is best to avoid Holidays. An exception to this is if you are planning a multi day event like a campout. It can be nice to do it on a weekend that many people will

have an extra day off from work. Even in this case you will want to avoid the major Holidays that people are likely to spend with family.

Then there are the characteristics of your location that can affect the available dates. Restaurants may be difficult to get space in on a Friday or Saturday night. Some parks and forest allow Hunting at certain times of year which can make Geocaching at those times less safe. The seasons should be taken into account for campouts.

In the end, choose a date and live with it. Don't start adjusting the date because this person or that person can't make it. You are going to host other events after all.

Chapter V - Social Activities

Name Tags - This is an often-overlooked means of greasing the skids of social activity. While many of your guests may not have met, most of them will know each other, through their hides and their logs. Some of us are gregarious and will take the opportunity to meet others with the slightest provocation. Some, however, are a little more hesitant and may find it difficult to walk up to a stranger and introduce themselves or ask, "Who are you?" Nametags eliminate this step and will allow your guests to jump right to "So you're so and so, I'm glad to finally meet you in person."

With a little additional planning and effort, the nametags for your event can be made in a way that they become not just an introduction tool, but a souvenir of the event itself. Pre-making laminated tags and individualizing them for the event can produce a great piece of memorabilia. Adding a lanyard can make them a valuable trade item. The potential is limited only by your imagination. However, just the simple "Hello my name is" sticky tags will do wonders for helping provide Fellowship at your event.



Icebreakers - Fellowship can be encouraged by providing little games that "force"

people to mingle. Icebreakers are common activities at many social functions and most icebreakers that work at other types of gathering adapt well to Geocaching. An Icebreaker will require participants to approach their fellow cachers and ask them a question or questions, thus leading to an introduction and possibly further discussion. Here are some common examples that have worked well in the past...

Geo-Bingo - Each guest is given a sheet with a grid of squares on it. Each square has a statement in it, such as "Less than 100 finds" or "Required medical treatment while caching" or "Caches with a geo-dog". Participants must then attempt to locate fellow Geocachers in attendance that match those statements and have them sign the appropriate square. The first full sheet wins.

Three things about you - Each guest is given a slip containing the name of another guest along with several questions about that person, such as Hometown, Favorite Cache and Real First Name. They must find that person and get answers to the questions. To make it more interesting, guests are divided into teams. In order to complete the activity all team members must have their slips completed. This requires people to find their team members and help them find the player on their slip to get the answers to the questions.

Pocket Caches - While traditional pocket caches have been outlawed by Groundspeak and are verboten at events, there are ways to adapt to the observed rules and still use this valuable Icebreaker activity. For example, while preparing for your event, hide one or more Puzzle Caches nearby. It's best that they be somewhat difficult to solve. Put the actual coordinates on one or two laminated cards and give these to a couple of your guests. Announce that there are two hard to solve puzzle caches very near by and that several of your guests have been given the coordinates. Guests only need to find them and ask them for the coordinates. They may simply pass the card with the coordinates on to the next person. Or hold on to them and give them to the next person who asks.

Discussion - Inviting your guests to discuss certain topics or tell some cute stories about their Geocaching experiences can add to the social activity. It's best when it's kept informal, but it helps if the host leads the discussion, such as asking "Paint, why don't you tell us about the pink candle..."

Speakers - Discussion can be stimulated by inviting people to speak at your event about Geocaching related topics. Perhaps the local volunteer reviewer could take some questions about the review process and interpretations of the guidelines or a park manager could speak about concerns about Geocaching in the local parks. It's best that the format be more question and answer and less lecture.

Campfires - Few things make the conversation flow like sitting around a campfire. Since humans first tamed fire, social interaction around a warm fire has been a part of human culture. If your location allows for a campfire, take advantage of it. Arrange for enough wood and build a fire in a spot that leaves enough room for people to set up chairs and

gather round. Marshmallows and smores add a nice touch.

Time - Providing catalysts to Fellowship will not amount to much, if your event does not allow the time to take advantage of it. Be sure that time is set aside, formally or informally, for cachers to meet, mingle, talk, discuss and enjoy the Fellowship of those who share their addiction.

Chapter VI - Feeding your guests



Since Food is one of the key elements of a successful event, making arrangements for your guests to be fed will be a key part of planning your event. There are a limitless ways to feed a group of people. We have come up with a few general categories that have been used successfully. This is not an exhaustive list so don't hesitate to come up with imaginative ways to put on the feed bag.

Restaurants - One advantage of restaurants is that it is easy for the cost of the meal to be passed on to your guests. Also, by choosing an appropriate place, it allows for menu options that will please the widest variety of attendees, from meat eaters to vegetarians and from big to small appetites. Furthermore, the event host can often complete Food planning simply by choosing the spot and making a phone call to reserve some tables. Simple, quick, easy and inexpensive for the host. But there are drawbacks. Having an event at a restaurant can be very limiting as to space and time. While the Food portion of the event may be covered, it may be hard to incorporate Finds and Fellowship into the event. However, for events with short notice, that are not intended to be all day affairs, a restaurant can be a good choice.

Catering - Having the Food for an event catered can save a lot of work for the host and attendees but doesn't tie you down to the time and space limitations of a restaurant. Catering can include anything from doughnuts and coffee (for a breakfast event), to pizza, to a complete barbecue dinner. The big downside is the expense and it is difficult

to pass the costs on to attendees. The event host may need to pay out of pocket. Money can be raised either directly by charging those who would like to eat or indirectly through some means of fundraising, but that adds another layer of work and planning.



Potluck - This is a simple and inexpensive way to feed your guests. Have the guests bring the food themselves. With a little organization getting commitments from attendees on what they will bring, it's possible to put together a fine meal. You can even refine your planning to the point of listing what you would like people to bring and soliciting volunteers to bring the individual items. Those experienced with potluck dinners will know, having enough is rarely a problem.

Grilling - For outdoor events, nothing beats cooking animal on the barbie. The cookout menu can vary from hot dogs to chicken to steaks. You can feed even moderately sized groups at a reasonable cost without a lot of labor. It's even easy to get volunteers to do the grilling, leaving you free to perform your hosting functions. It's also easy to make it a combination of Potluck and a cookout.

Contests - Another great way to have your guests take care of the Food is to sponsor a cooking contest. For example, a Chili Cook Off. You can be the judge or you can recruit judges. Once the food is judged the guests get to eat. The possibilities are endless from cakes and pies to Dutch ovens and casseroles.

The Little Stuff - Whatever arrangements you make for the Food, don't forget the accessories necessary to serve it. Plates and utensils and condiments are a must. Even at restaurants, you may need to make advance arrangements for things such as a cake. Keep in mind that you are not on your own for these items. A simple request on the cache page can lead to an outpouring of paper plates. Many event hosts have been known to return from an event, with more plastic utensils than they left with.

And don't forget seating. If you are using a site that doesn't have picnic tables and chairs, you'll need to arrange for tables to set out the food. You might also advise guests to bring their own lawn chairs.

Chapter VII - Event Activities

Geocaches - Since Finds are one of The Three Fs, geocaches should play a key role in any event. While you may have an event in an area with lots of existing caches, it's important to keep in mind that many of your guests may have already found them. For those attendees, one of key elements would be missing from your event. You can solve this problem by placing some new caches in the area. These can be simple grab and go micros for guests to hunt as they arrive or depart, a large number of caches that attendees may do in groups before or after the event, or they can be made an integral part of the event. Whatever you do, they should be permanent listed caches that your guests can log as finds.



Injecting Competition - A great way to provide an activity at your event, incorporating the Finds into the event itself as well as providing for Fellowship, is to give the caching a competitive edge. The ways to do this are as limitless as your imagination. While by no means an exhaustive list, here are a few examples...

Poker Runs - Place a series of caches containing cards (in envelopes so they cannot be seen until opened) or tokens that can be exchanged for cards. Once the attendees have found all the caches, they'll have a full hand. When everyone returns to the location of the event, they compare hands and the high poker hand wins.

Race - A simple "first to find all the caches wins" type contest. There are many variations on this that can make it a very interesting competition.

Puzzles/Trivia - The caches all contain trivia questions or clues to a puzzle that when answered reveal the coordinates to a final cache or prize.

Road Rally - This can be one or a combination of the above, however, instead of taking place in a limited area, it may cover a whole city, county, region or state.

Scavenger Hunts - While this can be used on its own as an event activity, it's also a good way to spice up a competitive caching activity. While hunting the caches, participants must find scavenger hunt type items. It can be a photo scavenger hunt, for example, getting you picture with a Police Officer or getting a picture of a certain color butterfly. Or it can be a hunt for items placed just for cachers to find. Perhaps a specific item for each cachher or with all cachers hunting the same item on a "first to find it retrieves it" basis. Another possibility is just a list of odd items that cachers are on their own to find wherever they can. Of course, combinations of all these work well too.

Contests - Your event might include a contest for the Best Cache Container, Best Hide, Best Hint, Best Cache Description or Funniest Caching Story. The potential categories are endless.

Teams - A great way to increase Fellowship is by getting participants to form teams. This can be done by requiring it, or by simply suggesting it and slanting the competition in a way that gives teams an advantage. This allows the larger group to break into smaller groups and gives your guests a chance to socialize with other cachers on a closer level.

Night Caching - If your event begins or continues into nightfall, night caching is a great way to add some fun. Since many people are hesitant to cache at night (for safety reasons or just because caches are harder to find), this is a means of introducing them to group hunts and night caching at the same time. You might even place a nighttime only cache just for the event. This is a cache in which you follow a series of reflectors from the posted coordinates to the final location. For many, night caching is the best part of a campout.



Geocaching Related Activities - Many fun activities may not be exactly Geocaching, but they are related in some way. Examples include...

Orienteering - Using a series of directions and a compass to follow a course and end up in the correct spot.

Closest to the Pin - The host finds a spot in an open field, marks the coordinates and then marks the spot in a way that it can be found, but can not be seen by someone who doesn't know what they are looking for. Then guests use their GPS to place a flag at what they find to be the coordinates. The closest to the actual spot wins.

Scavenger Hunts - This can be done in conjunction with a caching activity as noted above, or all on it's own as a separate activity.

Non-Geocaching Related Activities - Opinions will, of course, vary on whether events should include non Geocaching related activities but we will not focus on them much here. If you chose to do this at your event you might try to relate the activity to Geocaching in some way.

Chapter VIII – Prizes

Prizes can add a level of fun and anticipation to an event. Even if you are not having any competitive activity, it can be a nice touch to have door prizes. While it's nice to have a well stock prize table, just like it's nice to have a well-stocked cache, it isn't necessary to spend a pile of money on prizes to have a fun time with them. Here are a few examples to assemble a nice array of prizes for your event.

Geo-style - This is kind of like a "Potluck" version of prizes. You have your guest each bring prize to contribute to the prize table. (Usually within a specified value range, i.e. \$5 to \$10). Just like as with trading in a geocache, each attendee brings a prize, and when the prizes are distributed they take one. The First Place winners go first, then Second Place and so on until everyone has drawn a prize.

Purchase - There are low cost options for purchasing prizes. The "Dollar Store" sells ribbons and other items that are appropriate for many events. Wal-Mart or other discount stores cost a bit more but have a better selection and higher quality. You might focus on Geocaching related items, like little baggies, that many people don't know where to find, but you've found a good source for. There are also many internet sources for low cost items. If you plan far enough in advance, shop cautiously and stick to a budget, it's possible to assemble some great prizes without feeling it too badly in the pocketbook.

Contributions - Asking your fellow cachers to contribute can be a good source of prizes. Many geo-related businesses like GPS and software companies may also contribute prizes. Even bumper stickers make a great prize if it's got your brand of GPS on it. As the saying goes, "If you don't ask, you don't get".

Swag Bag - Sometimes great prizes can be found right in your bag of trade items, particularly if you do any traveling and run across swag that can't be found in your area. Boodle is boodle after all, whether you find it in a cache or win it as a prize. Worst case, the winner gets a nice trade item for their own bag of swag.

Craft Items - Making items yourself means you can offer one of a kind prizes that can't be found anywhere else. They can be specific to your event or related to some other Geocaching theme. The possibilities are endless, but keeping them geo-related is best. Craft items can range from laminated cards, to painted ceramic magnets to t-shirts. If you're a craft oriented person, you may have as much fun making the prizes as hosting the event.

Coins - Geocoins always make great prizes. Collectors can keep them or trade them for other coins. Non-collectors might enjoy activating and releasing them like a travel bug. Others might just like using them as trade items or the more mercenary might even sell them on EBay.



Chapter IX - Getting Help

While it's possible to put on a fine event all on your own (with guests of course), events can be bigger and more fun if people pitch in to help. By viewing yourself as the organizer and getting help where it's needed, you can put on a much better event than you might on your own. How do you go about getting that help?

Direct approach - Ask. It's that simple. Ask your fellow cachers to help. Think of the people you know that have special skills or enjoy doing particular things that will help with your event, then call them or email them and solicit their help. Keep your request reasonable and small and few will want to refuse. Don't limit yourself to Geocachers though. Others may be happy to help as well. Perhaps your neighbor has a load of firewood in the back yard he wants to get rid of. Perhaps a relative is creative with crafts and can help you make some prizes.

Forum posts - If you have a local Geocaching organization that has a forum, one post can produce more help than you ever thought you'd need. There are many people out there that would love to do an event but think it's just too big of a job for them or they aren't sure quite what to do. Helping someone else with an event can be a way to get their feet wet. Geocachers are a helpful and giving group of people. Give them the opportunity to help you put together a great event.

Event Page - Posting notes to the cache page is a good way to ask for help, particularly for specific things that come up late in the planning stages. For things that all guests might be asked to help with, like bringing chairs or for potluck, posting in the cache description works very well.

Chapter X - Paying for your event

Events on a budget - Have no doubt that it is possible to put on a fun event that involves virtually no out of pocket expenses for the host if you plan carefully and ask for the help you need. Starting with that goal may limit your options some, but don't let money stand in the way of your hosting an event. Simply set an amount that you can afford to spend and stick with it. By spending your out of pocket resources carefully, planning your event appropriately and asking for help frequently, it is possible for even those of the most meager purse to host a fine event.

Passing the Jar - If you do have an out of pocket investment in your event, part of the money might be recovered by placing a contribution jar in plain sight and even pointing it out to your guests. You don't want to make anyone feel bad if they can't contribute, but those who can are usually happy to throw in a few dollars. Don't count on recouping all your costs, but if you are living on a budget, it can help.

Fundraising - Fundraising can be a source of funds for an event, but you must keep in mind you are not a charity. Expecting a local business to contribute to your event isn't a whole lot different than asking them to help foot the cost of your New Years cocktail party or your family's 4th of July Cookout. When soliciting contributions, you'll have better luck if you understand that businesses always have their radio tuned to WII FM (What's In It For Me). If you can't answer that question, you are likely spinning your wheels. However, by focusing on businesses that do have an interest in Geocaching, you might have better luck. If nothing else, you may be able get some "in kind" contributions rather than cash, perhaps an item for the local sporting goods store for the prize table.

Sales - Selling event-related items can be an effective means of raising money for an event, particularly a larger event. Focus on items that have a wide appeal but a low unit cost (if purchased in quantity). Geocoins and T-shirts are great examples.

Conclusion - Do it! Do it!

This brief explanation of how to bring the key elements of Food, Finds and Fellowship to your event should be a good starting point. If you are in an area where there have been events hosted by others, hopefully you've had a chance to attend one or more of them. Otherwise, another resource is the posted events that others have done. By reading those pages, you may get many ideas. For more ideas, you may want to look at the "Organized Geocaching" section and other areas on the Groundspeak forums.

The final step though is to post your event on geocaching.com. It works just like posting a cache except that you select "Geocaching Event (Event Cache)" as your cache type and you change the "Date Placed" to the actual date of the event. The really cool thing is you get a new icon! If you post it they will come. So do it. Do it!