

# SOCIAL MEDIA & EVENTS GUIDELINES

## Starting your Facebook page

**Cover Photo and Profile Photo:** Make sure all photos on your page are high resolution. Images should not be fuzzy, pixelated, or awkwardly cropped. Use your best judgement. Does the photo you've uploaded appear to be an image you'd see on a professional organization's social media platform? Or does it look like something an individual's profile might have on their own personal facebook page? Remember your Facebook page is a reflection of L'Arche and all forward facing collateral should exemplify your current standards.

Be sure all images are the following dimensions:

Cover Photo: 851 x 315px

Profile Photo: 180 x 180px

**About Section:** Complete your About page in full. This includes sections "overview" "page info" and "milestones." Refer to the official L'Arche USA About page for assistance. Mimic the official page as much as possible, with additional information about your specific program added in. Remember, as with anything on social media keep language short and to the point. Be succinct.

**Preparing and shortening URL links:** Shorten all url links *before* you share on social media. Using a link shortening program allows you to not only save all the links you have shared on social but it also cleans up the long, messy look of your links.

We suggest [bitly.com](https://bitly.com) as the preferred URL shortener network. In addition to shortening your links, bitly saves, and provides stats for each individual link you share. This information is good to have for tracking how your facebook post has been received by the audience. It is free to sign up. You should create your own bitly profile before setting up your page so you are ready to post once you have launched.

## Social Media Basics

**Crafting your post:** Do not share a post that is just text. You must direct readers to a url link. This could be a promotion on your website, blog posts, relevant and approves articles and content etc,.. or it can also be third party content from partners that strongly connects with your program or L'Arche in general.

To share a url link, grab the original url copy and paste into bitly. Bitly will then shorten the link for you and give you the option to "copy" the new bitly link for your chosen url.

Paste your shortened bitly link into the post section on your L'Arche FB profile. Do NOT post the url if Facebook does not provide a thumbnail image to go along with the link.

If for any reason, you paste a url within your Facebook post and no thumbnail preview image appears, you have a few options:

1. Refresh your Facebook page and try again.
2. Logout of facebook. Wait a few seconds. Log back in and retry the url.

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3. If all else fails, attach a relevant image within the post as a standalone photo and share the url. This will provide a visual when Facebook's preview thumbnail process is acting up.

**Language:** Just as you should not post anything on Facebook without a relevant url link to direct readers to, you should also not post any url link without the context of language. Your copy is extremely important when it comes to engaging with social media fans. Keep it short, catchy, and succinct in all of your social media messaging. An easy model to follow is the Hook then description model. First provide 1 very quick sentence to hook your audience, (this could be an engaging pull quote, a prompting question, an interesting fact or statistic, etc) then follow up in a separate paragraph below a VERY short, description of what you are sharing. See an example of this hook/description model from StoryCorps:

What happens when you listen? You help someone's memory live on.

Listen to Arlene remember her son, Tommy Sullivan, with daughter Norene and help StoryCorps [#SupportEveryVoice](#).

<http://bit.ly/1Dif7ea>

Finally, just because it is social media does not mean grammar, spelling and proper punctuation are not important. Triple check all copy being posted so any typos or mistakes can be avoided. The social media community always has a grammar-stickler out there to correct you, so anything that goes unchecked will be caught by your community!

**Hashtags:** Facebook does now use hashtags to follow and organize trending topics. It is smart to incorporate these when relevant to your social media language. Be sure to do some background research before using any hashtag. Facebook's own search function and google are great resources for this. When researching which hashtag to use, pay attention to the conversations being had using your potential hashtag. Do these conversations seem to relate to the topic you are trying to discuss in your post? Don't just use a hashtag because you see that it is trending or popular, make sure it makes sense in your context!

**Visuals:** Images are one of the most important pieces of social media. Your fans are more likely to click, like, and comment on posts that provide engaging, quality visuals. You have several options with photos on Facebook:

**Albums:** You can upload several photos on to an album. This is recommended for any event or single activity your program was involved in. Make sure to give the Album a name, a location, and a description.

A great way to engage followers on Facebook is to invite people who were present at this event/activity to tag themselves. This will assist in social media engagement and interacting with important community members.

Promptly monitor this album. If a guest requests an image of themselves to be taken down, respect their wish.

Double check all photography crediting requirements before posting.

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## **Sharing Photos or Videos as posts**

**Photos:** You can share a stand alone image in a post. To do this, simply go to your profile's posting section, click the section labelled "Photo/Video" and then click "Upload Photo/Video" and select the photo you want to share. Be sure to provide context with this image. Use language guidelines as you would with any normal post. It is encouraged to provide a link within a shared photo post to give audience members an action beyond the image.

***Dimension for a stand alone photo: 1200 x 1200px***

**Video:** You can also share videos directly to posts (as opposed to a url link to a video). This is done in a very similar way as sharing a stand alone photo. Go to your profile's posting section, click the section labelled "Photo/Video" and then click "Upload Photo/Video" and select the video you want to share.

Video content should be 1) visually appealing (ie no amateur camera work) 2) appropriate (no potentially offensive content) 3) In line with L'Arche USA's mission (nothing irrelevant to the work we do at L'Arche please).

**Uploading a photo within a thumbnail image from a post:** Sometimes, the thumbnail image that Facebook grabs from a url you want to share is not the image you'd like. You have the option of selecting "Upload Image" within the thumbnail picture. Once you click "Upload Image" you now have the option of placing your own image file within the clickable image link.

***Dimensions for a thumbnail image from a post: 1200 x 628px***

**Events:** You can create events to promote on Facebook. To do this, simply click the "Events/Offers" button within your profile's post box. Select "Events" and begin creating your event.

Make sure all needed descriptions for the event are listed (RSVP required, time, date, location, description, will food or drink be available, etc?)

Do NOT neglect to use a visual for your event page.

***Dimension for Event Photo: 1200 x 444px***

It is NOT recommended that an event on Facebook take the place of an actual event page elsewhere such as eventbrite, or traditional invitations, etc. Remember that RSVP's on facebook do not often translate to real RSVP's. A separate means of collecting and confirming guest information will be needed (see Events guidelines for suggestions).

Be sure to collect guest information during your events as well and pay attention to any guests from events that interact with your Facebook pages. These are most likely your loyal community fan base, and should be responded to promptly on social media to secure this relationship.

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## Events-Planning Guidelines

This is a set of guidelines designed to handle a range of event types and sizes. Not every guideline will apply to every event being held at every location, so the planner should work with his or her supervisor and the Special Events team to determine what is appropriate for a particular event.

## **Objectives**

All events should start with a detailed plan of objectives, to be reviewed no later than 8 weeks before the event date. Without objectives, there is no way of measuring the success of an event and no way to improve upon them in the future. Common objectives for events include:

### Programming:

- Increase in successful community partnerships
- Solidification of community partnership agreements
- Increased visibility in the local community that could lead to increased public interview sign-ups
- Successful positive touch of a target community or population

### Press:

- Publication of L'Arche USA -related stories in print, on television, and on the radio
- Strengthening of relationships with local and national reporters, especially of major metropolitan and national news outlets

### Marketing:

- Lead generation in the following areas:
  - Unique visitors to our websites and social media sites
  - New active engagement and/or followers on social media sites and YouTube
  - Overall increases in public interview reservations
  - Increased use of/traffic to the do it yourself page
  - Creation of material for the blog

### Development:

- Discovery of new major donor or corporate sponsorship prospects
- Successful interaction with current prospects that could lead to increased individual giving
- Increase in local membership or membership enrollment by attendees
- Scheduling of face to face meetings to discuss financial sponsorships
- Satisfaction of current funders by making them feel that they are getting the recognition and/or marketing power given by the partnership
- Completion of grant deliverable requirements

## **Metrics**

The return on investment for an event is frequently difficult to ascertain, as so many of the objectives are intangibles, such as relationship- or morale-building. However, some easily measurable metrics that we would like to establish for all events are:

1. **Personal data collection.** All guests should be invited to join our mailing lists and/or provide full contact information when registering to attend an event. All events should strive to achieve a minimum of a 50% data collection rate.

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- 2. Creation of material for social media and press.** Useable photos and quotes for blog posts, social media posts, and sharing should be taken at every event. At least 10-15 useable photos and a paragraph-long summary of highlights from the evening should be provided to M&C within 24 hours of the event.

### Timelines

Below is an ideal event timeline. Having a meeting at least 8 weeks out gives planners plenty of time to accommodate any new or different objectives that are brought to the table at said meeting, and having a venue and basic refreshments needs hammered out by this time alleviate a lot of the pressures involved with planning an event. Invitations tend to be more successful if they are sent a minimum of 6 weeks before the event itself. It makes people feel like they were valued and thought about in the planning of an event, as well as gives them time to consider their schedules and plan. Keeping everyone and everything on the same schedule allows planners to assess the health of the RSVP list and guest list so that they can adjust as necessary throughout the four-week open invite period, including if they need to extend that or change the nature of the event.

| Date         | Activity                                   |
|--------------|--|
| 8 weeks out  | Event Kickoff Meeting                      |
| 8 weeks out  | Venue & Caterer (if applicable) booked     |
| 7 weeks out  | Invitation Lists Gathered and Collated     |
| 7 weeks out  | A/V Rented; Web Requests Submitted         |
| 6 weeks out  | Event Invitations Sent                     |
| 4 weeks out  | Invitation Follow-up Begins                |
| 2 weeks out  | RSVP Deadline                              |
| 2 weeks out  | Program Finalized                          |
| 1 week out   | Reminder Emails Sent                       |
| Event Date   | Party                                      |
| 1 day after  | Thank You Emails Sent                      |
| 1 week after | Personalized Follow Up to Individuals Sent |

### Notes on Specific Timeline Items

#### Kickoff

Not every event requires a formal kickoff meeting or extended timeline. When a planner would like to schedule an event, they should contact the Community Leader to determine how formal the process needs to be. If an event is going to be public-facing, the Community Coordinator should be informed via email.

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## Invitations

Event planners may choose to send invitations through whatever mechanism is appropriate and convenient for their purposes. This can be through regular email, through an event website such as Eventbrite, or through a database like eTapestry. All invitation copy for public-facing events should be run past the relevant coordinator to ensure that any necessary sponsor or donor credits are included.

## **Production/ Day-Of**

All events must have a detailed run of show, prepared no later than the day before an event, and approved by the morning of the event. This should include all relevant details, including staff assignments, timing of deliveries and vendors' arrivals, setup, breakdown, and departure, guest arrivals and departures, VIP guest information, program information broken down piece by piece, and the general flow of the evening.

## **Staffing**

Proper staffing is vital to the success of any event. There should be at least one staff member per 20 attendees present at all times at an event. There should be at least one staff member assigned to check-in per 50 attendees at an event. There should be one staff member designated as the event manager, who will be able to handle any problems that might arise, from late deliveries, to problems at check-in, to missing presenters. If there are volunteers involved in the event, there should be one staff member, who is *not* the event manager, designated as the volunteer coordinator. Staffing should be included on the Run of Show for approval by the relevant leaders

## **Follow-Up**

The intrinsic values to attendees of an event—face-time, inclusion, a common bond, new connections, etc.—are best solidified and capitalized upon as soon after the event as possible. This makes follow-up a crucial part of event strategy. All event attendees should receive some sort of thank you as soon as possible after the event, preferably the next day. This can be somewhat impersonal, such as a nicely worded mass email, as those attendees with whom we want to create a partnership, or ask for a gift, or ask to publish an article, can and should be followed up with individually by the staff members who spoke to them. If attendees aren't contacted within a week of the event, the opportunity is gone, and the value of having them attend drops significantly. Also, a full list of attendees and their accompanying contact information (if that has been collected,) should be provided within three days of an event, for entry into the appropriate database. This allows for a more accurate list collection for future events, and allows them to be added to mailing lists, prospect lists, etc.

## **L'Arche Events-Membership & Individual Giving**

**Email Collection:** Please have a sign-up sheet where event attendees can share their email addresses. An iPad with an Excel or Google Docs spreadsheet is preferable, but paper and pen is also acceptable. Please submit the sign-up sheets (email or scan) back to Development no longer than 48 hours after the event ends.

**Giving Pitch:** Event managers should take two minutes during the event program to make an "educational" announcement about L'Arche. During these two minutes, the manager should introduce themselves and speak briefly about L'Arche. The event manager should invite all attendees to visit our website and encourage them to make a donation or become a L'Arche USA

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Member in order to support our mission. Stress to them that every gift counts, no matter how big or small and that our work depends on their support.

**Collateral:** Every event should have a visible space where membership brochures can be placed for people to take.

**Special Guests & Members:** In the event that development staff is unable to attend an event, and should donors or members be present, the site staff will be sent a bio brief on the donors/members in attendance so they can personally greet and thank them for coming.