

Annual Auction Solicitation FAQ's

If you are thinking about getting involved in solicitation for the CCS Annual Auction or are just curious about what it takes to become a solicitor, here are some FAQ's that might help.

Q. What exactly do you mean when you talk about auction solicitation?

A. Auction Solicitation is the process of approaching companies and businesses, either in person or by email, to request a donation of goods or services that Conestoga Christian school (a nonprofit organization) can then sell during our annual auction.

Q. How involved do I need to be? / How much time will I need to spend doing this?

A. How involved do you *want* to be? You can give it a try by starting with one or two businesses. Solicitation can be something you do in your spare time, maybe 30 minutes per week... OR you can dive in headfirst – the sky is the limit. It's totally up to you.

Q. I'm too shy and I'm not very outgoing.

A. That's OK. Not everybody is good @ face-to-face interaction with people they don't know, that's why we have "ON-LINE" solicitation opportunities for larger "corporate" businesses. We have the forms & documents that you can either attach as a file or cut-n-paste into an e-mail. We also have pre-printed solicitation letters that can be mailed to businesses requesting a donation.

Q. I'm not good at walking into a business and asking someone I don't know for a "hand-out". I feel out of place and I never know what to say.

A. Believe it or not, solicitation doesn't take a lot of words or conversation to be successful. A simple handshake, your name and a short sentence or two about the CCS Fall Auction is all it takes. PLUS we have a pre-printed solicitation letter to help convey the message.

Q. I don't know WHO/WHAT businesses to contact?

A. We have an ever growing list of local and corporate businesses that we can pull from to help create a list that will fit your level of involvement as well as your strengths. Also, consider what businesses you frequent, both locally and on a corporate level? Restaurants, car repair shops, hair & nail salon, spa, clothing & department stores, etc. The things YOU enjoy and are a part of your normal day-to-day life are most likely going to be something someone else appreciated and finds value in. Plus it is easier to start with a store owner or employee that you have regular contact with and are comfortable talking to.

Q. What does it take? What is involved in solicitation?

A. We have a "Solicitor's Packet" with all the necessary forms & paperwork as well as instructions on "how to" solicit businesses both "face-to-face" as well as "on-line". PLUS, for ease of use, these forms are also available on Parents Web.

Solicitation Instructions and Helpful Hints

First let me thank you for your willingness to be a solicitor for the CCS Annual Auction! If you have **any** questions about the process please don't hesitate to contact me... this takes a TEAM & I am always there to support my team! Also, feel free to make any suggestions for improvement(s) to the solicitation process. I/we are always open to new ideas that will make the process more user-friendly as well as bolstering the income for the school.

A link to all businesses that are being solicited or still need contacted is available on Parents Web in the Announcement Section

ON-LINE Auction Solicitation

CONTACTING AN ONLINE BUSINESS:

- Once you have located the business' web-site, search for a link or e-mail dedicated to "charitable donations", "community relations" or "contact us" if neither of the first two options can be found.
- Determine if they require an "ON-LINE" request or if the request needs to be mailed in.

For "ON-LINE" requests;

- Some larger companies have online forms that they ask you to fill out. Their website will guide you through this process.
- For smaller companies an email is how you can submit a request. Just CUT & PASTE the script from the "E-Mail Form Letter" (included in your SOLICITOR'S PACKET or on our website).
- Add YOUR NAME & CONTACT INFORMATION to the "E-Mail Form Letter" in the spaces provided.
- ATTACH the SOLICITATION letter found on Parents Web (and included in your SOLICITOR'S PACKET) to your ON-LINE request.

For "SUBMISSIONS BY MAIL";

- Find out whom the letter needs to be sent to prior to submitting your request.
- Official CCS solicitation letters and envelopes are available at the Main Office. Please stop in to pick up a letter for each business you are soliciting prior to submitting your request(s).
- Please "write-in" your name and preferred contact information at the bottom of the letter where it says "CCS PATRON". They need to know how to contact you when they are ready to donate!

"FACE-to-FACE" Auction Solicitation

CONTACTING A BUSINESS:

- Whenever possible, we ask that you visit each business so they can "put a face" with the school. This helps give some credibility to the school and the event which they may be donating to and inevitably will help create a relationship for future contact.
 - If you prefer to call ahead this is fine but we still want there to be some form of LIVE "face-to-face" interaction during the process.
- Prior to visiting a business, please be sure to have the following forms/paperwork with you:
 - A pre-printed solicitation letter, available @ the CCS main office or online. There is a simple letter or a letter with both the Donation Tag and Contribution Receipt included for easy access. Use the version you are more comfortable with.
 - Make sure to "write-in" your name and preferred contact information at the bottom of the letter where it says "CCS PATRON".
 - A CONTRIBUTION RECEIPT to give to the business owner for their records should you receive a donation @ the time of your initial visit.

- You may also want to consider keeping a folder in your car with the donation letters should the opportunity to solicit a business arise unexpectedly.

FOLLOW-UP:

- When you visit the business, please be sure to pick up a business card for your follow up process and to help with recording their business information on our spreadsheet(s).
- If the person you speak with needs to “think it over” or has to forward the information to another person, ask when a good time to follow-up would be. If no time frame is given, we recommend waiting 3-5 days before re-contacting them for the follow-up.

RECEIVING A DONATION:

- When you receive a donation, whether @ the time of your initial visit or on a return visit, please fill out a CONTRIBUTION RECEIPT to give to the business owner for their records.
- Once you have returned home, please take the time to fill out a THANK YOU card to drop off or mail to the business. If possible, please address the thank you note to the person by name.
 - THANK YOU notes can be picked up @ the main office.
 - You may also drop them off @ the main office to be mailed.
- Prior to dropping off donations @ the school, each item must have a DONATION TAG filled out & attached to item, describing the item and identifying the donor (this is not necessary for gift certificates).

NOTE: If a business feels that they do not have anything tangible to donate, feel free to suggest that CCS also has corporate sponsorship opportunities. Please take their information and forward it to Ken Parris so that he can follow up with your contact.

NEW CONTACTS:

Any time you contact a new business that is not on our database please make sure to record and e-mail the following info to me @ the e-mail address listed below so that I can continue to UPDATE the spreadsheet(s).

- Business Name
- Address
- Phone #
- Name of Contact Person
- Web address
- E-mail address
- Any other pertinent details about the business, their guidelines/preferred method of contact, their willingness to be solicited in the future, etc.

Please update the Google Doc with your name and date contacted when you have solicited **ANY** business, **NEW** or otherwise, so that we can monitor how we are doing as a team.

Thank you again for your commitment to making our Annual Auction a SUCCESS.

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