

2016 GFWC Florida Fundraising and Development Creativity Report



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Terror on Main Street

The GFWC Florida Sebastian River Jr. WC held its 36th annual Haunted House in October of 2016. This is their largest PR project and they do it with limited club funds. They rely on social media as their source of advertisement. Members begin promoting the project in January by updating their club website (www.gfwcsebastianjrs.org), their haunted house website (www.sebastianhauntedhouse.org), and various Florida Haunted House Websites. They link to the city's Sebastian Haunted House site and many Haunted House Attraction websites, which are the first places a haunter checks. They include the GFWC logo on each page of the website. Starting in September they update sites weekly so that Google searches result in theirs popping up at the top. They took advantage of Facebook and posted daily, including videos (and the hurricane damage). Members placed posters donated by a local printer all around town. The club solicited sponsors, and in exchange for their monetary support, they provided them with signs for their business. Members list all sponsors right on both buildings of the Haunted House. The club also provides complimentary tickets to the sponsors as additional advertisement. They begin construction in August, when the house transforms from four vacant lots to two giant buildings, 17,000 SF, in about a month. The club uses over 1100 2' x 4's and 260 sheets of plywood to build 140 8' x 8' walls. For the last 6 years the community has watched this prime location transform from four vacant lots to two giant buildings right before their eyes. Once the outside walls are built, banners with dates, admission info and the GFWC Florida Logo are placed on the walls. The club even includes a replica of the Jennie June Croly cemetery plot in New Jersey on the grounds of the house. In 2016, members overcame the adversity of the wrath of Hurricane Matthew from late September until it dissipated October 10. They had to rebuild the houses in order to continue their 36 year tradition. Through perseverance and determination, the Sebastian Juniors, the Sebastian Woman's Club members, the Junioresettes, and Boosters from all three clubs pulled it off. They were able to be open only 7 of the usual 10 days, but turned this into a plus with social media and the community watching and rooting for them. Those involved in building and working on the weekends also helped in the rebuilding effort. You see, they build it, then become the actors staffing the haunted walls, and then help tear it down and store for the next year.

With a total of 5,003 volunteer hours they raised \$13,464. This was \$5,000 more than the prior year even with the 7 vs. 10 days open schedule due to Hurricane Matthew. They came out in droves to support the GFWC FL Sebastian River Junior Club.

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