

Central MN Elder Network's

Cottage Tour : An annual event since 2003 - Held the 1st Tuesday in August from 3-7 p.m.

- August usually assures good weather and it's a no holiday month.
- 7:00 p.m. allows those who work to attend.
- No less than 5 cottages on tour. We had 6 this year plus a garage for the boutique. We try to stay with true cottages because they are so rich in history but have in the past had more modern homes. All are located on lakes.
- Tickets are \$20 advance and \$25 at the door.
- Tickets are sold at 2 grocery stores and 1 drug store.
- Insurance - we used to get a special one day policy for the event but found it more cost effective to have it built into our general policy. If an individual homeowner needs proof of liability, the insurance company will provide copies as needed.

Volunteers: we have a "Cottage Tour Committee" of 4; an event chairwoman who oversees details, a ticket person, an advertising person, and a volunteer coordinator. This committee, and anyone who is willing to ask, finds the cottages that will be on the tour. In addition we supply 5 volunteers (1 hostess & 4 'guides') for each cottage on tour.

Tickets: I design the tickets. The tickets are actually a combination of things: A ticket, a write up for each cottage and a map to the cottages. I print on basic 8.5 x 11 white paper, front and back and tri-fold; like a brochure.

A boutique (donated new & used (really good used items)) is held at one of the cottages which has had a very popular following & has brought in as much as \$1,200 in one year. HOWEVER, this is very time consuming to display, price, etc. & what doesn't sell has to be dealt with.

- This year & going forward we are trying something different-we now are inviting local artists to display and sell their wares and donate some of the proceeds they make that afternoon to Elder Network. This year our artists included handmade pottery (they donated 50% of their proceeds) and a yarn/wool spinner, etc.
- It is our belief that it is yet another way to join forces with our local community and the Cottage Tour committee is thrilled not to have to deal with all the donated items.

Lemonade & cookies are served at the boutique location.

- Thus far the lemonade & cookies have been donated. We have had to purchase cups & napkins occasionally but the Dollar Store keeps costs down for these items.
- This is also a good place to have a table with your brochures/literature and board members to tell about your program. You have a captive audience.

Advertising = \$590

- Full page article w/ pictures in our local newspaper and one small ad in the Senior Perspective.
- Printing of tickets.
- Open line at our local radio station-2 people from Elder Network are interviewed live about our program and event.
- Posters are done free (local printer will do them for free with their ad/logo on the bottom of poster)
- Anyone & everyone that has an electronic reader board in town are asked to display the date of the event. Also businesses, churches, banks, hospital, are asked to display a poster. We also advertise event in our own Elder Network newsletter.

This event is our largest fundraiser of the year. Our profit along with matching funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans was around \$5,900. At one time the amount approached \$9,000.