



Adopt-a-Ghost[®] Program Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction to the Program	1
• How the program works	
• What are the benefits to my Chapter?	
How to Execute the Basic Program.	1-3
• Managing the program	
» Building relationships with community partners	
» Collecting funds	
» Prizes	
• Guide to getting local businesses involved	
• Promoting Adopt-a-Ghost to the media	
• Ordering information	
Program Options: How to Grow the Program.....	4-5
• Developing a marketing plan	
• Creating support events	
Resources	on CD
• Skeleton marketing plan	
• Interest letter templates	
• Phone script	
• Sample flyer	

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Adopt-a-Ghost® is a national fundraising program that was originally created by the Spina Bifida Association of Kentucky (SBAK). It not only raises funds for local Spina Bifida Chapters but also raises awareness about Spina Bifida in the community, among both businesses and individuals. This manual provides information first on setting up a basic program and then offers ideas for expanding to a larger fundraising program.

The Adopt-a-Ghost program consists of offering small paper ghosts for sale in your community. It relies on building a relationship between SBA Chapters and stores, restaurants, and businesses in your communities. SBA Chapters order pre-printed ghosts from a centralized print vendor at very low prices (details outlined in this manual). The Chapter then solicits local stores and businesses to offer the ghosts for “resale” during Spina Bifida Awareness Month in October. Each ghost is “sold” for a \$1.00 donation to the Chapter. Business employees may be incentivized through prizes which are given out by the SBA Chapter based on employees’ or participants’ sales.

The basic program is very straightforward and easy to administer, by simply looking to local businesses to put ghosts up for adoption; yet it can also grow to include larger fundraising events at schools, girls and boys groups, churches or synagogues, and other venues.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO MY CHAPTER?

- **Raise awareness of Spina Bifida during Awareness Month (October):** When displayed in local businesses, the ghosts create visibility and interest in Spina Bifida and the challenges it causes as well as offer information on how to lower the rate of occurrence. Chapters can ask that flyers or information on Spina Bifida be posted alongside the ghosts (available on CD).
- **Low cost of program execution:** At a cost as low as \$.04 per ghost, your Chapter can see a return of up to \$.96 per ghost!
- **Adopt-a-Ghost is an SBA core program:** Participation in SBA core programs is a part of the minimum affiliation requirements.

HOW TO EXECUTE THE BASIC PROGRAM

MANAGING THE PROGRAM

Managing the Adopt-a-Ghost program is simple. This manual provides a step-by-step overview of how to get the program started, as well as a longer term marketing plan template. In the resources section of this manual are sample letter templates, phone scripts, and typical questions and answers that can all help you to do this.

The first step is to send out letters (or make phone calls) to local businesses asking them to participate in this valuable program at no cost to them. Look to restaurants, grocery stores, dry cleaners, video stores, convenience stores, etc. Shortly after the letters have gone out (or phone calls have been made), walk into local businesses and approach the manager. You should indicate you work/volunteer for the local Spina Bifida Association Chapter and are seeking help from local businesses to raise funds and awareness. Have copies of the Spina Bifida brochure and Adopt-a-Ghost Frequently Asked Questions to hand out. Remind them that **the program will not cost the business anything, but will greatly assist your local Chapter and community.** Suggest a number of ghosts each business could offer for sale (100 for a smaller enterprise such as a packing/shipping store and a larger number—300 to 500—for a grocery store or restaurant). Find out how many ghosts each participating business is willing to adopt and then place your order with the printer.

Once the ghosts have arrived, deliver them to the businesses along with a flyer they can post that offers information on Spina Bifida and your local Chapter. Ask the manager to remind the cashiers to offer the ghosts to each customer. To make the program easier, businesses with the ability to scan a bar code will enter the item number with the price into their computer system. Attendants and/or customers may simply scan the bar code located on the ghost. At the end of the month, the business will have a record of the number of ghosts adopted and will make a check payable to your SBA Chapter. For businesses without scanning ability, recommend keeping an envelope in the cash drawer and each employee can turn it in at the end of their shift.

Check back with the businesses mid-way through October to determine whether they need more ghosts (or whether they have received too many ghosts, which can then be moved to a higher selling location).

GUIDE TO GETTING LOCAL BUSINESSES INVOLVED

Local businesses are often interested in ways they can support the community, especially when there is no cost to them. Start with businesses you are familiar with. Those with multiple locations can be a great way to “grow” your core group quickly.

Once a business has signed on, try targeting businesses of a similar type or area. Being able to reference to a grocery store that the dry cleaner next door is participating will help legitimize the program.

Create a flyer with the “selling points” of the program to distribute or use the Frequently Asked Questions document provided on this CD. The most fundamental points to emphasize are that the program costs the business nothing to implement, but helps the community and those with Spina Bifida. A basic solicitation letter template has also been provided that you can customize for your own efforts.

If a business decides not to participate, try to find out why. Knowing their reasoning might help you better prepare your pitch for the next business, help alleviate some concerns other businesses might have, and know who to keep on your list to try again for next year and who is best to leave off.

PROMOTE ADOPT-A-GHOST TO THE LOCAL MEDIA

Creating buzz for the program through your local media is key to building a successful program. Not only does it build awareness among potential new businesses and groups but it also builds program recognition in potential ghost adopters. Local businesses will also be more eager to participate if they feel they will receive some wider recognition. Each year you can show businesses the press clippings from the previous year when approaching them to participate in the program.

You may also find that the publicity brings in independent donations that help the fundraising efforts. Send out releases about not only the standard Adopt-a-Ghost program but also about any events you plan to do in conjunction. Whenever possible, highlight individuals’ names or the names of businesses to help publicize their involvement and also put a face on the program. In addition to encouraging awareness about Spina Bifida and your Chapter, use the publicity as a way to deliver your folic acid messages. Smaller community publications and newspapers (as opposed to city-wide newspapers) will be the most likely to include articles.

At the conclusion of the program, in November, you may want to institute an “awards ceremony” for those businesses selling the most ghosts; again, this should be something a community paper would be interested in covering, and press clippings could be included in the following year’s solicitation letters.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Quantum Graphix, a printing company based in Louisville, Ky., provides the printed ghost supplies at a minimum cost to SBA Chapters across the country. Through its user-friendly, online ordering system, it is easy to order and replenish your supply.

- First, be sure you have faxed your tax exemption certificate to Quantum Graphix at 502-493-8360, attn: Accounting. Double check that the information on your certificate matches either your checks or credit card (whichever you'll be using for payment).
- Go to <http://www.myorderdesk.com/quantumgraphix> on the Web. Bookmark this link to your Favorite links so you can easily find it next time. You can also access this by going to the main site (www.quantumgraphix.net) and clicking on the "online ordering" tab on the left hand side of the web page.
- Click the MY ACCOUNT tab near the top of the page. Click the START HERE button to the left.
- Enter your email address and password (6 characters minimum) twice each. Click the NEXT button.
- Complete the form. Be sure to complete all required fields. Click the FINISH button and the OK to continue.
- When prompted to download the LAUNCH! Web Helper, click OK. A 2nd internet window will open (and will quickly minimize)—simply close that window as you will not need the LAUNCH! Web Helper for ordering your ghosts. After your initial account setup, you shouldn't see the LAUNCH! Web Helper messages but if you do, please ignore/cancel/close them.
- Click OK at the "Your account has been updated" message. That will bring you back to the page containing your account profile. Scroll down and select your correct time zone and click the UPDATE button and OK.
- Click the SEND FILES & ORDERS tab near the top of the page. Once the screen refreshes, click it again. That will take you to the "Next Step" page. Click the LOG OUT tab to the right and call Michelle Wechsler at 866-493-5933 so that you can gain access to the Spina Bifida Adopt-a-Ghost order form.
- Once you have been granted access, go back to <http://www.myorderdesk.com/quantumgraphix> and click the SEND FILES & ORDERS tab. Click the SIGN IN button to the right, enter your email address and password and click SIGN IN.
- Click the Spina Bifida Adopt-a-Ghost Order Form link to place your order. The order form is very simple to use but feel free to contact Michelle with any questions. You can view your order history by clicking the MY JOBS tab.
- Your ghosts will be shipped to you via UPS within 5 business days.
- Expect your invoice in the mail shortly thereafter. The shipping/handling charges are not included in the prices shown on the order form but will be included on your invoice. Payment terms are Net 30.

EXPANDING THE PROGRAM: OTHER PROGRAM OPTIONS

Adopt-a-Ghost can be a wonderful fundraising and awareness building program for your SBA Chapter but part of its ongoing success will be in expanding the program from year to year. The basic model may be expanded on to widen the type of groups participating and to add other fundraising vehicles. Below are a few ideas you may wish to incorporate after your initial experience with the Adopt-a-Ghost program.

DEVELOP A NEW MARKETING PLAN EACH YEAR.

By planning ahead you can better target businesses and community partners that may be growth opportunities for you. Soliciting businesses early on gives them time to consider the program and be more open to the idea. If you have seen a lot of success in restaurants, as opposed to stores, you may want to increase the amount of restaurants you ask to participate. Find out if participating businesses have other locations they might be willing to include on the program. Solicit larger businesses and institutions, such as local colleges or hospital cafeterias. Businesses with lots of different day-to-day traffic such as grocery stores, bowling alleys, and banks will provide you with new people every day who may be interested. A skeleton marketing plan is provided for you as a guide. Generally, the larger the business or organization, the further out in time you should anticipate the planning process must be. Schools, colleges, and larger institutions may have participation requirements that smaller businesses do not and it takes time to work through those requirements.

CREATE A SUPPORTING EVENT TO DRIVE INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION.

By creating supporting events, the Adopt-a-Ghost program can begin to appeal to more than just your “buying” audience. Developing the right events can allow you to more easily target businesses and interest groups, in addition to bringing in more funds for you. One example of this is a Ghost Bowl: SBA of Kentucky developed a Ghost Bowl at a local bowling alley, which they hold at the end of SB Awareness Month to conclude the Adopt-a-Ghost program. Participants are asked to register as either an individual or a team and solicit sponsor pledges to participate in the event. They offer four bowling times ranging from afternoon to late night to appeal to families, teenagers, and adults

Schools and local boys and girls groups (for example, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, church groups) may also be eager to participate in a fundraising event. This can fulfill community service requirements many organizations have. Each organization needs to be approached individually to determine what requirements they have for participating. Decide whether you would like each participant to solicit funds door-to-door or whether they will participate together in a single fundraising event. The Ghost Bowl is one example; others are a bat-a-thon, basketball scoring contest, or jump rope gathering. The simplest way is for the participants to solicit and collect flat donations before the event and hand in their donations at the event itself. Alternatively, each participant solicits a pledge relating to the event (\$1.00 per hit for the bat-a-thon or per basket for basketball, etc.) and returns to those who pledged to collect the money. This adds an extra step and is therefore more complicated and time consuming.

OFFER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.

The SBA of Kentucky uses an award system to thank its participating businesses and organizations, described below. This may be easiest to develop after you've had some experience with the program (in the second or third years, for example). The award system incentivizes employees and businesses to participate. It offers gift certificates based on collected donations. The gift certificates can be donated by other local organizations/businesses or can come from funds each Chapter raises. If the former, be sure to include canvassing local businesses to donate gift certificates as you begin each year's planning and timeline for the Adopt-a-Ghost program.

The system that SBA of Kentucky uses follows these guidelines:

- Individuals and/or Employees:
 - » \$20 gift certificate to each individual that has collected donations for 150 ghosts
 - » \$50 gift certificate to each individual that has collected donations for 500 ghosts
 - » \$100 gift certificate to each individual that has collected donations for 700 ghosts
- Groups/Schools:
 - » Appreciation party (minimum adoptions may be required)
 - » Gift certificates issued to the top selling group/class/organization
 - » Gift certificates issued to the top selling individual within his or her group