



A Cops-on-Top a.k.a. Building Sit – is a unique and successful fundraising idea that originated in North Carolina and has gone on to become a trademark Torch Run event worldwide. It requires officers to sit on a building for a period of time or even several days in an attempt to raise awareness and funds for SONC. The individual on the roof often will use a megaphone to attract attention and request that people give donations to additional volunteers standing at street level.

Ideally, Cops-on-Top events should be held at high traffic locations such as fast food restaurants like Chick-fil-A, or large retail stores such as Walmart.

The events that raise the most money also have other attractions beyond the law enforcement officials on the roof. These events have included bounce houses, DJ's, static displays, dunking booths, clowns and other costumed characters, corn hole tournaments, car seat checks, etc. The more additional items you can use to attract more visitors, the more funds you can raise.

Below is a proposed timeline to help guide you on your way to an effective and fun event.

### **Sixty Days Prior to the Event**

- Coordinate an organizational meeting with your the local store manager(s) in your area to discuss event dates, partnership overlays and logistics.
- Set a fundraising goal for your event.
- Create an internal incentive or challenge to meet the fundraising goal. Discuss the goal with the store manager, so he can tell his employees.
- Contact your department and other departments in neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate event dates.
- Get permission to use marked patrol cars, special unit equipment, K-9's and motorcycles as displays.
- Coordinate with local TV, radio and print media to create and garner sponsorship for event publicity and contact SONC for assistance with press releases.
- Establish a relationship with a local radio station for an all-day live remote on site.
- Coordinate cell phones for communication, chairs, tents, special lighting for the roof, etc.
- Consider other entertainment options to drive traffic to event (celebrity dunking booth, face painting, a band, car show, etc). Contact any local sports teams about costumed mascots and/or cheerleaders attending.
- Order Torch Run t-shirts and hats to have on hand for donation incentives.
- Submit an Event Notification form to [nctorchrun@sonc.net](mailto:nctorchrun@sonc.net).
- Ask the store manager to allow the sale of Torch Run icons for a dollar donation. Icons are available from SONC.

### **Thirty Days Prior to the Event**

- Host second organizational meeting to discuss planning progress with your the local store manager(s).
- Send out second notification within your department asking for volunteers for the event.
- Coordinate with the local Special Olympics Coordinator to arrange for Special Olympics athletes to participate in the event.
- Localize and distribute event press release on departmental letterhead.
- Make follow up media calls to promote the event.
- Reserve any equipment needed at the site: tents, inflatables, building materials.

- Confirm the use of marked patrol cars, special vehicles, mounted officers, and displays, if there is space available and the store manager approves.
- Arrange for a portable sound system. One that plays music CDs will add a lot to the fun.
- See about getting any police lighting to the roof for the nighttime portions.
- Arrange for any special signage to be posted on the streets 500 feet from the store and in front of the store. Post flyers in the store if the manager approves.
- Educate and promote the event to local businesses and the community through posters, flyers, media and word of mouth.

#### **Fourteen Days Prior to the Event**

- Confirm any special guest sitters including the Chief, Sheriff, or your boss.
- Confirm any guest sitters from the media or the community such as the mayor, or an elected official.
- Invite the manager to join you on the roof for a time, or if the manager approves, maybe reward an employee who has done an outstanding job for the company and the event.
- Confirm any special live broadcasts by the local radio and television stations. Be sure to have a schedule of times available for them. Shoot for live broadcasts – for example have the meteorologist do the weather from the roof.
- Develop a work schedule for your ground crew that covers the entire period. Do four to six hour shifts for the ground crew. Your police roof sitters are there for the duration of the event. They come down only for bathroom breaks, and severe weather.
- Confirm you have to have plenty of Torch Run shirts and hats on hand.
- Promote the event to local law enforcement agencies, businesses and the community through posters, flyers, media, and word of mouth.

#### **Seven Days Prior to the Event**

- Make final site visit with the store manager(s) to go over the event logistics – Walk through set up on the roof and on the ground.
- Obtain Torch Run and Cop-on-Top banners from SONC.
- If necessary, distribute another press release with any updates on guest sitters, if applicable, and make follow up media calls to promote the event.
- Arrange for nearby parking for volunteers, if necessary.
- Provide talking points and event information for radio station to use during live remote - Contact SONC for assistance, if needed.
- Educate and promote the event to local law enforcement agencies, businesses and community through posters, flyers, media and word of mouth.

#### **Day Prior to the Event**

- Set up anything that has to be erected on site, such as scaffolding, tents, etc with permission from store manager.
- Be sure that anything that you have to set up or build is safely secured and is approved by the manager. • Verify location and access to electricity, if necessary.
- Set up tents if they are being used on the roof for sleeping or on the ground for volunteers and t-shirt sales.
- Localize and distribute media advisory to the media.
- Make final media calls to promote the event.

## Day of the Event

- Arrive at event site early!
- Set up all banners and signage.
- Meet with your volunteers and train them on what they can and can't do on the site, including the appropriate terminology when referring to the athletes.
- Brief your guest building sitters.
- Make going up on the roof a media event. Ask the fire department to bring a ladder truck to lift the sitter to the roof.
- Include the store manager and employees in media interviews.
- Ensure that all participants have signed the required waiver.

## During the Event

- Have all participants wearing Torch Run shirts, including store employees. Provide them the shirts at no cost, if the manager approves.
- Make sure everyone wears sun block even in the colder months.
- Have anyone working near a street or intersection wear a safety vest.
- When collecting donations from customers don't block access to the store or drive through window.
- When collecting at the drive through, position the volunteer at a point where the customer has already ordered and picked up his food.
- Make the customers aware - as they approach - of any special offers or donation rewards offered by the store.
- Have your sitters maintain a constant dialogue with the customers and passersby.
- Hand out any free samples and coupons provided by the store.
- Update the manager and media on money totals at the end of each day.
- If water, food, and beverages are provided by the store, assign one ground crew member as a point person to avoid confusion and congestion in the store.
- Assign a contact person for the store manager for each shift of volunteers. Have that person introduce themselves to the manager at the start of each shift, so if concerns do arise the manager knows who can handle it.
- Keep a record of volunteers for ordering incentive items from SONC.

## After the Event

- Leave the area as clean, if not cleaner, than you found it.
- Hold a short event debriefing session to discuss the event. Advise the manager of how much money was raised and discuss what could be done to make the event even better next year.
- Thank the manager and all the employees for allowing you and your crew to be a part of the store.
- Send out thank you letters to all of the media that came out or who provided advertisement. Personalize the letters for reporters and radio hosts who sat with you, or interviewed you.
- Send out thank you letters to the store manager and all the other sponsors who provided food, equipment, and other resources.
- Advise SONC how much money you raised and make your deposits.
- Arrange for an appropriate plaque or framed letter to be presented to the store.
- Return the Cop-on-Top banners to Michelle Zaski as soon as possible.
- **Last but not least, thank all of your volunteers and the athletes that came out and worked so hard to make the event a success!**