

Steps for Planning an MSPA Event

1. Gather key background information. Understand the goals of your event and any history from prior years. Confirm that the date is on the school's master calendar. Calendaring is done through calendar@menloschool.com and most events have a date assigned before the school year starts.
2. Know your budget. Confirm whether the funding will come from the MSPA Treasurer or from the school. Know the policies for reimbursement. The MSPA does not pay for bartenders, valets, extra servers or appreciation gifts for volunteers, and tips are limited to \$200. The MSPA also does not pay for alcohol - if that is part of your event, it should be collected through a parent sign-up sheet. Certain payments must be made directly by the MSPA not by a volunteer (see #5) so be sure to plan ahead to coordinate with the MSPA Treasurer. To keep things equitable and sustainable, parent underwriting is discouraged and collecting cash donations is not permitted other than exceptional situations approved by the MSPA Co-Presidents.
3. Make your plans. Review the Event Resources page on the Menlo website for ideas and procedures. Secure your vendor(s). If needed, explore ways to extend the budget with sign-up sheet or borrowing décor and supplies from volunteers, the MSPA "cage" or Menlo facilities. Remember the best way to keep within budget is to keep things simple. MSPA events are typically buffet style with a potluck component, and volunteers do the work to make it come together by signing up for shifts to set up, help during the event, and clean up. Parent participation increases the sense of community.
4. Develop a communications plan. Submit announcements to ZipNotes/Enotes, and use Paperless Post Flyer and Signup forms if appropriate. Menlo School policy is to use platforms that do not contain advertising, and MSPA policy is that invitation costs are not reimbursable, so we encourage the use to free invitation resources. Communication procedures and guidelines can be found on the Event Resources page.
5. Submit check requests to the MSPA Treasurer at least one week in advance of the event and submit reimbursement requests within 30 days after the event (or within 1 week for any expenses incurred in May or 3 days for any expenses in June). The check request form can be found on the MSPA Webpage in the Forms and Files section. Caterers, service providers and equipment rentals must be paid directly by the MSPA Treasurer, with a check requested at least one week in advance. Vendors must submit a Form W-9 to Menlo annually, so if you use a new vendor, you need to collect one. Purchases from grocery stores, take-out restaurants, Amazon, etc. can be paid directly and reimbursed. If you have questions, reach out to MSPATreasurer@gmail.com to ask for guidance.
6. After the event, document what you did and share the information so that other volunteers can learn from your experience. Make sure to share a recap of your spending with your committee chair.

Thank you for volunteering! If you have questions, reach out and ask!