



# Procter & Gamble boosts World Choir Games

**Sponsor donates more than \$1 million  
to 2012 Cincinnati event**

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**CINCINNATI** - Procter & Gamble has become the first major corporate sponsor of the **World Choir Games**, the two-week international event expected to draw 90,000 people to Greater Cincinnati next year.

P&G's donation of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million is a good start to the effort to raise \$10 million needed to pull off the Games, organizers say. As an "official presenting sponsor," P&G also stands to win top-line billing and high visibility for the event, which is making its debut in the United States.

"This will be a historic event for Cincinnati because of the multicultural and global nature of the Games," said Werner Geissler, P&G's vice chair of global operations.

- **Help design the World Choir Games mascot**
- **Photos: World Choir Games**

Geissler and his wife, Sabine, are global co-chairs for the Games. They'll lead what organizers say is one of the biggest corporate fundraising campaigns in recent years.

"There hasn't been anything this large," said Nick Vehr, managing director of World Choir Games 2012, a tax-exempt, nonprofit set up to organize and raise funds for the event.

Vehr in 2000 led Cincinnati 2012 Inc., a group that put together a bid to bring the 2012 international Summer Olympic Games to

Cincinnati. The games were awarded to London, but Vehr and others gained experience in corporate fund-raising and logistics that they're putting to work for an event often compared to the Olympics.

The owner of the World Choir Games, Pohlheim, Germany-based Interkultur, says the event is based on Olympic ideals "to peacefully unify singing people and nations connected by song in a fair competition." The biennial Choir Games were held last in 2010 in Shaoxing, China.

## Olympic ideals

Like the Olympic Games, competition will take place over two weeks. Singers can compete in 23 categories, ranging from champions to children's choirs to jazz and barbershop, judged and scored by international panels. Gold, silver and bronze awards will be presented while the winners' national anthems are played.

Opening ceremonies, including a parade of nations, will kick off the event, and closing ceremonies will end it. Singers will perform in a variety of existing venues, including the Duke Energy Convention Center, the School for the Creative & Performing Arts and churches and cathedrals in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

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"This is the largest civic event of a global nature that we've ever undertaken in this region," said Dan Lincoln, CEO of the Cincinnati USA Convention and Visitors Bureau. Lincoln led the effort to lure the Games here and is leading the organizing and planning.

He's prepared a working budget of nearly \$10 million, comparable to the budget planned for the Tall Stacks river and music festival, also scheduled for 2012. Up to \$6 million of the Choir Games funding is to be raised through major corporate sponsorships, such as P&G's, where the donor has the opportunity to get its corporate name and logo attached to an event.

Organizers are looking for sponsors for the opening and closing ceremonies, which, like the international Olympics, will include a parade of nations and a theatrical production. The location and scope of the ceremonies will depend on the level of corporate support, Lincoln said.

"The idea is to go out and get total games sponsors, but also sponsors of the individual pieces," Lincoln said.

At the end of each week, for example, a major awards ceremony will be held, which can be underwritten by a named corporate sponsor.

### P&G's part

P&G already has contributed beyond its presenting sponsorship.

It paid for the services of the firm that designed the typography, logo and look of the printed materials, banners and website for the World Choir Games 2012 organization.

By putting Geissler, one of P&G's top five executives, in charge of fundraising, the \$80 billion global firm is showing its commitment to the Games, organizers say.

The international aspect was an attraction for P&G, as much of its sponsorship dollars go to events with worldwide impact.

Last year, it agreed to a 10-year, multimillion-dollar sponsorship deal with the International Olympic Committee, making it one of the major corporate sponsors of the next five Olympic games, including the 2012 Summer Games.

Although financial terms weren't disclosed, it's believed the deal was worth more than \$100 million.

Geissler will be working with U.S. co-chairs Lee Carter, chair of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, and his wife, Shannon, CEO of Crayons to Computers; and retired federal judge Nathaniel Jones and his wife, Lillian, a longtime community volunteer.

Another \$4 million will be raised through smaller donations from businesses and individuals.

A \$100,000 matching grant for the Games from the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, affiliated with Fifth Third Bancorp, was recently announced in connection with a fundraising effort by some past honorees named Enquirer Women of the Year.

### Non-cash donations

Much of the budget will be supplied not in the form of cash but in services.

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Metro, for example, has agreed to allow registered Choir Games participants to ride buses for free to get to and from their venues, some of which will be outside downtown Cincinnati.

That service alone could be worth a half-million dollars, Lincoln said.

Uniforms for volunteers and staffers, food, radios, and sound and lighting equipment also could be donated or provided at low cost.

P&G and other companies also may provide manpower; discussions are under way with P&G on that, Vehr said.

About \$2 million is forecast to come from the sales of tickets, merchandise and concessions.

The equivalent of up to 50 employees are anticipated to handle the logistics of creating venues and arranging staging, housing, food and security.

Organizers want to work with the city of Cincinnati to arrange for security assistance from the federal government, including the Department of Homeland Security.

They also may seek funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Lincoln said.

million for the Games. Goals include:

- ~ Corporate sponsorships: \$4 million to \$6 million
- ~ Individual and business donations: \$4 million
- ~ Tickets, merchandise and concessions: \$1.5 million to \$2 million

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