Using the documents in the Spring Social binder as a guide, we began our planning in February, 2014. Our first activities were to identify a caterer and visit the party venue, which was to be the home of Vicki and Doug Blayney on Mears Court on the Stanford campus. The party was to be held on May 18 at 5:30 pm. The visit was designed to ascertain how many tables and chairs we would need and how to set them up.

We investigated several caterers, most of whom offered menus that were more expensive than we wanted to pay. This event has an extremely small budget ($400), essentially meaning that the full price of the party needs to come from ticket sales. In 2013, we charged $30 per person for the party. As we reviewed the previous year’s party report we realized that, as a result of some earlier donations, the Club already had most of the wine that they would serve. But in 2014, we would need to budget funds for drinks. As a result of increased catering costs, and the need to budget more money for drinks, we determined to raise the price to $35 per person so we would have the money to hold a memorable party. We proposed a price increase to the Parents’ Club Board of Directors and secured approval to raise the price. Even with the price increase, we decided to solicit guests for desserts, rather than order them from the caterer.

Of the caterers interviewed who presented attractive proposals, we concentrated on two: Encore Performance Catering and Bianchini’s. Encore Performance was the caterer for the 2013 Spring Social, and came highly recommended by last year’s chair. Suzanne was familiar with Bianchini from a Stanford event and had also used them at a private party. At Suzanne’s request, Bianchini’s offered a “tasting” at my house. They came with an impressive array of almost all of the items that we had initially selected for the event. It was a great way to determine which items we liked and disliked. Following the tasting in March, we made revisions to the original proposal and selected final menu items.

In the final analysis, our catering decision was based on the fact that Bianchini’s offered a more varied menu that was about $500 cheaper than Encore Performance. Suzanne and I engaged them in late March. They were extremely patient, kind, and customer oriented. They were willing to adjust the numbers of guests until almost the last minute, which was helpful to us, since our attendance list was initially quite low. They also came to Vicki’s house to check out the party lay-out. The proposal they submitted is included as Attachment 1. The total price for the Bianchini’s order was $1,951.02. They required a 50% deposit at the time of the reservation.
We planned for 70 guests, although individual items were ordered in smaller quantities, and the proposal also included coffee and tea for 50, ice, and two servers at $27 per hour per server. They also charged a set-up and delivery fee. Vicki generously paid $100 for a third server.

We then researched party supply rental companies. We compared two bids that were almost identical, and ultimately selected A- Abco. We debated about how many tables we should order since certain Parents’ Club members felt that the party should mostly be a stand-up affair. We ended up compromising on the tables. Based upon the number of guests from 2013, we ordered 6 round tables for eight, and two bar tables. We ordered 50 chairs and 80 wine glasses. We also ordered linens for all of the tables. The invoice is included here as Attachment 2 and the total price for all A-Abco items was $340.95.

In late April, we prepared an invitation to be sent to all Parents’ Club Members and transmitted it to Marcia Hansen, the Club’s President. (See Attachment 3). The invitation had an RSVP deadline of May 13. It requested that individuals mail their checks to Suzanne, and that they consider bringing a dessert to share. Subsequently, we worked with Marcia to send out several e-mail solicitations over the next two months to invite people to join us. We also made presentations at the April and May Board and General Meetings to encourage members to sign up.

Suzanne agreed to maintain the RSVP list. Despite the proliferation of e-mails, and multiple presentations at the General Meetings, people were very slow to respond. By April 26, three weeks before the event, we only had 26 people signed up. By May 5, we had 42 guests signed up. We reluctantly ended up allowing people to sign up after the deadline. By May 12, we had 60 people signed up, but few sent in their checks ahead of the party, despite the instructions in the invitation. We ultimately ended up with 72 guests, including our hosts, whom we did not charge. We also had two additional guests who paid, but did not show up. We charged guests $35 per person, so our revenue from ticket sales was $2,520 (72 x $35).

On May 13, we submitted the final order to A-Abco for tables, linens, and glassware. We purchased 100 red and white roses for the party from Costco. They arrived on the Friday before the Sunday event and were beautiful. Vicki Blayney, Frederique Sugarman and I spent a few hours on Saturday arranging the flowers. Since then, I have been told that certain members of the Parents’ Club have access to wholesale flowers, so next year you might consider identifying a member with such contacts to reduce the price of the flowers.

We also purchased paper plates, napkins, drinks, nuts, small plastic cups for nuts, tea lights, balloons, name tags, and ribbon. The caterers also provided white napkins and
tiny plates, but I think the higher quality decorated plates and napkins we ordered looked better, and were a larger size which was important.

The tables, chairs, linens and glassware were delivered on May 16, the Friday before the party, and we stored them in Vicki’s side yard. A few hours before the party we set everything out, and we placed a Parents’ Club sign outside the house, and I made an additional sign for a different entry door. We also blew up several balloons to tie to the mailbox. We set up a small manned and decorated table in the front of the house where we checked people in, collected money from guests who had not yet paid, and encouraged guests to make nametags. We made some restroom signs, iced tea, and brought a wine opener and plastic serving pieces for desserts. We borrowed some pretty drink containers for the iced tea from Jane Phipps. We did not have live music, but used a boom box to provide music via CD. While it would have been nice to have live music, I don’t believe that anyone missed it, and we saved some money.

We purchased 15 bottles of wine, had 7 bottles of red left over from last year, and also solicited wine from Club members. Darrell and Helen Jang generously contributed lots of the wine and served as bartenders for the evening. We ended up consuming 14 bottles of wine, 8 beers, 10 sodas, 14 Pellegrino waters, 10 Crystal Geyser sparkling waters, 24 small bottles of water, 2 gallons of Arnold Palmer iced tea and coffee for 50. We ran out of decaf coffee, but it is important to be flexible about drinks. If the weather is warm, less coffee is needed. We purchased many types of drinks to accommodate everyone, but next year you might consider reducing the types of drinks to make it easier on yourself. We had some drinks left over and will use them for Parent Club events during the year.

The weather was lovely for the party. The main party area was on an outside deck that led from Vicki’s living room. We set up all of the food on the deck, as well as three of the large tables and chairs and the two bar tables. We did not have enough room to put all tables and chairs there, so we placed four tables and accompanying chairs in a side yard. On the deck we had a long table that served as a bar at one end, and located two high bar tables nearby so that people could rest their drinks and mingle. There was a long food table with hors d’oeuvres and a second long table upon which the caterers had placed their hot dishes. We also had a station where a server sliced beef and made small sandwiches for guests. We had a table with coffee and tea. We decided to put all of the desserts that guests brought on Vicki’s dining room table inside. We decorated Vicki’s house with flowers. Vicki generously contributed small floral centerpieces for all of the tables. We put out votives and tea lights but never ended up lighting the candles since we had enough ambient light.

The bar tables were quite popular and next year you might consider adding one more bar table. As the party progressed, however, guests wanted to sit down and eat. All of the tables and chairs were filled, on the deck and in the side yard.
The food was generous, varied and well displayed, and included chicken and sausage skewers, fresh fruit, meatballs in tomato sauce, prawns, antipasto (salami, prosciutto, mortadella, Italian cheese, olives, and pepperoncini accompanied by pesto mayonnaise and breads), a Mediterranean sampler (hummus, couscous, tabouleh, olives, and pita bread), seared ahi tuna, stuffed mushroom caps with spinach and boursin cheese, a carving station with marinated tri-tip and small rolls, grilled vegetables, and mini sliders of turkey and pulled pork. We were cognizant of the need to have vegetarian options. Ultimately, we had plenty of food and one nice feature was that the caterers brought carry-out boxes for guests to take food home. All guests took food home and I think that people felt that they really got their money’s worth as a result. It also simplified clean-up for us since most of the food was gone at the end of the party. The tri-tip carving station and the prawns were very popular, although I would suggest that if you have the tri-tip again, you specify that it be served rare instead of well done. We also could have used more prawns and less sliders.

We had 19 desserts contributed, and guests seemed to enjoy sampling the wide variety of choices. At the end of the party, any remaining desserts were taken home by the individual who brought them. In advance of the party, we had secured the help of members to help with set-up and clean-up. Jeanne Harvey helped with set-up, and Ramona Varella, Tina Morris, Barb Takahashi, Marcia and Russ Hansen and Vicki and Doug Blaney helped us with clean-up, as did our loyal husbands.

The party ended around 9:00 pm. The caterers cleaned up the remaining food and trash. We cleaned up the house and left it in original order. We moved the tables, chairs, linens and glassware to Vicki’s side yard, and the following day (Monday) A-Abco retrieved their tables, chairs, linens and glassware. We were not required to clean the linens or the glassware. We sent out thank you notes to our helpers, and purchased boxes of candy for key individuals in recognition of their help.

Final expenses are detailed in Attachment 4.

Anne Williams
Suzanne Epstein
Attachment 1

Bianchini Invoice
(see paper copy in Spring Social Binder)
Attachment 2

A-Abco Invoice
(see paper copy in Spring Social Binder)
Attachment 3

Spring Social Invitation
For Dinner, Drinks and The Best Company

Stanford Parents’ Club
Spring Social

Sunday, May 18, 2014
5:30 pm – -- 8:00 pm

At the home of Our gracious hosts Vicki and Doug Blayney
927 Mears Court, Stanford (734) 709 - 8703

$35 per person

Please volunteer to bring a dessert

Questions? E-mail anne_m_williams@yahoo.com (650 327 0421)

________

rsvp no later than May 4, 2014. Please Tear off here and return Form with Cash or Check
Made out to “Parents Club of Stanford University”

Name:____________________________________e
mail:____________________________________

Number of Guests :

__________________________________________________________________________
I plan to bring a dessert:   YES_____ NO____

Please Return Form at 4/8/14 general Meeting, or mail to: Suzanne Epstein
(23828 Ravensbury Ave, Los Altos Hills, CA  94024)
Attachment 4
Final Expenses for 2014 Spring Social

Expenses:

1. Caterer (Bianchini’s Catering) $ 2009.74
2. Tips for Catering crew 60.00
3. Flowers 97.86
4. Paper plates and napkins 81.37
5. Table, linens, chairs, glass Rental 340.95
6. Suzanne Expenses (wine, drinks, miscellaneous, food) 259.60
7. Anne paper goods expenses 51.08

Total Expenses $2900.60

Total Revenue $2520.00
Parents Club Budget 400.00

Total Expenses - 2900.60

Final Total $ 19.40

We also had the following donations:

1. Anne Williams –wine, iced tea
2. Darrell and Jane Jang – wine and services as bartender
3. Vicki – she paid for an additional server ($100)

FYI – We consumed:

14 bottles of wine
8 beers
10 sodas
14 Pellegrino waters
10 Crystal Geyser sparkling waters
24 small bottle waters
2 gallons Arnold Palmer Iced Tea
Coffee for 50 (we ran out of decaf)