

Sponsorship

In 2021 our sponsorship focus was two pronged:

1. Ensure that we provide value to our 2020 sponsors. 100% of our community partners kept their funding with us through COVID
2. Lay the groundwork for future sponsorship partners via social media campaigns that support small businesses in the Hamilton community

In 2021 we used social media to drive awareness and value for our community partners through a number of programs including:

Stick In Hand Program: Promotion developed to keep kids engaged in the sport - working on skill development and having fun. This program also provided a solid opportunity for us to promote our community partners. This program was promoted via social media/ email blast and encouraged players to take a photo/video with their "Stick in Hand", post on social media and tag HLA. All entries were entered into a draw weekly for a prize. Prizes consisted of gift cards purchased from our sponsors. Each week this program was "brought to you" by a different HLA sponsor and their social media pages were tagged in the posts.

Lacrosse Recess: Designed to engage kids during the late Winter/ Spring school shutdown. Program encouraged kids to practice their skills at home & drove excitement around the return of lacrosse. This program provided a platform to promote our community partners and was promoted via social media & email blasts. Players posted pics & videos on social media and tag HLA. All entries were entered into a grand prize draw for a \$50 gift card from one of our key community partners.

Work Out Wednesdays: Workout Wednesdays was built to engage our kids and get them ready for the upcoming return of lacrosse. The program focused on dry land training for athletes of all ages and encouraged total family participation. This program was promoted via social media & emails to our HLA base. The weekly programs were built by our privacy officer who is a certified personal trainer & a local police officer. Content includes both video and written instructions that were posted weekly to a dedicated page on our website. Each week this program was "brought to you" by a different HLA sponsor and their social media pages were tagged in the posts

Support Today; Sponsorship Tomorrow: The COVID-19 pandemic had an immense impact on small businesses, especially the restaurant community. For this campaign we developed small-business supporting creative and used our Hamilton Bengals' Jr. B social media channels to encourage our network to support local businesses. Each week the Hamilton Bengals' Jr. B social handles profiled one local restaurant, small-business, or boutique food shop. We tagged the profiled businesses profiles - as well as their BIA's, city departments, & other influencers - to boost awareness of our program and the Bengals' brand. We offered 4 free Bengals' tickets as incentive to post pics of their support for our featured business. By using our Bengals' and HLA platforms to extend a helping hand to Hamilton businesses, we've been able to further connect with our community.

Beyond leveraging social media to create value for our community partners, we executed our Sponsorship T-shirt program in 2021, providing over 300 HLA players with a free shirt with our classic HLA banner on the front and featured all of our HLA sponsors on the back. The shirts were a hit with all the players and family and are great mobile marketing for our partners!

Grants also helped to support our programs in 2021 including \$13,000 from Jump Start, and funding from both the OLA and Zone 9.

Looking ahead to 2022:

- Work to retain historical, pre-COVID sponsors
- Expand our sponsorship committee to help unearth more support and increase this much needed revenue stream
- Continue to work towards securing a platinum sponsor for the league. Ideally this will be a larger local business that shares our vision of growing & supporting lacrosse in Hamilton, with the funds and sponsorship directed at player development.
- Continue the sale of unique items such as phone pops and car stickers to drive additional revenue. New items coming for 2022 season

Apparel

For the 2021 season, the association was able to largely use the Jersey's and pinnies that were ordered from the cancelled 2020 season for both the 6's program and fall field. The association has all required rep jerseys for the 2022 season with the cost implications falling in last years budget. Box Jerseys underwent a design change starting with the white jerseys for the 2020 (now 2022) season and feature a more retro look with tone-on-tone patterning. We will be working in early January to source all needed apparel for house league and rep teams to try and mitigate any supply issues.

Our contract with THQ was set to expire at the end of the 2021 season but through a series of negotiations has been extended to the end of 2022. Year 2 of the contract will be represented by years 2020 and 2021, with 2022 being the third and final year. We have been able to maintain all guaranteed pricing in the contract with the exception of 1 item.

Spirit Wear

For 2021 we executed a number of pop up shops featuring gear with our new retro HLA logo. This new logo was designed to pay homage to Bengals logos of the past and will be used in 2022 as part of the rep team apparel packages. The historical Bengals logo will remain the core branding for the association, with the retro logo being used strategically on limited addition items and select rep team apparel.

Looking ahead to 2021:

- Christmas POP UP shop in early November 2021
- Rep Fitting Night- We will work to increase the number of items available to purchase as per 2019 season feedback.
- Pop up shops will continue to be used to offer a selection of spirit wear. Targeting 3 pop up shops a year (early spring, early box season, early November)
- Planning to work with ILA to offer exclusive deals on helmets & gloves for 2022 season
- Orders for Rep team bags are planned for the spring