

1. What are the requirements to become a candidate for King/Queen of Fantasy Fest?

All candidates must:

- Have a Campaign Manager and a Treasurer for the financial management of your campaign.
- Have been a resident of Monroe County for at least one year.
- Complete the Candidate Application Form for approval by the Fundraising Committee.
- Complete a biography and forward press release photos to the Candidate Director.
- Participate in the mandatory Campaign activities:
 - Campaign Workshop
 - Campaign Kickoff & Meet the Press Party
 - Coronation Rehearsal Meeting
 - Royal Election & Coronation Ball
- Enlist the support of a maximum of four major sponsors committing a combined total of \$750 to \$1000 to be used as seed money for your campaign.
- Request that all checks collected be made payable to "AIDS Help."
- The words "Fantasy Fest" can only be used as "Fantasy Fest King" or Fantasy Fest Queen".



2004 Queen Ginger King
and King Jean Claude Gosselin

"Strong moral fiber and an even stronger liver!" -- Tom Luna, Fantasy Fest King 1992

2. Is this a gay event?

NO, MARY! The King & Queen Competition is a community event. Over the past 20 years, creative, energetic candidates from all segments of the community have combined their unlimited energies to raise much-needed funds for AIDS Help through a fantastic array of events supported by locals and visitors alike. Previous crowned candidates mirrored the makeup of our community, with both straight & gay winners.

*"No, but it made me very happy!"
– Vicki Roush, Fantasy Fest Queen 1992*

3. When does the campaign begin and end?

The official campaign starts on August 28th. In order to maintain a level playing ground, no candidate is allowed to begin collecting monies for their Fantasy Fest Campaign until the kickoff date.

The campaign ends on the evening of the Coronation Ball. The final votes of the campaign will be purchased on that climatic evening by your supporters. A local certified accounting firm will be present to pass the official envelope announcing the new King & Queen.

"It never ends! You just can't stop!" – Chuck Lamb, Fantasy Fest King 1993

4. How much time does it take to be a candidate?

There are only four events that each candidate is required to attend. Other than these events listed above, the personal time commitment of past candidates has depended in great part upon the support system they built around them. A strong campaign manager and an active campaign team to provide the organizational, creative and emotional support will make your campaign more successful. **Remember, you can't do it all!**



2005 King Doug Stripp and
Queen Helen "Redd" Smith

AIDS Help has a serious mission: bringing services and assistance to those friends and neighbors in our community who greatly need our help. The funds raised by past candidates have contributed a significant amount to this cause. We are serious about raising money, but we want you to have fun in this campaign. Build a team of strong support, and you will be able to enjoy this special experience!

"Sometimes you may be overwhelmed or tired...or maybe one of your events wasn't as big as you had planned – don't give up, there will always be another event that will pick you up and push you through the race!" – Frank Cicalese, Fantasy Fest King 1995

5. How do I raise money as a candidate?

Some Kings & Queens can raise funds simply by levying a tax on their subjects. Unfortunately, candidates for King & Queen of Fantasy Fest have to be a little more creative. Past candidates have held the most amazing array of events any fundraising organization could possibly develop! Poetry readings, drag shows, formal auctions, dinners, car washes, concerts, pig roasts and walkathons are only a few of the dozens of ways to generate donations. Every year candidates develop new, unique ways to get the community involved in their campaigns.

Finding sponsors for your campaign provides the framework to hold your events. Restaurants, clubs, service organizations and local businesses of all shapes and sizes can be approached to become partners in your campaign with contributions for working with your campaign team to create fundraising events held at their establishments.

*"Create events that will appeal to a broad audience - locals, visitors, regular supporters and those that have not necessarily participated in the past - you have an opportunity to increase awareness as well as raise funds. That was the premise of my campaign, and one of the most rewarding things I have ever done!"
Nadene Grossman Fantasy Fest Queen 2003*



2006 Queen Meta "Fizz" Rettew
and King Gregg McGrady

6. How many sponsors can I have?

All candidates must have a maximum of four principal sponsors who agree to contribute a combined total of \$750 to \$1000 to that candidate's campaign to be used as seed money. Past Kings & Queens have succeeded in building partnerships with businesses from all segments of the community. The more partners you develop throughout the campaign, the greater your opportunity to raise money.

7. Can I do anything to raise money?

As long as it's legal, yes! Beyond that, you're limited by your imagination! If someone will donate money to your campaign to participate in an event...then go for it! AIDS Help requests only that candidates refrain from holding events which might be confused by the public with any of our annual events such as "Taste of Key West" or the "Annual Art Auction."

"Call everyone you know – family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Ask for help! If they can't make a donation, ask for their time or the name of their family and friends that can make a donation." – Mikey Duncan, Fantasy Fest King 1996

8. When do I have to tell you my events?

Advanced planning of a campaign has proven to be one of the best ways to raise money. The earlier you plan your events, the better job your campaign manager can do to receive the most advanced press coverage. It also allows AIDS Help staff to help your campaign get the word out. Remember, with a field of anywhere between 6 to 10 candidates, the event calendar fills up fast.

You want to try not to compete on any given night with another candidate's event. It not only limits your opportunity to raise money, it can reduce the overall effectiveness of the fundraising goal.

A campaign event calendar must be forwarded to the Candidate Director of AIDS Help so the overall event calendar can be prepared prior to the announcement of candidacies. As soon as you and your campaign team add events to your calendar, notify the Campaign Director as soon as possible so that your information can be released to the press.

Additionally, AIDS Help will do ONE bulk mailing on behalf of your campaign to our extensive mailing list. The Campaign Director will assist you and your campaign team in arranging this mailer.



2008 Queen Kate Miano
and King Timothy Brown



2007 King Chris Lipa
and Queen Mary Lou Hoover

"Use the newspapers, use the radio stations – get the word out! Let everyone know who you are and that you mean business...after a while, they will write you a check just to shut you up!"
– Gina Dietrich, Fantasy Fest Queen 1995

9. Who do I call when I have questions?

The Candidate Director, Pam DeMala, is the point person for all your campaign questions. The Campaign Director will help you with the events calendar, press coverage, the Fantasy Fest production and just about everything you need. A Candidate's Workshop will be held on July 7th, prior to the kickoff with past candidates to share their thoughts, experiences and advice.

"Everyone at AIDS Help was so helpful. Anything you need is just a phone call away!"
– Peggy Fields, Fantasy Fest Queen 1996

10. What do I receive if I win?

AIDS Help has assembled prize packages to be presented to all King, Queen, Duke(s) and Duchess(es) of Fantasy Fest that are overflowing with gifts of appreciation generously donated by supporting businesses and individuals. The staff, volunteers and most importantly, the clients of AIDS Help are extremely grateful for your loving gift of time and effort. We hope that by presenting this appreciation package at the Coronation Ball we can express our thanks.

"Love!" – Chuck Lamb, Fantasy Fest King 1993



Interested in being King or Queen of Fantasy Fest?
Contact Pam DeMala at AIDS Help today!
AIDS Help in Key West (305) 296-6196

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A Royal Pocket Guide to becoming A Queen (or King)...

