



Fundraising Ideas

From www.fundraiserinsight.org

All Saints Day Cleanup

Little ghosts and goblins can wreak havoc on yards and pumpkins during Halloween. Have an all-saints day cleanup for your next fundraiser. Create a flyer about your group and what you are raising money for. Advertise locally with signs and in your local newspaper that you will be going around the day after Halloween cleaning up yards for a donation. Head out the day after Halloween with rakes, gloves, and garbage bags. Patrol the local neighborhoods, looking for yards with a mess. Knock on doors and politely ask the homeowner if they would like you to clean up their yard. Hand them your flyer and explain what your group is doing. Find yards that need their leaves raked as well. Decide with the homeowner everything that you are going to clean up for them and get to work. Ask the homeowner if they would like you to take the trash with you or dispose of it in their trash cans. Let the homeowner inspect your work before you leave and give them a thank you note.

All You Can Eat Potato Bar

Tired of the same old spaghetti dinner fundraisers? Try having an all you can eat potato bar for your group's next dinner fundraiser. People will enjoy the change and there is minimal preparation for it. You will want to have baked potatoes with all the fixins. Chili, sour cream, shredded cheese, butter, steamed broccoli, melted cheese, chives, bacon bits, sautéed onions, sautéed mushrooms, hot peppers, ham, and spices. The possibilities are endless. Consider setting up a craft station for your younger diners, with carved potato stamps, ink and paper. Put "sprout your own potato" kits up for sale. These can be easily made with recycled glass jars, toothpicks, potato, and growing instructions. This would be a great time to have a 50/50 raffle. Advertise in your local area with flyers, signs, and by contacting the local newspapers. Sell tickets in advance as well as at the door. You may want to offer a small discount to those buying in advance to encourage early sales.

Baby and Kids' Resale

Babies and children outgrow clothing and toys so quickly, often before they are worn out. Host a baby and kids' resale as your next fundraiser. You will need a large building with a cafeteria or gymnasium, such as a school or a church. You will need access to long tables. Clothing racks would be helpful, but not necessary. Set a day to have the sale, preferably a Saturday or Sunday to maximize shoppers. Rent the tables to parents looking to sell their children's

clothing, toys, and accessories they are no longer using. You could rent the tables for ten to twenty dollars each. Charge an entry fee to shoppers. A dollar would be appropriate. Have a monitored room that the table renters can place their large items in for sale, such as highchairs and strollers. Mark each item so you know who gets the money when it sells. Have a concession stand with drinks and food for your hungry shoppers and moms. People will look forward to this sale every year.

Bagger for a Day

Sometimes it seems that your local grocery store can be too busy and that you always end up bagging your own groceries. This quick and easy fundraising idea lets you provide a nice service to your community and raise funds at the same time. Find a busy grocery store that is willing to help your group and pick a busy day of the week. Print off flyers that explain your group and what you are doing in the store that day. Hand out the flyers to people entering the store. Give your “baggers” a quick lesson on how to properly bag, for example heavy items on the bottom and eggs and bread on the top. Have a tip jar at each register. You may want each bagger to wear a nametag with your group’s name on it as well. Bag each person’s groceries quickly and with a smile. Offer to push their cart and help to unload them into their car. This should be done with adult supervision for safety reasons.

Barbecue Contest

Fire up the grills and break out your best barbecue recipes! Everyone loves a barbecue. Anything cooked on a grill is delicious—even vegetables—and it's a great venue for socializing and getting to know members of your group, and of your community. Amp up the fun with a little competition to find out who has the top grill skills. You might want to make it a rule that bottled, brand barbecue sauces are not allowed. Contestants need to be original! Ask members of your group to act as judges. Create categories for different meats and vegetables, and categories for mild and spicy sauces. Require contestants to pay an entry fee, and then you can charge spectators by the plate. Don't forget the beverages and easy side dishes like chips. Above all, don't forget the napkins. Moist wipes are even better. This event can be held on its own, or as part of a larger event like a field day. May the best griller win!

Break the Balloon

Pop, pop, pop. What can be more fun than popping a balloon? Winning something for doing so, of course. This is an easy fundraiser and can be incorporated into other events, such as a dinner fundraiser or fair. You will need balloons, a helium tank, string, and slips of paper with prizes printed on them. Go to the local retailers and explain who your group is and what you are raising funds for. Ask if they would like to donate a prize in exchange for free advertising at your event. On the day of the event, place the prize slips into the balloons, fill them with helium, and tie a string to them. All balloons should have a slip of paper, even if it is just a thank you for participating, so they all look the same.

You may want the balloons to all be the same color to distinguish them from others at the event. Sell the balloons telling people to hold onto them until a big announcement. After all the balloons have been sold, instruct everyone to pop their balloon and see if they have won. It will be humorous to see the different methods of popping the balloons. Instruct the winners to come up and claim their prize.

Christmas Carolers

The Holidays are jolly and nothing sets the mood better than singing. This fundraiser is perfect for a school choir or glee club and will make you feel good as well as raise money. Split your club into smaller groups of 4 or 5. You may want to have an adult with each group for safety. Print a flyer that talks about your group and what you are raising money for. Have a song book of all the popular Christmas and Holiday carols for everyone in your group. Dress in Santa or elf hats. Go around your local neighborhood, knock on doors and begin singing. Be respectful of those who ask you to leave. Take requests from those that ask you to stay. Hand them your flyer and say that donations are optional. You just want to spread Holiday cheer, but if they would like to help it is very much appreciated. The closer you run this fundraiser to the holidays the better.

Face Painting

Children love to have their face painted. This is a popular activity at carnivals and fairs. Set up a face painting booth at your next craft show or fair. Enlist the help of some talented artists from your group to help paint faces. Have a practice session beforehand so that you will know what you are doing. Face painting kits can be bought online and at some party supply stores. Shop around for the best deal. You will want to have seats, water for cleaning brushes, wet wipes, face paints and examples of face painting that the kids can choose from. You could charge as little as a dollar for simple artwork or up to five dollars or more for elaborate ones. As your young customers walk around they will drive more customers to you. Offer instant photos of the face painting for a dollar more, so they have a lasting memory. This will be a fun fundraiser for everyone.

Gift Basket Auction or Raffle

No one wants to do another candy sale for his or her schools' fundraiser. Here is one that is gaining in popularity and returning large rewards for those that host it. Make each classroom or homeroom responsible for one themed gift basket. Send a note home to parents to donate one item within the theme or contact local retailers, businesses, and sales representatives to see if they would like to help out. For instance, one classroom could have a sports theme and their basket could include a baseball glove, basketball, jersey, and tickets to a local game. A chocolate lover's basket could include a chocolate bar, hot chocolate, chocolate cookbook, and a box of brownie mix. The assembled baskets could then be auctioned off in a silent auction or raffle tickets could be sold. Have a listing of each basket's full contents on the basket. Get a roll of two-part raffle tickets. Set up a bucket near each basket so people can place half of their raffle

ticket into the buckets of only the baskets they want to win. At the end of the night, draw the winning tickets and let the winners claim their prizes.

Giving Tree

This is a great fundraiser to stock a food bank or other church pantry or collect gifts for people in need during the Holiday season. Instead of decorating a tree with regular ornaments, decorate it with hand crafted paper ornaments that have items that are needed written on them. Have ornaments that hit all price points. Items in the \$1.00 to \$25.00 range are best, so that everyone can participate. If you are collecting items for a food bank, request non-perishable items. Have bins set up around the tree for people to deposit their gifts in. Or have a collection date and time to gather everything at once. If you are collecting items for those in need, try to have as much information available on the ornament. It is easier to shop for someone knowing that they are a size medium woman who likes the color blue and needs some long sleeve shirts, or a little boy who needs a pair of snow boots and is a size 7.

Grab Bag

This fundraiser is similar to a What's in the Box Auction and a White Elephant Sale with a couple of important differences. First, a grab bag fundraiser is not an auction. You'll charge a flat fee per item. Supporters will also not be able to see what they're buying. Have volunteers donate inexpensive items. They can be anything from used books to gag items. You can also spend a little money to buy fun things at a dollar store. Place each item in a paper bag and seal all the bags so the items inside are not visible. No feeling or shaking of bags is allowed! Decide what to charge per bag—a few dollars is appropriate. Supporters pay the fee and then choose a bag. They won't know whether they're getting a real treasure like a great cookbook, or a silly item like a rubber ducky. That's part of the fun! Most people will buy more than one bag to try to get to the good stuff. Place some scratch-off lottery tickets.

Head Shaving

A head shaving fundraiser can have many incarnations, so you are only limited by your imagination. Here are a few ideas to help you brainstorm. Find a school teacher or principal willing to shave their head for your fundraiser. Someone who has long hair would be ideal, because they will seem to be giving up more and people will be more willing to donate. Have a public head shaving when your goal has been met. Let the top donors or fundraisers take turns with the clippers or find a local barber willing to do it. As an alternative, you could also do a beard or mustache shaving. Find a salon or barbershop willing to donate their time, service and place of business for a day. Offer head shaving and haircuts in return for a donation. Find a group of people willing to shave their heads in support of someone who may be losing their hair to chemotherapy. Have them find sponsors who are willing to donate money in return for shaving their head. Some charities will collect donated hair to make wigs for cancer patients. Check with local organizations or beauty salons about the requirements for donations.

Holiday Shopping in One Night

Holiday gift shopping can be time consuming and hectic. Host a “holiday shopping in one night” event for your next fundraiser. Find vendors willing to set up a booth, either for a set fee or a percentage of their sales for the evening. Contact representatives from popular companies such as Avon, Mary Kay, Tupperware, and Watkins. Most companies have online directories to find representatives in your area or ask around to find them. Send home flyers, advertise with posters, and contact your local newspapers. Offer a free grab bag or raffle ticket to the first fifty shoppers. See if the vendors will donate gift baskets or product samples to give away. Have a bake sale and concession stand to feed your hungry shoppers and make extra money. Consider having craft vendors as well, but do not make the show bigger than one shopper can get through in one evening. Your shoppers will appreciate being able to get all their shopping done in one place.

Paint the Curb

Grab some stencils, some paint and masking tape and get ready to paint the curb for this fundraiser. Having your address painted on the curb in front of your house can save precious time if emergency services ever need to find your home. Create a flyer talking about your group and what you are raising money for. Explain that you will be in their neighborhood on a specific date to paint address numbers on curbs for a donation. Tell them the benefits of having done this. Distribute the fliers door to door in local neighborhoods a few days in advance. Be careful not to place them in mailboxes, as this is against federal law. Make sure you practice painting in advance. Knock on doors and ask to speak to the homeowner. Explain who you are and have a copy of your flyer. Ask if they are interested in having their address painted on the curb. After you are done, ask them to inspect it for final approval. Give them a thank you note to show your appreciation. Make sure to check with your local municipality for any regulations or requirements for painting numbers on curbs before you begin.

Silly Sweepstakes

This is a great fundraiser to have during a dinner fundraiser. For the silly sweepstakes, give everyone a raffle ticket. Brainstorm a list of silly things for the “winners” to do. Start with things that are simple such as wear a silly hat through dinner or pass the rolls to the table farthest from you. More embarrassing ideas are sing a silly song (provide lyrics) or prepare plates at the buffet for everyone at your table after taking orders like a waiter. Provide a monetary value to each task from \$1 to \$10. The twist on this sweepstakes is that everyone has the opportunity to pay rather than perform the task that they have won. People with an adventurous spirit will be more than happy to participate. Others will gladly reach for their checkbook. “Winners” can be allowed to take a collection if they don’t have enough money. A silly sweepstakes will add tons of fun to your next fundraiser.

What's in the Box Auction

Curiosity killed the cat and it will be curiosity that will work in your group's favor with this fundraiser. Have all the attendees bring a wrapped package, big or small, to the auction. They can place anything they want in the box from tickets to the opera (perhaps weighed down with some rocks) or the lamp Aunt Esther bought them as a wedding gift (a hideous thing really). As each box is brought in, label it with a number and place on tables that have been set up. People should be allowed to examine the boxes, picking them up and shaking them. Absolutely no unwrapping or peaking! You can either run the auction live with an auctioneer, or as a silent auction. In a silent auction, people write down their bids on a piece of paper kept near the box and try to outbid each other that way. Seed the auction with a few really great items that have been donated by local stores to keep bidding high. Let each winner unwrap their box in front of everyone after they win to show off if they got a great prize or a dud. This will be fun for everyone.



Wrapping Up Your Fundraiser & Moving On

By Adina Genn

- Most groups need time to regroup after a drive
- Make sure things are in order for the future
- Post your results & thank everyone involved

After a major fundraising drive, most organizations require time to regroup. People often need to step back and detach themselves for a while to catch up with friends and family. The larger the project, the more downtime your organization may find necessary. Take time to pat yourselves on the back regardless of whether you raised your projected total.

A wrap party is often a good way to conclude your busy fundraising efforts. You might choose to wait a week or two before celebrating to give everyone a chance to recover. The party should be simple and come from the organization's ongoing budget, not from the project.

Preparing for the Future

Make sure everything is in order for the future. For example, do you have a file for each donor, complete with contact information and amount contributed? Do you have the names and contact information for each person who volunteered and worked on the project?

Software programs can make this kind of database management easy. Be sure to file all vendor numbers and those of any fundraising experts so their information is easily accessible for future reference. Also, make arrangements to return any items borrowed from friends or neighbors, as well as rentals and leased equipment.

Reporting Fundraising Results

Post your results in some manner. For example, you might publish a story in your monthly or quarterly newsletter about the success of the fundraiser. In addition, you might write a press release, detailing the highlights of your event, whether it was meeting your fundraising goals or attracting 500 people to the auction. No matter how your fundraiser turned out, put a positive spin on the final results.

Board members should meet to hear a final report that includes the budgetary details, number of attendees, and so on. Inform stakeholders, sponsors, and anyone else who was involved in your fundraiser about the details of your event. After all, if sponsors are pleased with the results, they will be eager for you to call on them in the future.

Finish Up Paperwork

Finish off all accounting procedures, which will include payment of any outstanding bills and fulfilling any contractual obligations. Make sure all bookkeeping is up to date and all information is accessible for the board members or other stakeholders who will review the figures. Have 1099 forms ready for the people you hired to work on the project. In addition, you may need to file reports with local government offices or follow up on any grants you received.

In short, there are plenty of loose ends to tie up after your fundraiser is completed. Plan for these activities ahead of time. Generally, this occupies the time and efforts of only a few key people, particularly whoever was handling the books, budget, and accounting procedures.

Saying Thank You

This concept is worth repeating. Thank everyone who made your carnival, walkathon, or golf tournament actually happen. Whether you raised the money you hoped to or not, you still must recognize the efforts of those who helped. Nearly all nonprofit groups agree that cards, notes, or even saying thank you are the top ways to bring volunteers back for your next fundraiser. Appreciation goes a long way.

From a simple thank-you note to a token gift to acknowledgment in front of a group of peers, a thank you means a lot. Make sure everyone who was involved feels appreciated when your fundraiser is completed, and promptly send out thank yous to donors and vendors. This way you can count on their efforts in the future!

... from ***The Everything Guide to Fundraising.***