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# Fundraising Events

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## 1) Helpful Hints for Successful Fundraising Events

- Fundraising events need to coincide with the geographic location in which they occur. Rural areas will not be able to successfully implement large fundraising events because of lack of people and money.
- Tailor fundraising events to the interests of your community.
- Be on guard for groups, businesses or organizations that want to do fund raisers for your cause. Make sure you know up front how much staff time they will require and how much money they plan on making. Too many programs have gotten "caught" with intense staff involvement and little money for their efforts.
- Be selective when choosing individuals to represent or support your cause. Choose individuals who represent a sincere interest and positive publicity.
- Make sure to limit the number of fundraising events to a maximum of three large events per year. The community may become weary of contributing to your cause if the fundraising events become too frequent.
- Include volunteers who will supplement staff efforts.

## 2) Examples of fundraising events

Fundraising events are a fun and exciting way to raise much-needed funds. They can also be a great way to raise community awareness about your cause, organization or non-profit services. Here are some fundraising event ideas:

### ✓ "Quarter" Rally

(People Power: 15-20 / Planning Time: 2 months)

Ask a local shopping mall to sponsor a "quarter" rally. This event is very popular and can generate lots of money depending on the size of the mall. Double-stick tape is placed around the interior of the mall from one end to the other. Shoppers are asked to lay down a quarter for a certain cause (e.g. respite care services). It helps to have a lot of publicity with this event such as a radio station broadcasting live and special giveaways from the mall. This event will need a lot of coordination and volunteers to "man" different points on the "quarter walk". It is a lot of fun and definitely gets a large percentage of the community involved.

### ✓ Community Auction

(People Power: 2-6 / Planning Time: 2 months)

Sponsor a community auction. Items can be donated by local individuals (e.g. artists), stores, or organizations. Include some expensive items to attract buyers. Collecting the items or services will take the most time. A community auction can be combined with another event such as an annual festival, a dance, or a celebrity golf tournament.

### ✓ Corporate Request

(People Power: 1-2 / Planning Time: 1 month)

Corporations with which you have a good relationship are sources of small amounts of money for emergency purposes. Top level managers often have up to \$1000 in discretionary funds which they can release without internal approval.

### ✓ **Mystery Party**

(People Power: 12 / Planning Time: 6 months)

This scavenger hunt party is a very popular event and a lot of fun for the donors. Parties can be held in private homes or at a public site. Food for the event is donated by local stores and companies. Games can be purchased or donated and participants may pay up to \$50.00 per person.

### ✓ **Run, Walk or Bikeathon**

(People Power: 6-24 / Planning Time: 8 months)

This takes quite a bit of time to organize depending on the size of the event (length of the area, number of participants, etc.). Promotion is the biggest cost and an essential component of the event. The better the advertising, the larger the number of participants. Participants pre-register and obtain pledges before the event. Encourage groups or clubs to participate since they would represent a significant number of people. This event will also increase the visibility of your organization throughout the community. Prizes for competitors can be donated (cash or goods) by community organizations who will also enjoy greater visibility by becoming a donor. Remember, this event is weather-dependent.

### ✓ **Pledging**

(People Power: 12-24 / Planning Time: 6 months)

Individual donations typically compose 80% of support for non-profits in the United States. An accurate list of potential donors and staff (e.g. volunteers) to solicit donations needs to be created before beginning this event. Pledges can be for one time only or on a time payment plan. Time plans must be billed. This event helps increase community ownership for your program.

### ✓ **Raffle**

(People Power: 6-24 / Planning Time: 6 months)

Prizes are donated by local business or individuals (e.g. artists). Large ticket items are necessary to attract sufficient support. Selling tickets can be time-consuming. However, donated prizes can be given to ticket sellers for the greatest number of tickets sold. It is important to time this event so that it does not overlap with other community raffle events. Sometimes organizations combine their efforts to support a larger event. Please check raffle laws in your state before beginning to play this event.

### ✓ **Paid Advertisements**

(People Power: 1-3 / Planning Time: ongoing)

Local businesses can pay to advertise their goods and services in your newsletter or other project publications. Promotion and solicitation is necessary to start this event.

### ✓ **Golf Tournament**

(People Power: 24 + / Planning Time: 12 months)

Celebrity golf tournaments can be very successful especially if you include a dinner and dance as part of the event. It may take more than one tournament before you see substantial profits. Often a golf course gives a cut in fees for purchase of gifts in their pro shop. Celebrities need to be recruited far in advance for the event. Golfers may pay large fees for the privilege of playing with a celebrity. An event of this type needs a strong community base, underwriters, wealthy donors and buyers, and a very professional team of volunteers. This event may also include a raffle or auction.

### ✓ **Fountains**

(People Power: 1-6 / Planning Time: 2 months)

Check with local malls or restaurants that have wishing well fountains. Most of these places donate the pennies, dimes and nickels to charity. It would be nice to get a local radio station to publicize this event. For one week, ask that all the money be put into designated fountains across the city and go to a specified charity or program. This will give the program "free" publicity with very little staff time required. A city-wide effort of all wishing fountains could generate \$4,000 to \$8,000 for a one to two week promotion.

### ✓ **Celebrity Waiters**

(People Power: 10 / Planning Time: 6 months)

Well-known people from the local community can be recruited to be waiters for a dinner event during one evening. Corporate groups are encouraged to attend. Prices at the restaurant are the same as usual. All tips go to your project. Regular wait staff are also asked to donate their tips. Other volunteered amenities include flower sellers, entertainment and photographers.

### ✓ **Wish List**

(People Power: 2-3 / Planning Time: 2 months)

Publish your own "wish list" for your agency birthday party or some other special event. The wish list can be sent to businesses, past donors, and other community organizations. Items and cash can be donated to the program.

### ✓ **Buses and Supermarkets**

(People Power: 2 / Planning Time: 4 months)

Ask a local grocery company to print your logo or message on their brown grocery bags for one month. This is not a direct fundraising activity, but it does generate a lot of publicity and some funds. It would be great to coordinate this activity with some other fund raiser from your organization. In addition, have the mayor or county commissioner designate a certain week or month as respite care or crisis nursery "week." You will get a proclamation which brings publicity. During this week, you may also have the Transit company put "free" signs on the back of their buses promoting respite or crisis nursery care. Most large metropolitan transit authorities will have some type of community service activity. In San Antonio, non-profits may have "free" bus signs for one week per year.

### ✓ **Rock-a-Thons**

(People Power: 2 / Planning Time: 2 months)

Have local day care centres or some other children's group to raise money through "rock-a-thons" rocking in rocking chairs. This works very well in small communities and gets "kids helping kids." In one town of 2,000 people, the local day care center raised over \$6,000 for the Heart Institute by rocking in rocking chairs in the town square on a Saturday. It is amazing what children can do for other children.

### ✓ **Black Tie Bowling**

(People Power: 20-30 / Planning Time: 9-12 months)

Have a bowling alley sponsor a "black tie" bowling event. This can take on many dimensions and really get the community involved. The bowling alley is closed to the general public for the evening. Each participant dresses in a "black tie" costume from the waist up, and in any style of their choosing from the waist down. Teams are organized. The sponsor can charge \$40 per person, which includes two drinks and a buffet meal. Prizes are donated for the best costume, worst bowler, best bowler, etc. You may also have a team competition and get businesses to sponsor certain bowling lanes. Ask media to attend. It is a very festive affair. You can make about \$10-15,000 for this event, but it requires a lot of staff and volunteer time.

### ✓ **High School Volunteers**

(People Power: 2 / Planning Time: 3 months)

In addition to children's groups, invite high school students to become involved in your program. They can hold car washes, bake sales, etc., for you. Get a pizza parlor to donate a number of pizzas and sodas and throw an appreciation party for the teenage volunteers once a year. Begin with one high school. These students can then become volunteers in your many fundraising activities, such as the "Quarter Walk."

### ✓ **Percentage of Business Profits**

(People Power: 1 / Planning Time: 2 months)

Check with various businesses to see if they will give part of their profits to your program. For example, a local photographer may give her sitting fee of \$5.00 to the program around Mother's Day. This event produces small amounts of money, but every little bit helps. These activities require little extra work. Your local high school volunteers can disseminate flyers to advertise the event.