



# Fundraising for Families in Crisis

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# Fundraising for Families in Crisis

Too often, a family member or friend will come down with an illness, get hurt in an accident, need a transplant, and the list goes on and on. When folks are in this situation, they may not have adequate insurance or may not be able to work, putting even more strain on themselves and their family. In some cases, they could even lose their home or job and have a hard time surviving and providing for their family. Family members and friends may want to step up and help in some way but they might not know how. Others may want to help with fundraisers but don't know where to begin.

That's what this project is all about: *Helping people who want to help others* - with fundraising ideas, and “*The do's and don'ts of fundraising*”.

Most people know very little about putting on an event or planning a fundraiser, and since there can be so much to do and think about, it can oftentimes be quite overwhelming. This guide will not guarantee success but we hope it will help you in your efforts to help others.

The first thing you want to do is assemble a team of people to help, including as many family members, friends, co-workers, church friends, etc. that you can find. With this group, you need to come together and explore ideas for fundraising. Chances are, the bigger the group, the more resources you will have since many of these folks will have different circles of friends, different talents, and more contacts that can help further the cause. It is a huge benefit to have two or three people to be the main contacts and leaders - but make sure each of these leaders has specific and separate responsibilities so that no two people are making the same

decisions on specific items (as to prevent confusion and/or contention). Also, people need someone to call that can organize your resources and answer questions. After your group comes together, you can decide what kind of fundraiser (or fundraisers) you want to do. We highly recommend contacting someone who has done fundraising projects in the past, especially if this is your first fundraiser, as they will have a lot of insight to share as to the inner-workings of such an effort.

Here is a list of some of the things we will cover for fundraising ideas in this document:

- Events
- Selling a Product or Service
- Other Fundraising Ideas
- Other Help and Resources

## Events

We will start with events because events will be a big job. Despite the amount of effort required, events can raise a lot of money and are often the most profitable in terms of time and effort. The first thing to do is figure out what kind of event you would like to host, and then start narrowing in on the details - first from a global view, then down to the specifics. Do you want music and dinner, a themed event, will there be games and or contest, will you have silent auction, a 5K run? There are so many things to consider.

With almost any type of event, most people expect food (or at least refreshments) and/or music. And of course you have to have a location. All three of these can be difficult to get lined out.

### **Pick A Date**

The second thing you want to do is pick out a date. Make sure to give yourself plenty of time to prepare and to line things out. A lot of venues and bands are

booked many months in advance. When considering a date for the event, make sure you try not to pick a date when there is another big event going on somewhere else in or around the area. You obviously want as many people as possible at your event, so the less competition for people, the better.

### **Event Venue**

After picking a date, it's time to find a *Venue*. Some places to consider would be your local church's event center, a nearby school gym or auditorium, and some towns have "arts centers" with a performance area (much like the Riverpark Center in Owensboro, KY). Some non-profit organizations also have places for events, so don't forget to check to see if those may be available. Local "Community Centers" are often a good choice as well. The venues listed above would probably be the cheapest (and sometimes free) places to book, but if these type of venues are not available, there are other places that you can book that will probably cost more to rent. Never be afraid to tell them what the event is for and ask for a reduced rate. Think hard about places that have events in your community. There are many places that rent space for weddings, such as orchards, old historic buildings, farms, etc. Every venue does not always provide table's and chairs so be sure to ask. If they do not supply them, you may be able to borrow some from another location or rent what you need. Also make sure you have plenty of help to set them up, along with setting up any decorations you might use.

### **Music**

Next you may need to hire a band or a DJ for music (if appropriate). Someone in your group may already know a band or performer, but if not, start contacting bands in your area to see if they will donate their time or play for a reduced rate. You want to make sure you ask the band if they are providing their own sound system (many people don't even think about that part when they book a band). If you have to provide them with a sound system, ask them what all they need included with such system and if they recommend any rental company who they have had success with in the past. Write everything down, even if you don't understand what they are even talking about, so you can tell whoever you contact

for renting/borrowing the sound system what all they need. Don't assume that just anyone who comes along with a sound system and is willing to donate their time will have the correct equipment. There is nothing worse for a band to show up to play, and someone does not have the things they need. You can also choose to play music just as background through your radio or through internet stations like Pandora or Spotify. A Gospel or Contemporary Christian band is good to have at a church event.

## **Food**

Food is the next thing on your list, and this can also be very complicated. First of all, if you don't know how many people are coming you won't know how much food you will need - and if you over-spend on food or under-deliver, it could be harmful to the outcome of the fundraiser. Some people try to send out RSVP invitations in an attempt to see how many people respond and say they are coming. Others may create an event on Facebook and invite friends, in order to get an idea as to how many people are coming. Obviously, the cheapest way to provide food is to have family and or friends cook and prepare it. You could offset the workload by assigning one food item for a small group of 2 or 3 people to work on, such as one small group who can prepare meat, one or more groups for side dishes, a group for desserts, a group for drinks, and a group for eating utensils (plates, forks, knives, cups, napkins). Some food ideas that are easier and cheaper to make and deliver in large quantities are spaghetti, soup, chili, hotdogs and hamburgers with chips, etc. You can also organize the event as a "pot luck" too, where everyone that comes brings a side dish and 2 liter. Usually, in this instance, the host will cook the meat and provide eating utensils.

Other options are to hire a catering group. Don't be afraid to ask for a discounted rate and tell them what the event is for. Also ask if there are ways to save money - as each dollar saved goes directly to the beneficiary of the event. You may cut costs by serving tea, water, and lemonade instead of other more costly drinks, and there may be one type of meat or side dish that is cheaper than others.

## **Games and Activity-Related Fundraisers**

Games or activities are always a fun way to spice up an event. If you have a DJ, ask them if they have crowd-interaction music and activities. Here are a few ways to incorporate games or activities into Events, and some of these can even be Stand-Alone events that can be fundraisers of their own:

- Corn hole, washer toss and/or horseshoes have always been fun games for folks to play, and you can even incorporate a “tournament” of some type with teams and admissions.
- Some outdoor games could be volley ball, softball, touch football, and basketball.
- A great game that everyone likes is a watermelon eating contest or dunking for apples, but creating a fundraiser out of this game may be tricky - it may just need to be incorporated into an event.
- A lot of times, a local church will be open to hosting a musical event or talent show and take up a love offering for the family or person in need.
- Gameshows are fun and a lot of people can be involved. This would be a great addition to an event.
- In the last few years, there has been a lot of people do 5K run/walk. You may contact a park or campground to host that.
- A children beauty show, talent show, or local comedy show is always fun and can bring family and friends together for support. Book an appropriate venue and charge a modest admission.
- Everybody loves a good scavenger hunt and you can get many ideas online.
- Bunco or bingo is fun games to play. You could have each person donate \$10 or \$20 a piece to be in the game and the winner get's bragging rights.
- Kids and adults both like a good magic show. You could have a few different performers and charge a modest admission.

## **Themes**

Here are a few pointers for Fundraiser Themes:

- A murder mystery theme is a fun idea as well, and you could even incorporate this into some type of game. You can buy kits online that will help you put one together.

- If your event is around the holidays, you may want to think about having a theme for the holiday.
- A hippie 60's party or cowboys and indians themed social event would be a good time for attendees.
- A Valentines date night fundraiser can be a big hit - complete with food, dancing and such.
- A family picnic could be a lot of fun. Simply have hotdogs and chips with bottled water or tea and lemonade. Incorporate the games and such for the fundraising aspects, or just ask attendees to donate.

### **Silent Auction**

A silent auction is a good way to earn extra money at a event. You will need a team of people that are willing to call, email, and even stop by business and ask for donations. It is a good idea to develop a flyer explaining “why, when, and where” you are having the fundraiser which you can email or hand to prospective supporters with contact info. They want to make sure it is legitimate and not someone walking in just asking for free stuff. Don't get your feelings hurt if you hear “No” a lot. Businesses get ask by many people for sponsorships and donations each and every day and they can not support each and every one.

### **Contests**

Some people pride themselves as being good cooks, men and women alike. You could have at your event, a soup and chili cooking contest. Each person entering would make a pot of their choose, bring it to the event, maybe have a \$10 entry fee, and they winner spits the pot 50/50 from the fee's of all the cooks. After the winner is chosen, that is a lot of free soup and chili for the folks at your event. Other ideas for contest are corn hole, cards, board games, bingo, bunco, darts, etc.

### **Advertising your Event(s)**

If your going to have an event, you have to let people know about it. Word of mouth has always been the most powerful way to advertise, so have your team of

people tell everyone they know. That will be the most effective way to get the word out.

Facebook is a very powerful and free way to advertise. Anyone who has an account on Facebook can create an event and market the event to their friends & followers. Make sure and put all the details within the event's description so there are no questions people might have. After creating the event, you will see a Invite Friends button on the event page where you can invite all of your Facebook friends. be sure to ask others to do the same.

Your local newspaper is a very good way to get free advertisement as well since they are usually always looking for newsworthy events to report. You should send them a press release about the person you are helping and why. After you share their story, you can add the details of the fundraising event(s) and ask them to publish the event. People are always hearing about fundraising events so the story about the person in need will help them understand the situation and need and are more likely to help. You could call or email them from their website contacts.

Local radio stations are usually good at helping spread the word. They are all about community outreach and they might encourage you to have one of your team members stop by the station to talk about the person you are helping and ways people can help. Call the station and/or email the DJ's from the contact info on their website.

Making a flyer with your info on it to hang around town can also be helpful. Maybe have a friend that is good with design to help develop the flyer. Depending on how many flyers you plan on printing, it might be cheaper to go to a local printing shop to get them done. Ask each of your team members how many copies they need before you print, so that you don't overspend or have a bunch of extras laying around. How many locations do they think they could put one up in.



Email lists are another good way to send out the message. Simply email your contacts and explain the situation and ways they can help. You can also ask them to forward your email to anyone they feel would be interested in helping.

## Selling A Product Or Service

### **Raffle**

A raffle can be a good way to raise funds for a family in need. Think about your community and or your circle of family and friends and what might interest them. A small farming community might have a lot of hunters, so a raffle for a gun might be a good idea in that context. If there are a lot of sports fans, maybe some tickets to a favorite team or tournament. If you can't think of a good product to raffle, ask your team to see if they have ideas. Also, see if anyone has connections to a local business that might be willing to donate a product or sell it to you at cost.

If you are hosting an event, you could have a 50/50 raffle at the event, and ask attendees to participate as they enter the event. You would need to buy a roll of tickets at either a party supply store or Walmart, then you could sell them for \$1 per ticket. You would give them one ticket and you would keep the matching number ticket and put it in a bowl or holding container. At the end of a certain time period that you designate, you can draw for the winner and split whatever money you raise.

### **Garage Sale**

A large Garage Sale can be very cheap way to raise some money if your group of family, friends, church members, etc can donate items for the sale. Make sure you have plenty of help collecting the donated items, setting up for the sale, marking prices, collecting money, advertising, and cleaning up afterwards. You could have it at someone's house, but it may be a good idea to try and find a bigger and better location. Maybe the parking lot of a church or business. That would give you more

room, better parking, and people would more likely know the location and find it easier.

### **Booth at an Event**

A booth at a local or regional festival or community event would put you in front of hundreds or thousands of people. Ask the event coordinator for a booth, explain the cause and maybe they will not charge you for it. That could be a good place to do the following:

- Sell tickets for a raffle
- Hand out flyers for your fundraising event
- Place a collection bucket within/outside the booth
- Sell candy, water, or soft drinks.
- Maybe you know someone that is good at making crafts that you could sell.
- You could do face painting or temporary tattoo's for kids for a donation.
- You may have folks you know that are good at baking cakes or cookies that you could sale.
- If it's a hot day, you may want to sell water, popsicles, watermelon slices or ice cream.

### **Car Wash**

With a car wash, you defiantly need a location with lots of traffic and obviously water. You could ask a local business to use there parking lot. It may be best to ask to do it on a Saturday when that business is closed so you don't interrupt their business. And you'll want to advertise the car wash in advance for the best results.

### **Restaurant Percentage Night**

There are many restaurant's that will allow fundraiser nights which may let you keep a percentage of all sales on that night toward the cause. A lot of times they will give you a window of time, say 4pm to 8pm, and ask you to distribute coupons to give to family, friends, etc. to bring with them and use for the fundraiser. If they

do not allow fundraisers at a restaurant you approach, you may ask if they are willing to donate gift cards or food baskets for other events you might have.

### **We Bake For You**

Take the guesswork out of what will sell at a bake sale, and have a “We Bake for You” sale as your next fundraiser. Decide on a list of approximately ten things that you and your group wants to bake and what you can sell each for with a nice profit. Create order forms with your selections, their prices, and the date they will be available. Maybe include pictures to really entice people. Time your sale to major holidays or sporting events. People will appreciate the convenience of not having to bake or shop. Find a commercial kitchen at a local church or school that you can borrow for the day. Assemble all the ingredients you will need. Have a bunch of bakers and group each into teams. Assign each team to a specific item they are responsible for. Package each item nicely with a thank you note. Bake a few extras for last minute sales.

## Other Fundraising Ideas

### **Collection Containers**

A good way to collect funds for a cause is to create collection containers to place near cash registers of local businesses, to entice people to donate their extra change. There are different way's to make change collectors. Some people make them from can's, boxes, plastic containers, etc. Do a quick google search for collection containers and you will find many ideas. You will need to design it to incorporate a description and/or picture on it that explains the need. It needs to be short and sweet because people don't have a lot of time to read a long description. A small pictures along with the description would be highly recommended. Just glue or tape it on the container. The more locations you have containers, the more money you will raise. One of the best ways to do this is to get your team together and ask different people in your group come up with a list of convenient stores, banks and other high traffic business. From your list, have each person in the team

choose which locations they would like to cover and have them go in and ask the manager for permission to put a collection container there.

### **Toilet Surprise**

Sounds silly but this fundraiser gets a lot of laughs and can promote involvement. For years people have raised money by painting up an old toilet (even putting flowers in the bowl) and placing it in someone's front yard. When the person wakes up the next day or arrives home from work, they find the toilet, along with a letter or sign, in their yard. The toilet should have a contact number and description of what the fundraiser is all about. You can set a price to get the toilet removed and placed in another person's yard (\$20 maybe?). If you include who donated to have the toilet placed in their yard on the contact card, it often promotes reciprocity or further involvement.

### **Scavenger Hunt**

With this fundraiser, individuals and/or teams pay an entrance fee to take part in the scavenger hunt. Each team is given the list of items they need to find and very detailed instructions about what is – and is not – allowed. Each person or team must return to the starting location by a specified time. Anyone returning even one minute late is disqualified from being the winner.

A winner is selected from those who returned by the specified time based on who found the most items on the list. If there is a tie, the winner would be the person or team that had the most items and returned to the designated location in the least amount of time.

It's a good idea to assign each item a point value based on how difficult the item would be to find. For example, "one unused burger wrapper" is going to be easy to locate, so that item would be a low point value. On the other hand, "a business card from a local police officer whose name starts with the letter M" would be more difficult to find and thus would have a higher point value.

## **Food Sales for Small Events**

For these kind of events, people will be coming and going, kind of in and out to eat and go so you don't have to worry as much about entertainment and a really big place. Some easy and cheap foods to make in bulk and sale can be a pancake breakfast, a soup and chili lunch or supper, a spaghetti supper, etc, Maybe even a pizza party, and if you place a big order and they know what the fundraiser is for, they may give you a discount. A hotdog or potato bar would also be cheap and easy.

## **Dog Bakery**

Spending on our four legged friends is at an all time high. Take advantage of this trend to raise money for your group. Dog treats can be made very inexpensively and sold for a large profit, and recipes can be found online or in a dog treat cook book. You can find cellophane bags with paw prints or bones on them quite easily online, and can make the treats at home or find some place to donate the use of their kitchen. All ingredients should be easily found at your local grocery store, but **BE SURE** not to use chocolate or other ingredients dangerous to dogs. You can either take pre orders and/or set up your dog bakery at a craft sale or sporting event.

## **Trivia Night**

Cater to everyone's competitive spirit and raise money at the same time by organizing a trivia night! Find a local bar or restaurant with a private room that your group can rent for the evening. The establishment may even offer a rental discount (or free) since it's for a good cause, and because they'll be making money on the food and beverages people order while they're playing trivia games. Or, if you want to get in on some of the income, find a venue like a church meeting room or a school auditorium, and sell finger foods, sweet treats, and beverages for players

to enjoy. Find out if your city has a trivia game provider, and if so, ask if they would be willing to donate their service for one night. Or, you can just as easily put together your own trivia challenges with trivia board games cards, a microphone, and a volunteer to act as an emcee. Charge a flat fee for people to participate in the trivia contests. Create both individual and team challenges, and if you make it a family event, a special round for kids. Don't forget to offer prizes for the winners, which can be gift certificates to local stores or restaurants, or even small trophies.

### **Karaoke Night**

There is a hidden singer in all of us! Most people will admit to singing in the shower or car when no one else is around. Bring the singer out with a karaoke night for your next fundraiser. You will want to find a place to host it - a cafeteria always works well, as there are usually tables and chairs already set up. Find a place that rents karaoke machines and see if they will give you a deal being that it is a fundraiser. Tell them you will give them free advertising during the event. Theme your karaoke night as a coffee shop or a bar. Serve fancy coffee drinks or non alcoholic frozen beverages. Charge an entry fee and give a discount to those willing to sing to ensure there is entertainment, and allow people to sing solo or in groups. Most importantly, you will want to have an emcee to keep things flowing.

## Other Help and Resources

### **National Organizations That Help People In Need**

In your area or community, there may be assistance available to you that you may not even know about. Ask around and do a website search to see if there is government help or local non-profit organizations that could help. Here is a list of a few places that help:

<http://www.needhelppayingbills.com>

<http://www.habitat.org>

<http://www.n2n.org>

<http://www.benefits.gov>

<http://catholiccharitiesusa.org>

<http://www.svdpusa.org>

<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org>

### **Website Resources for Fundraising Ideas**

<http://www.partypop.com>

<http://www.funattic.com/home.htm>

<http://www.picnicpeoplesandiego.com>

<http://www.selfishgiving.com>

<http://www.fundraisers.com>

<http://www.fundraiserinsight.org>

<http://www.better-fundraising-ideas.com>

<http://www.fund-raising-ideas-center.com>

<http://www.fundraising-ideas.org>

<http://www.giveforward.com>

<http://www.easy-fundraising-ideas.com>

<http://simple-fundraising-ideas.com>