



## FUNDRAISING TIPS

You've got a great trip planned, but how to pay for it? Fundraising is a great way to help support your efforts. Here are a few tips to help you get started on the road to success!

Whether you're doing fundraising as an individual or group, it's critical to have a clear idea of your goals. For example, are you trying to fundraise the entire amount for each group member, or just a set amount per traveler? Next, understand that you know your own community best. This doesn't necessarily mean your entire town, but rather your friends, family, school, church... this is to whom you'll direct your fundraising efforts. **Select a few key fundraisers that you believe will be successful within your community, and do them well!** There will be many people who wish to support your group. Communicating your goals to all involved, coupled with encouraging students to work together with their families are key organizational elements as well as excellent ways to connect with one another! In addition, effective use of time can be a deciding factor to your group attaining their goals. A great way to begin is by creating a contact list at an initial meeting, with 2 or 3 adults volunteering to coordinate your group. From this point, setting up a group email and/or phone tree will help facilitate information dissemination and coordination. Even though your event may not be school-sponsored, it may be possible to publicize and announce your fundraiser at school, with approval, as well as negotiate use of school facilities. It is wise to establish a relationship with school administration or others who may be necessary to facilitate your logistics before committing to a specific fundraiser. Finally, be respectful of other fundraising efforts throughout your community, share dates and avoid duplication to maximize your effectiveness.

## PRODUCT FUNDRAISERS

Selecting product fundraisers typically yield higher profits and are less labor intensive than traditional fundraising "events". Please keep in mind that selecting a product fundraiser does NOT necessarily require door-to-door sales. Safety is a priority! Encourage students to contact friends and family members via phone, email and letters.

Students may also create a poster, resume' or note describing their fundraiser and ask a parent to share it at work. Then, invite students into work at a convenient time to collect money, deliver items and distribute thank you letters to keep them involved in the process.

Generally speaking, when you have decided you'd like to participate in a product fundraiser, you would contact a professional fundraising company who will connect you with a sales representative. The role of the sales representative is to provide support, tips, trouble-shooting and other timesaving services for a more efficient fundraiser. Most sales representatives are non-commissioned in order to better assist you by matching an appropriate product to your group's needs. You may prefer to brainstorm amongst your group members for local companies providing fundraising opportunities. Often, local companies are more invested in the community which means more versatility and support of your group's needs.

Regardless, choosing a fundraising company with which to work is critical to success. There are many factors your group may wish to consider, but the Association of Fund Raisers and Direct Sellers (AFRDS) has a checklist of interview questions to get you started. You may access this file from the AFRD homepage: <http://www.afrds.org> then select "Fundraising Toolbox" from the toolbar, finally select "Fundraising Checklist" from the pull-down menu.

Some questions you may wish to consider:

- Is this a high quality organization and/or product with a fair market price?
- Are there any upfront costs? (Ask about promotional materials, product samples...)
- What are the profit margins? (Hint - many are graduated based on quantity sold.)
- What are the record keeping logistics? (Tip - having assistance to double check individual orders before submitting a master order to the company will prevent delays.)
- How are products shipped and who pays freight? (Take note - some deliveries need to go to a community address versus residential as certain trucks are not permitted in residential areas, also some food products will not be delivered on Fridays due to potential spoilage.)
- Are there additional incentives provided and what are the specific requirements?
- What is the policy on back-orders, returns or damaged merchandise?
- How often are payments made? (Find out if there is a minimum amount of money that must be reached before the company issues you a check.)
- What is the privacy policy for those making purchases?

Often a prosperous choice for groups includes selling seasonal and holiday items such as cookie dough before Christmas, pizza before Super Bowl, temporary mascot tattoos for spirit week, and custom silicone bracelets for special events/causes. However, planning must be done well in advance. A good rule of thumb is to have a two week selling period, followed by a two week processing period before products are shipped. For example, in order for you to have items delivered to your group and then distributed to your customers by Christmas, you would want to sell during the first two weeks of November and turn in your orders by November 21 at the latest. Check with company for specifics but realize that shipping and delivery tends to be delayed during the major holiday seasons. You may wish to pay for alternative shipping to guarantee a specific arrival date.

Once your product(s) arrive, you need to have some timesaving tips in place to deal with the delivery and distribution of your product. Usually the chairperson for your group will receive a checklist and notification of delivery details. Again, having created a group email and/or phone tree may facilitate group member contact with minimal time investment. Even though your event may not be school-sponsored, it might be possible to publicize and announce your fundraiser at school, with approval, as well as negotiate use of school facilities. Make sure to have all tools and supplies available when your product is delivered. Useful items might include: a dolly, refrigerator space, cell phone, box opener, sticky notes and highlighters to label. Following a systematic approach, set out product(s) as they appear on the order form with an adult double-checking all items. Be advised that some fundraising companies pre-sort your orders for your convenience.

Variations on the typical product fundraiser would include:

Product Recycling Programs – collect and return toner cartridges, cell phones... for cash.

Usually shipping is paid and return labels are included. A list of accepted products and their value are posted on the company website.

Scratch Cards – booklets are created for your particular group with scratch off circles in hidden donation amounts. Some amounts are as minimal as 50¢ and range between \$3.00 and \$5.00 (ask company for specifics). Donors scratch off a prescribed minimum number of circles (or more if preferred) and contribute the total amount. Sponsors have included coupons in the booklets to be received regardless of amount donated.

Online Fundraisers – an online catalog is available with all purchases credited to your group's code. Emails detailing the process and linked to the online catalog are sent to your interested customers. Generally shipping is free and your time investment is minimal; however, check with the company on privacy information before committing.

When in doubt, ask a sales representative about ALL ordering, packaging and shipping particulars! They wish to make your fundraising experience successful!

Some product fundraising starting points...

[www.afrds.org](http://www.afrds.org) (Association of Fundraising Distributors & Suppliers, terrific overall resource and starting point)

[www.ezfund.com](http://www.ezfund.com) (wide variety of food, gift, and product fundraisers)

[www.CurrentFun.com](http://www.CurrentFun.com) (Current paper and gift products)

[www.PizzaKit.com](http://www.PizzaKit.com) (Little Caesars Pizza)

[www.buyforcharity.com](http://www.buyforcharity.com) (Domino's Pizza)

[www.TonerBuyer.com](http://www.TonerBuyer.com) (recycling fundraiser)

[www.FundingFactory.com](http://www.FundingFactory.com) (recycling fundraiser)

[www.scratchandhelp.com](http://www.scratchandhelp.com) (scratch card fundraiser)

[www.4myfundraiser.com](http://www.4myfundraiser.com) (online product fundraiser)

# EVENT FUNDRAISERS

Special fundraising events, such as car washes and bake sales, while generating a spirit of enthusiasm, require more effort and often yield less profit. Careful planning and organization of resources and volunteers is critical to success. Before initiating any fundraiser, negotiate how the profits will be distributed. Developing a contract for students which emphasizes the group's goals, or creating a sign-up sheet for time worked (profits dispersed as an "hourly wage") will help prevent issues in the long run. Once again, creating a phone tree/group email may facilitate volunteer contacts with minimal time investment. Additionally, keep in mind that products as well as cash donations from grocery stores and other businesses are often available for your event. This is especially pertinent to groups interested in concession stands and school stores. Some groups are even able to sell raffle tickets for donated items. Finally, effectively communicating your upcoming fundraiser is key! Even though your event may not be school-sponsored, it might be possible to publicize and announce your fundraiser at school, with approval, as well as negotiate use of school facilities.

Some event fundraising starting points...

Community meal (students and their families, cook and serve pancake breakfast, spaghetti feed... Some local restaurants such as McDonald's even allow your group to work the register for a percent of the profit!)

Silent auction (donated items and services are bid for silently on sign-up sheets. Even services students would provide like mowing lawns, shoveling snow and raking leaves are great auction items. Check on pre-established community events which you may join, such as school open house or community family fun night.)

Community garage sales (group members bring items to a central location for sorting, pricing and selling. If your students are drivers, they may assist in product pickup.)

Student dance (decorated in your group's destination theme, parent disc jockey and supervision provide fun for all. Concessions are also a big hit!)

50-50 raffle (particularly good at large sporting events where there are multiple sales opportunities – in the stands, at the door/gate... Sell tickets for set amount with the group seller keeping one half of each numbered, perforated ticket sold. The buyer gets the other half. Holding a drawing, often at half-time, the winner gets half of the money collected and your group gets the rest. Many times winners will donate their share to your worthy cause!)

# DONATIONS & CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

Another option is to directly contact businesses for donations or corporate sponsorships. Many larger companies and service organizations have annual, budgeted amounts dedicated to non-profit or community groups. Check out local banks and businesses, as well as groups involved with youth such as the Kiwanis and VFW. If your group is school sponsored, you may even wish to contact the PTA, student council, other student organizations/clubs (i.e. - foreign language club) or activity booster club. It is important to remind sponsors that these donations are tax deductible!

Some twists on traditional donations and sponsorship are as follows:

- Negotiate a day with grocery stores or retail businesses in which a percentage of the profit would go to your group. Have students create posters and signs promoting the event and business, encouraging community members to shop during that timeframe.
- Create a sign-up for sponsorship per hour of learning similar to traditional sponsorships for events such as walk-a-thons. This is a great community investment in students' education!

When contacting businesses or organizations for donations/sponsorship it may prove useful to include a letter of introduction or resume' along with your trip itinerary. Key items to mention are your name, with what group you are traveling, where and when you are traveling, amount which you are trying to raise, and most importantly, why their donation would be beneficial to you. Payment specifics are also very helpful to donors. To whom should the check be made out (**Global Travel Alliance**), how should they specify to whom the donation applies (either in the memo field, included in a cover letter or other detailed notation), and is this donation tax deductible (Yes! If your group has established a non-profit banking account, please include that tax i.d. in your materials for the donor.) Following up with a personalized thank you will be greatly appreciated and likely encourage future sponsorship of other qualified students! See [Fundraiser Samples](#) for examples which would be appropriate for contacting businesses and organizations.

# PULLING IT TOGETHER

As a safeguard, before fundraising money comes in from any source you will want to have a structure in place for holding and distributing funds. Again, before initiating any fundraiser, negotiate how the profits will be distributed. Developing a contract for students which emphasizes the group's goals, or creating a sign-up sheet for time worked (profits dispersed as an "hourly wage") or products sold (profits dispersed per dollar or quantity sold) will help prevent issues you may face in the long run. If your group is school sponsored, you will probably have access to a club/activity account. Referring to school administration prior to fundraising will give you a clear idea as to the logistics of using these specific accounts. If you are not a school sponsored group, you may want to consider the benefits of opening a non-profit banking account. Keep in mind that if you deposit fundraising money into a personal account, any interest will be reported on your own social security number for tax purposes. To open a non-profit banking account, you will need to acquire a non-profit tax i.d. or employee i.d. number from the IRS (800/829-4933). A group name is necessary to complete the process. Most banks in your community provide non-profit checking accounts. Generally these accounts have no minimum balance, gain no interest and assess no service fee, but you are limited to a certain number of checks and deposits per month. Should you exceed this limit, there will be a small fee; however, working as a group should keep you easily within this range. In addition, there will usually be a signature card which allows a certain number of people to write checks and make deposits on your account. When going from one year to the next, you can either close the account or have a current parent get new people on the signature card. Finally, facilitate accurate processing by having all checks made to **Global Travel Alliance**, and include the group and traveler's name either in the memo field, included in a cover letter or other detailed notation.

# SAMPLE STUDENT LETTERS

Below you will find a sample letter that you may find useful in sending to potential donors. Upon making revisions for your specific trip, copy on your own paper and distribute. Be sure to include your itinerary and a return envelope!

<DATE>

Dear Sponsor:

I am currently in <GRADE> at <SCHOOL NAME> here in <CITY NAME>. This <DEPARTURE DATE>, we have the opportunity to take an educational trip to <DESTINATION.>. I am writing to ask for your support which will enable me to attend this powerful learning experience through Global Travel Alliance. To get further information about this organization and their destinations, I encourage you to visit their website at [www.globaltravelalliance.com](http://www.globaltravelalliance.com)

I have enclosed our itinerary for your review. As you can see, this will be a powerful learning experience, enabling me to personally connect and interact with history beyond the borders of my classroom. Participation in this experience will cost a total of <\$AMOUNT OF TRIP>. This cost covers transportation, lodging, and food as well as admission and activity fees. My combined contributions from my parents and other fundraising efforts equals <\$ AMOUNT CURRENTLY RAISED>, but I still am in need of <\$ DIFFERENCE NEEDED>. I would greatly appreciate your financial support in any amount you can contribute. If you are able to help sponsor me, please make a check payable to **Global Travel Alliance**, and indicate my name on the memo line. My final payment must be paid no later than <FINAL PAYMENT DUE DATE>. I have enclosed an envelope so that you can return the check to me.

I appreciate your assistance in making this life-changing experience a reality. I know that attending this trip will enable me to develop my leadership skills and be a positive representative of <COMMUNITY NAME> which makes you proud!

Sincerely,  
<STUDENT NAME>

Below you will find a resume' that you may find useful in sending to potential donors. After making revisions for your specific trip, copy on your own paper and distribute. Keep in mind that a unique stationery design and color will set you apart!

TO: <YOUR COMMUNITY, BUSINESS, ORGANIZATION>  
FROM: <GROUP NAME>  
DATE: <DATE>

Hello, my name is <STUDENT NAME> and I am currently in <GRADE> at <SCHOOL NAME> here in <CITY NAME>. This <DEPARTURE DATE>, we have the opportunity to take an educational trip to <DESTINATION>. I am writing to ask for your support which will enable me to attend this powerful learning experience through Global Travel Alliance. To get further information about this organization and their destinations, I encourage you to visit their website at [www.globaltravelalliance.com](http://www.globaltravelalliance.com)

I have attached our itinerary for your review. As you can see, this will be a powerful learning experience, enabling me to personally connect and interact with history beyond the borders of my classroom. Participation in this experience will cost a total of <\$AMOUNT OF TRIP>. This cost covers transportation, lodging, and food as well as admission and activity fees. My combined contributions from my parents and other fundraising efforts equals <\$ AMOUNT CURRENTLY RAISED>, but I still am in need of <\$ DIFFERENCE NEEDED>. I would greatly appreciate your financial support in any amount you can contribute. If you are able to help sponsor me, please make a check payable to **Global Travel Alliance**, and indicate my name on the memo line, included in a cover letter or other detailed notation. My final payment must be paid no later than <FINAL PAYMENT DUE DATE>. Donations can be mailed to: <MAILING ADDRESS>.

I appreciate your assistance in making this life-changing experience a reality. I know that attending this trip will enable me to develop my leadership skills and be a positive representative of <COMMUNITY NAME> which makes you proud! You may be interested in the following accomplishments I have made in school and extracurricular activities:

#### ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<In a resume' format, list academic accomplishments such as GPA, school related programs and classes of significance.>

#### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

<In a resume' format, list volunteer work, community and church related experiences, as well as clubs, activities, and sports with which you've been involved. Any work experience which you feel is pertinent may also be included here.>

#### REFERENCES

<In a resume' format, list references and ways in which they may be contacted. This may be a work number/email or home. Remember that it is an appropriate courtesy to ask references if you may list them and their contact information before distributing your resume'.>

Below you will find a sample thank-you letter that you may find useful in sending to donors upon receiving their donation. After making revisions for your specific trip, copy on your own paper and distribute. Your follow-up will be greatly appreciated!

<DATE>

Dear Sponsor:

I want to thank you for your generous donation, making it possible for me to attend a <DESTINATION: ie Washington D.C.> learning experience through Global Travel Alliance on <DATES OF TRAVEL>. Your support in providing this life-changing opportunity for me is truly appreciated! In the future, I hope you might be willing to sponsor other qualified young people as well.

Sincerely,  
<STUDENT NAME>