

FUNDRAISER IDEAS

What's in the Box? Auction

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 movies (perhaps weighted down with some rocks) or an old stuffed animal. 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.

Windshield Washing

Find a busy and local fast food restaurant with a drive thru lane that is interested in helping your group have a fundraiser. Gather squeegees, towels and cleaning solution. Offer to wash the windshields of cars going through the drive thru for a donation. Pick the busy times of the day to set up, such as lunch or dinner. Have someone at the back of the line explain to the driver who your group is, what you are raising money for, and ask if they would like to donate. Keep the speech short so that you don't hold things up. Mark the cars that donate with a bar of soap, or a sticky note so that the people at the front of the line know to clean the windshield. Work quickly, but thoroughly and with a smile and thank you. You will want to keep the drive thru line moving smoothly. The restaurant and their customers will be thankful.

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 a specific item they are responsible for. Package each item nicely with a thank you note. Bake a few extras for last minute sales.

Trivia Night

Cater to everyone's competitive spirit and raise money at the same time by organizing a trivia night! Use 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. If so, ask if they're willing to donate their service for one night. Or, you can just as easily put together your own trivia challenges with trivia board game cards, a microphone, and a volunteer to act as 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.

Sponsor my Grades

Instead of paying a student for their good grades, help them raise money for your group by getting a good report card. Find sponsors who will pay a certain amount for every A or B on their report card. Maybe have a bonus for an all A report card. This will be great motivation for students to study hard and keep their grades up. Work with the teachers and see if they will keep a running total so each student knows where they stand. Allow each student to photocopy their report card to send it to their sponsors along with envelopes so they can collect the money. Have each student send a thank you note to each sponsor letting them know what your group will use the money for.

Rake it Up

It seems like all the leaves fall from the trees at once in the fall. It can be a time consuming task, but a great fundraiser for your group. Create a flyer that explains your group, what you are raising money for, and talks about your Rake It Up day. Distribute them door to door in your neighborhoods. Be careful not to place them in mailboxes, as this is against federal law. Let people know you will be in their neighborhood, rakes in hand, to clean up their yard for a donation. Pick a weekend, as more people will be home. Bring rakes and yard waste disposal bags. Make sure to check with your local municipality for requirements. Knock on doors and see who wants their yards cleaned up. Remember to be courteous. Find out where they want the yard waste put, as you may not be able to just leave it at the curb. Leave a handwritten thank you note to show your appreciation.

Hot Dog Sale

Hot dogs are easy to prepare, easy to eat, and easy to sell! Get permission from a local retailer to set up a hot dog stand outside their entrance. Be sure to have everything ready to go before lunchtime to catch hungry shoppers as they exit the store. You can purchase everything you need at the grocery store, or better yet, in large quantities at a club store. Remember in addition to hot dogs and buns, be sure to buy ketchup, mustard, relish, and anything else you want to serve as a topping. Don't forget the napkins! You can also sell chips and sodas, if you like, and if you have the means to keep them cold for long periods of time. You can also sell hot dogs at the local park, or at events like 10K runs.

Funny Photo Contest

This is a chance for all aspiring photographers to show off their funniest pictures. Have a funny photo contest and ask for submissions from your group. Setup pictures like an art show. Have the picture framed or matted and include a small biography of the artist. In order to raise money, make it a juried art show. Place a jar, can, or box in front of each picture in which people can place coins or bills to vote for their favorites. One dollar equals one vote. Offer sparking grape juice, fruit and cheese to your patrons as a thank you for coming. Consider setting up in a public space, such as a local shopping mall to increase your traffic and votes. Leave the display set up for at week or a long weekend.

Consignment Sale

This takes some planning to pull off, but as long as you're well organized, it can be a very successful and fun way to raise money. When times are tough, people look for easy ways to save and make money. With this fundraiser, buyers will save money over buying retail, while sellers and your group will make money. You need a large enough area to hold the sale, maybe a school cafeteria or gymnasium. If it's a church fundraiser, maybe your church would be able to host it. Members of the community who don't belong to your organization can also participate as sellers, if you choose to make it open to everyone. Sellers bring items from home they'd like to sell, whether it's the clothes and toys their kids have outgrown, household items they don't need anymore, or even books, CDs, and movies. Assign each seller a number to track sales. You'll need to provide tables for sellers to display their sale items. Charge a small entry fee, and have concessions too. Shopping makes people hungry! Decide beforehand how much of a percentage sellers will keep from what they sell. The rest is profit for your organization.

Chili Cook Off

Just about everyone has a secret family chili recipe. Encourage people to share theirs by having a Chili Cook-off for your next fundraiser. Charge an entry fee to all chefs and award cash prizes to the winners. Assemble local celebrities to make up your judging panel. Have different categories for people to enter i.e. best spicy chili, best vegetarian chili, best chili by a chef under the age of 16, etc. Either have everyone bring in their pre-cooked chili or provide a space for them to cook it onsite. Have the cooking be a part of the judging process by awarding points based on timing, technique, and cleanliness. People love to watch others cook so have an observation area for the audience. Have a timed cooking contest to see who can make the best chili in an hour (or a half hour for an added challenge). Sell bowls or samples of the different chilies for the audience to try and to raise extra money.

Car Detailing

A car wash is a common fundraiser for groups of all types. But what if you don't have access to a water source? Or what if you just want to be environmentally friendly, and save the hundreds of gallons of water used up at a car wash? Why not have a car detailing day? Your group can clean just the interiors of cars, and either charge a flat fee or ask for donations. You'll need plenty of paper towels, but reusable cloths are a better way to go if you're trying to be environmentally conscious. You can buy big boxes of them at club stores or auto supply stores. You'll also need glass cleaner, as well as cleaners and protectants for vinyl and leather. Also have plenty of trash bags on hand to throw away. Hold your detailing event in a shady area, if you can, since it will be hotter inside cars than if you were washing the outsides. If there's an electrical outlet nearby, ask a group member to bring a heavy duty vacuum to use on the car's carpets and upholstery. An upholstery cleaner might also be a good idea, if you want to clean up spills and stains for an extra charge. Throw in an inexpensive air freshener, and your customers can drive away in clean, fresh cars while you earn money for your cause. And you can all feel good about having saved a lot of water!

Board Game Tournament

Create a fun twist on a card tournament and do something that everyone can participate in. Have a Board Game Tournament. Pick a favorite, such as Sorry, Trouble, or Monopoly. Assemble 4 person teams that will work together to accumulate points or you can allow individuals to participate. Charge an entry fee for each team, in order to earn money for your charity. Give a portion of the proceeds as the winning prize or get prizes donated from local businesses. Decide if you are going to play with a time limit for each game so that everyone has the same chance and to keep things running on a schedule. Decide on any "House" rules beforehand. Set up bleachers for the audience and consider having a 50/50 raffle or raffle for door prizes. Definitely have a concession stand with coffee, soda pop, popcorn, chips, hot dogs, and bottled water to earn extra money.

Bake Off Bake Sale

Appeal to the community's competitive spirit and love of sweets and hold a bakeoff bake sale! You can set parameters like participants can only bake cookies

or cakes, or just let everyone do their own thing. Charge a small fee to enter the contest. Find a venue for everyone to gather and have their baked goods judged. Provide a small prize for the winner, then sell off all the baked goods. You can either charge per item, or just ask for donations for the items people choose to buy. Sell punch or soda for people to wash down those cookies and brownies. A nice touch would be to have the bakers include copies of their recipes with the baked goods that are sold.

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 a minimal preparation for it. You will want to have baked potatoes with all the fixin's. 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, tooth picks, 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.