# FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

# Jane Indreland

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# Introduction

Almost every group and certainly every charity is going to need funds for something sometime. Here is a list of potential fundraising activities to help you get started. I concentrated on one-off smallish events that your club can adapt to suit your circumstances, and I hope that you will find the list helpful.

# **Product Sales**

### **Homemade Products**

- General Guidelines
  - Homemade product sales lend themselves perfectly to a carnival or craft fair, or they can be launched during or after a meeting.
  - You can sell directly or take orders for delivery.
  - Keep your group's mission in mind when you decide what your group can make and sell and select something that you have made successfully before.
  - Volunteers can make the items in their own homes or together in assembly style. If different people are making the same item, they should all have the same recipe.
  - When you decide the price per item, be sure to include ingredients and time.
  - Publicize the sale ahead of time and make big colorful signs for the day of the sale.
  - If you are selling food, give out free samples.
- Some successful homemade products are:
  - Various baked goods such as cookies and cakes or specialty items such as
    - Basically Breads
    - Simply Cinnamon Rolls
    - Just Cookies—A variation on this is a "mix and match" sale.
    - Purely Pies
    - Fantastic Fudge
    - Popcorn
    - Jumbo Pretzels
    - A variation on this theme is to give away the coffee and donuts but be sure that everyone knows that donations are gratefully appreciated.
  - Seasonal Items like
    - Christmas wreaths
    - Christmas ornaments
    - Christmas trees
    - Easter baskets
    - Homegrown pumpkins or other produce
    - Halloween treats
  - Jam and jelly or other preserves
  - Dried soup mixes
  - Plants, flowers, and herbs
  - Calendars with local events Perhaps you could get a sponsor to keep down expenses.

- Books—*Take what your group does best and put it into a book. These are time consuming to produce, but they can sell for years.* 
  - Recipe Books--Several professional publishers such as <u>Walter's Cookbooks</u> at <u>www.custom-cookbooks</u> will help you produce your recipe book if you don't have the expertise to do it yourself. *Charlotte De Wittet from Stockholm writes*, "Our AWC cookbook was one of them. Members donated recipes, along with little anecdotes to accompany the recipes. It took a long time, as our first floppy disappeared with the first editor (who probably is very fat now from trying out all the recipes), so we had to start all over again. But it has been a wonderful project, and really generated a lot of support and camaraderie amongst our members. The cookbook launch was at an old-fashioned Victorian garden party, held on a private countryside estate overlooking the Swedish archipelago."
  - · Guides for newcomers
  - · Restaurant, shopping, and service provider recommendations

#### Manufactured products

- Check the website www.fundraising-yellow-pages.com/ for a list of product providers. Even if you don't use one of these services, this site can give you some ideas that you could adapt to your part of the world. Some suggestions:
  - Nuts
  - Candy
  - Cheese
  - First aid kits
  - Seasonal items
  - Flower bulbs
  - Telephone cards
- Things that are personalized for your group usually sell well. Some possibilities:
  - Coffee mugs with the US flag and the flag of your host country. We used this as a fundraiser for the conference in London. Although they were popular, storage is a major factor to consider.
  - Tee shirts
  - Posters, bumper stickers, buttons, badges
  - Temporary tattoos Don't laugh--One fraternity raised over \$10,000 in two months selling temporary tattoos of their school's logo.
  - Note cards with a picture of your clubhouse or a local beauty spot. *The FAWCO Friendship Quilt cards are always popular.*
- Gift Certificates Solicit donations from merchants or restaurants at a discount, and then sell them at face value. These work especially well at the Holidays.

#### Selling Services

- Babysitting Service--This can either be set up so that your volunteers will go to the purchaser's home on a one-to-one basis or the children can come to a central place for one day, such as a Saturday before Christmas. This activity requires a good deal of advance preparation, but you will be providing a valuable service as well as making money for your cause.
- Car Wash: Yes, it is as old as the hills, but it still works, especially if you have young helpers.
- Care Package: If you have a boarding school, college, nursing home, or military post in your neighborhood, send a letter to parents offering care packages for their loved ones. Some good ideas-- birthday cakes for children in boarding school or snacks for college students during exam week.
- Teaching classes: Find a teacher who can teach something interesting and sign people up. Possibilities include languages, crafts, carpentry, plumbing, calligraphy, drawing, painting, photography, cooking, dance, sports, basic first aid, nutrition, self-defense, basic family finance, tax preparation, estate planning, and aerobics, body-building.
- Recycling: Offer to collect recyclables and take them to the scrap dealer or recycling center.

# **Raffles, Lotteries, Tombolas, and Auctions**

### Raffles

- Basic Raffle--This is a sure fire way to get more money out of any organized function. Get the prizes (donated if possible), sell the tickets, and the lucky winners go away happy. Everyone else has donated to a good cause. *The raffle for the FAWCO Friendship Quilt raises thousands for The Foundation*.
- "Strike It Lucky"--Each person buys a ticket. The winner wins half of the money collected. This works well as a regular club event and the money adds up over time. You must insist that the winner takes the money she wins. She isn't allowed to give it back, or the raffle won't work so well the next time.
- Money Tree—This fundraiser is a variation of the "Strike It Lucky" idea. Make your tree out of a branch spray painted silver or gold or a holiday theme. Estimate the number of tickets you expect to sell and take a percentage of this estimation for your tree. Attach bills of various denominations (folded so that viewers can't see the numbers) to the tree. The winner is the person who guesses the correct amount of cash on the tree. *Have a plan in advance to handle the situation of two or more winning guesses. They can either split the cash or have a drawing and the winner takes all.*

### Lotteries

- "Moo-Doo" Lottery—Divide a fenced off area into a 10x10 grid with a non-toxic powder such as flour to make 100 squares. Provide a little hay, water, and bring on the cow. The square where the cow first drops her "doo" is the winner. *This works best as a part of an outdoor carnival or fair*.
- ◆ Football (or other sporting event) Pool—This game can make almost any two-team event into a nice easy little earner, and the players don't have to have any expertise. Prepare a 10x10 grid, giving you 100 squares. Sell each square for a certain amount of money, e.g. \$10, which gives you \$1000. Reserve half of the money for the prizes. Put one team's name along the top of the grid and the other team down the side. *Randomly* assign a number from 0 to 9 along the top and side. Thus each square will have two random numbers from 0 to 9, one for each team. The winner is the person with the correct combination of numbers that match the last numbers of each team's score at the end of the game. *You can have first, second, and third place winners by giving prizes for the scores at the end of each quarter if you like*.

### Tombolas

- Basic tombola—A tombola is basically a raffle where **every purchaser wins a prize of some kind**. The prizes vary from a few very nice things to small items worth less than the cost of the ticket. Use raffle tickets and stick one half of the ticket to the prize and put the other half in a bowl for drawing. The purchaser buys a chance to draw one of the numbers out of the bowl. She wins the prize associated with the number. *Of course, the success of a tombola depends on getting many interesting prizes, because you can't sell more chances than you have prizes.*
- Easter Egg tombola—Put slips of paper with the prizes written on them into plastic Easter eggs, and sell the eggs.
- Balloon Tombola—Put the slips of paper into balloons.
- ◆ Spinning Tombola—Each buyer buys an envelope with 4 different color tickets with a different number (each corresponding to a different prize) on each. After all the envelopes are sold, the organizer spins a wheel with four colors on it. You get the prize that corresponds with the number on the winning color. The fun of this tombola is figuring out which prize you would win if the winning color turned out to be red, blue or whatever. It is time-consuming to set up, however. This was used to raise lots of money for charity at the AWC of London's Golden Eagle Ball.

### Auctions

- General auction tips
  - Auctions require a good deal of manpower in gathering and setting up the items for sale, collecting the money, and getting the items to the buyers.
  - Quality is important for an auction—this isn't a garage sale.
  - A lively auctioneer can make all the difference in the amount of money you make.
  - Keep track of who donates items, because thank yous are essential.
  - Try to have a good idea about the worth of items so that you can stipulate minimum bids if necessary.
  - You might want to establish minimum raises as well.
- Silent Auction
  - The auction room must be large enough for the items to be attractively displayed.
    - Allow enough room for the bidders to write down their bids.

- Have pencils around so that the bidders can find them easily.
- Each item should have a bidding sheet with a description, donor, and approximate value. The bidding sheet must also indicate the minimum bid and raise, if there is one.
- Post auction rules around the room, and be sure that everyone understands them.
- Bidding can be done by name or number. Bidding by number is usually preferable, because sometimes people won't bid if they know that their friends are bidding on the same item.
- Display the exact time the bidding will close.
- At closing time, have several committee members ready to immediately pick up the bidding sheets.
- The winning bids can be announced at this time and the bidders can pay for their items and pick them up. This can be done later, if it is easier.
- Be sure to collect the money before the item leaves the auction room.
- Some auction ideas
  - Used art auction—Members donate those things gathering dust and pick up something new and interesting.
  - One from the internet--Joey Faehnle writes, One thing my fraternity does is each year in September we write Hundreds of celebrities. In this letter we explain our affiliation with the local AIDS foundation and ask them to donate an item that we can auction off. Half of the funds go towards our fraternity and half go to the AIDS Foundation. Last year the grand total was \$1500, because we did for the first time. It is annual event now. The actual action is in February.

# **Raising Money with Food**

#### Food Stands

These are good fundraisers that can be piggybacked on to a carnival, fair, or sporting event. First contact the sponsor, and see if they are charging fees and if electricity is available. You must be responsible for set up, supplies and clean up. Keep your food simple. Have a banner with your group's name and logo, and be sure to have a clear price list. You must also provide the serving containers, utensils, and condiments. *Although they are labor intensive, a popular food stand can really bring in the funds.* Some suggestions

- Hot dogs or hamburgers
- Donuts
- Giant pretzels
- Lemonade
- Snow cones
- Ice cream
- Stuffed baked potatoes
- Cotton candy
- Elephant ears
- Caramel apples
- Pizza-by-the-slice
- Apple dumplings
- Strawberry shortcake

#### Donut Delivery

Contact a friendly baker, and ask him to assist you with your fundraiser. Tell him that you plan to sell a large number of donuts on a specific day that you will deliver yourself. Ask what kind of a discount he can give you, keeping in mind that this is great advertising for the bakery, and then sell the donuts at the regular price. Be sure to include the cost of delivery in deciding what to charge. Advertise to your group that you will be delivering a dozen fresh donuts on a specific Saturday between 8 and 10, and take orders. You can advertise in your newsletter and have a telemarketing campaign. Make duplicate copies of the orders, one for your records, and one to be attached to the bag. You can bag up the orders yourselves, or the bakery may insist on doing it. This basic idea can easily be adapted to other food items.

#### Magnificent Meals

Your group provides the meal, waitstaff, and bussers. Decide what kind of meal to serve and where, taking into account rental charges and kitchen facilities. Choose a convenient date and decide on a price that will cover your costs plus some. Request donations of everything that you can—food, napkins, cups, etc. Sell tickets ahead

of time so that you know how many people you will be feeding. *It is always a good idea to add a raffle, tombola or auction to increase your profits.* This can be simple or complex—some ideas:

- Barbecue Dinner
- Pancake breakfast
- Chili supper
- Spaghetti dinner
- Salad bar
- Baked or mashed potato bar
- Deli-style sandwich bar
- Specialty soups
- Dessert or sundae bar
- After meeting lunch
- 'All you can eat' chocolate and champagne (*Remember that calories consumed in the name of charity don't count.*)
- Afternoon Tea with scones and strawberry jam.
- Special dinner at a special home. The Aspen Santa Fe Ballet holds a serious of small events for a limited number of people in private homes. Example: Après Ski Fantasy for 16 guests at \$100 each.
- Wine Tasting—A local wine merchant provides the wine and the expertise. He or she will be able to give you price estimates for your consumption. You provide the bread and cheese or a supper. Be sure to sell your raffle tickets after the tasting.
- Two fun variations on the dinner theme
  - Dinner by the Dip—Do it cafeteria style, and charge people by the amount they take.
  - Take out—Save money by doing your dinner 'to go.'

#### **Multi-chef Dinner**

Get local chefs to do the cooking for you like Christine Cooper from the internet: My name is Christine Cooper and I am the Fundraising Chairperson for HOSPICE CALEDON. We just finished our second annual fundraiser "The Caledon Culinary Carnival". Six Chefs and Restaurants donated their services and created an incredible dining experience. I found sponsors for each course served through local businesses and this paid for materials needed. I gave Sponsorship credit throughout the beautiful programmes placed on each place setting. The affair was held at a local Golf Club, who we rented the room from and they waved the Corkage Fees. The event is hosted by a celebrity who also donates their services. A small silent auction is held only for a few items. We sold 250 tickets at \$75.00 per. In two years we have raised \$28,000 from this event. The real benefit has been the profile this event has given HOSPICE CALEDON and we have noticed an increase in random donations over this time.

#### Dinner at a Friendly Restaurant

Approach a local friendly restaurant to see if they will open on an evening they are usually closed especially for you. Arrange for a special menu with three selections at a certain price including all expenses. Price your tickets so that you make a profit from each one sold. Customers pick out their menu selections ahead of time so that the restaurant knows exactly how much to prepare. *Of course, sell raffle tickets for donated items after the guests have had a couple of glasses of wine to increase your profits. They expect it, it is a fundraiser, after all!* 

#### **Cooking Contest**

There can be many variations to this event—chili, pies, whatever! Decide how many contestants you can handle and induce them to participate. Personal challenges and 'grudge matches' are a good way to generate publicity. Ask area chefs or local celebrities to be your judges. Contestants fill out a registration form with a number, and the entries are numbered as well so that the judges won't know who made each entry. Make sure that the contestants know that their entries are the property of the group once they're entered. After the contest, you can auction or sell the winning entries for additional profits.

#### Menu Auction

Ask the members of your group to donate menus that they will prepare. Don't reveal the donor until after the auction. The donor and buyer make their own time arrangements. Sample menus Specialty Coffee and Dessert for four, Spaghetti Dinner for six, and Fondue for four.

Picnic Basket Surprise—Collect picnic baskets and fill them using different themes, e.g. homemade breads, specialty pastas, gourmet cheeses, home-style jams/jellies, and gourmet coffee. Shut the baskets and decorate

the outsides with a hint of the contents. Auction them off, only allowing the buyer to see the contents after the sale.

# **Bazaars and Garage Sales**

#### Arts and Crafts Fair

This can become a *very profitable* annual event for your group, but it requires a dedicated and organized committee.

- Begin many months or even a year ahead of your date range and reserve a space. It is always best to be in a place where passers-by will see all the excitement. Be sure to take into account cooking facilities if you are going to offer food.
- Decide how much to charge for spaces, keeping in mind the cost of tables and coverings.
- Contact craft people and artists and ask them if they would like to participate.
- You can substantially increase your profits by adding your own
  - Craft Stalls Be sure to have a plan about how to handle the issue of your members making crafts, for instance fine needlework, for the club stalls. Do you charge them a flat fee to participate and then they get the profits? Do all profits automatically go to the club? Does the club get a percentage? This needs to be addressed well before the event, or it can lead to problems.
  - Food Stalls
  - Used book stall
  - Plant stall
  - White elephant stall--pure profit to your group!
- Raffles and tombolas
- · Children's games
  - Mazes
  - Tug of War
  - Grab Bags with their variations
    - Fishing Pond—A small children's pool or nice painted wash tub makes a nice pond. Paint different numbers on plastic fish. The numbers correspond with categories of prizes. Every fish caught wins a prize.
    - Pocket Lady—Sew many pockets on a large skirt. Fill them with small prizes or candy. In exchange for a ticket, the child gets to choose a prize from a pocket.
  - Haunted House
- You can also have some live entertainment such as folk singing, carol singing, piano playing, or dancing from local dance schools. Not only does this make the event more festive, it gets more folks through the doors!
- Advertise any and every way that you can afford, including creating brochures and posters for display at local businesses.
- You can charge a small entrance fee, but not too high, or you could discourage attendees.

#### Garage or Lawn Sale

Select a date and place, and then ask your members to go through their closets, attics, and basements and gather all of their unwanted treasures for your sale. You could offer to pick up items if needed. Give yourself plenty of time to sort and price the items donated. Keep track of donors so that you can thank them and let them know how successful the event was. Publicize like crazy. Be sure to have change on hand before the sale. Be ready for customers beating down your doors.

#### Flea Market or "Car boot sale"

Find a good place for your sale such as a parking lot on a busy intersection and ask for permission to have the sale. Decide how much to charge for spaces—you can have single and double spaces—taking into account all of your expenses and the "going rate" for flea market spaces. Advertise in plenty of time for people who would like to participate to contact you. Attract customers to the area through advertising, posters, and signs on the day. You can increase your takings by selling something else like food or coffee. *If you have the manpower, this can really make money if you can do it on a regular basis.* 

# "A-thons"

The idea of an "a-thon" is for each person participating to sign up sponsors who pledge a certain amount of money for each jump, mile, minute or whatever you choose to do. This is a labor intensive because it is up to the participants to get the sponsors and to collect the donations after the event. The events can be something everyone does at the same time or something done solo, like losing weight.

Some possibilities:

- Running or Walking
- Bowling
- Jump rope
- Basketball

# **Contests and Tournaments**

## General guidelines

Amateur contests can be fun and profitable for your group. In general follow these guidelines and adapt them for your event.

- Decide what kind of contest you want to sponsor.
- Decide on a date and a place.
- Have an official set of written rules, and provide in writing how the winners will be determined—total points, elimination, and so on.
- To encourage participation, have several categories or divisions—age, team, or experience for example.
- You can charge a small registration fee to encourage participation.
- You can give cash prizes or get them donated by sponsors.
- Keep track of players through registration sheets, and a contest elimination form.
- Advertise through the news media and posters and flyers.
- Try to include tee shirts for the participants in your plans.
- You can earn profits through
  - Registration fees
  - Ticket sales
  - Concessions at the event
  - Sponsorship of teams
  - Selling advertising in the program

## Some possible contests or tournaments

- Golf or Tennis tournament—You can make these very profitable events by including celebrity guests, dinner, auctions and so on. *A combined golf and tennis tournament can raise thousands!*
- Bridge tournament
- Bowling tournament
- Basketball tournament
- Bingo
- Board games can be used, too.
  - Monopoly
  - Chess
  - Checkers
  - Backgammon

# **Special Events**

## Fashion Show

- This is a natural for spring and combines beautifully with a lunch or afternoon tea.
- Decide on the place and date, then decide whether you want to go professional, amateur, or half and half.
  - Professional

- Contact a designer or clothing store to see if they will do it for you. They may charge, or they may consider it advertising for them.
- They provide their own models and script, which is easy for you.
- Half and Half
  - A shop may provide the clothes and script, but your members serve as models.
  - This works well, because then the guests see the clothes as something they would wear.
- Totally amateur—This raised almost \$1000 every year for our small Oxfam Committee in Barton-on-Humber, England.
  - Collect donations of high quality (important!) clothing from your members or other friendly, fashionable donors well in advance.
  - Ask some members or friends to serve as models.
  - Get together with the models and clothes to work out what would look the best on each person.
  - Select the venue and arrange for spot lighting if the event is at night.
  - Decide how much to charge for tickets, remembering that the most important thing is to get customers through the doors.
  - Increase interest in the event by having some additional entertainment such as a local dance or singing group.
  - Advertise, advertise, advertise in the media, posters, and flyers.
  - Ask your members to sell tickets.
  - · Each model needs a personal dresser to help with changes.
  - Include a glass of wine and snack with the ticket price.
  - After the show, sell the clothes to the customers. *This is where we made the most money, not from ticket sales.*

#### House or Garden Tour

Do some of your members have lovely homes or gardens that everyone would pay to see?

- Arrange with them to have open houses or gardens on an afternoon or evening and sell maps as tickets. *You should be very careful about who you sell your maps to. This should probably be a members only event.*
- Arrange to serve some sort of refreshment (tea and scones at a garden tour or wine at an open house) included in the price of the event. Of course you can always increase profits with a timely tombola.

#### Bus trip

- Is there an "away" event that your members would like to attend?
- Timing is everything here.
- Arrange for a block of tickets, and be sure that you keep deadlines in mind. Know when the final payment must be in, and if you can turn in unsold tickets or if you are obligated to purchase them.
- Arrange for a coach and driver. They will know how long to estimate for the journey.
- You might want to include refreshments for the trip.
- Price the tickets taking in all your costs and adding in profit for your cause.
- Arrange the time and place to meet the bus, and tell everyone to be prompt because the bus can't wait for stragglers.
- Check everything 2 weeks ahead of time to be sure that you won't be faced with any nasty surprises on the day of the trip.

#### Dance

- Keep in mind that the more people that you have working on the dance, the more will attend, so try to get as many people involved in the planning as possible.
- Decide on a theme for your dance—square dance, Sock Hop, Mardi gras, Halloween, Snow Ball, and make sure that all of your advertising follows the theme.
- Find an appropriate venue.
- Find a band, caller, or disk jockey to do your music.
- Decide what refreshments you will offer—special dinner or punch and cookies.
- Work out the price being sure to include all of your expenses and being realistic about how many people you expect to come.
- Advertise, advertise, advertise and have your members sell tickets like crazy.

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- Try to get sponsors for everything that you can—tables, flowers—and sell advertising in the program.
- Increase your profits on the night with raffles, auctions or tombolas. (Prizes donated, of course.)

# **Miscellaneous Money Raising**

### Letter from Santa

Here is another one from the Internet-- I am a Police Officer, in charge of a Police and Citizens' Youth Club in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. The club is a registered charitable organisation and must raise all of its' own fund, with the exception of my wages which are paid by the WA Police Service. Each year, in November, we conduct a "LETTER FROM SANTA CAMPAIGN". Children are asked to send their letters to the PCYC for passing onto Santa. If they would like a reply and a small gift they enclose \$5.00. Each participant receives a personal letter from Father Christmas, a Badge, and Small gift. A nice paper with an appropriate Christmas theme is used and some of the children's' queries are answered. This is very quick to do if you draft a form letter and only personalise one or two paragraphs. We make from between 2 and 3 dollars per letter, raising over \$500.00 last year.

## **Coin Drops**

The basic idea is to put some sort of receptacle in a prominent place and watch the money grow. There are variations on this idea

- Candy Machine—You can have a real machine or just a box with candy and work on the honor system.
- Foreign Coin Collection—Collect those foreign coins that you accidentally brought back from your vacation. Take them to a bank that will process them and give you the equivalent in your home country's cash.
- Coin Drop Competition—This works well if you have two groups in the same place raising money for the same thing and a currency that has two colors. Have a clear coin drop for each group. One color type counts a positive and one as negative. Thus the competitors are encouraged to put one color in their own drop and the other color in the competitor's drop. Funds accumulate twice as fast.

### Adopt-a-Book Luncheon

Here is another good one from Charlotte De Witte, AWC Stockholm, AWC Sweden's annual <u>Adopt-A-Book Luncheon</u> is held at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador. Women attending contribute in two ways: first, by buying a ticket to the luncheon, which in itself is a fund-raiser, with the bulk of the money being used to purchase books chosen in cooperation with local school librarians. Secondly, each woman may purchase (or "adopt") a book from a wide range of pre-selected American authors. The books are then donated to English-speaking schools in the greater Stockholm area as a way of exposing students to excellence in American writing. The luncheon was created by AWC in response to the under-funding of Swedish school libraries and the lack of books in English in these libraries.

# Resources

Earning More Funds

Chip & Ralfie Blasius, B.C. Creations

This book was my primary resource. Not only is it filled with fundraisers it also includes excellent worksheets that you may photocopy guilt free. It includes tips on keeping your volunteers happy and earning funds through grants, telemarketing, and membership drives.

Fundraising for Dummies

John Mutz and Katherine Murray, IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.

This is a good resource if you are applying for a grant or working with large donors. It is not as useful for small fundraisers.

## Websites

www.fundraising-yellow-pages.com - listing of companies that provide products for fundraising.

www.fundsraiser.com Online cyberzine with different articles each month and links to other fundraising sites.

<u>www.raise-funds.com</u> Tony Poderis has many good ideas, especially in regard to working with donors.

www.nonprofit.about.com Articles and links to other fundraising sites.