



FUNDRAISING IDEAS

November 2009

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“Afternoon Tea/Fashion Show”

Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center
1000 Forest Glen Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
301-681-1255
betty.timer@montgomerycountymd.gov
Betty Timer

Last year’s theme was: “Wear the oldest thing you have in your closet or something from a thrift store that costs \$15 or less.” The models come from the membership. The Director tries to find someone from each class/group that meets at the Center. (This encourages interest and attendance.) They are asked to fill a form to describe their outfit. They can come to a practice session the day before the event to learn to walk down the runway.

- Male escorts are asked to walk the ladies down the runway. (They come dressed almost as fancy as the ladies.)
- The Chic Red Hatters of Merry Land serve the tea from pots they bring or ones the Ceramic class has made. They also make and bring the treats. Staff assembles the trays in advance.
- Attendees are encouraged to bring their own tea cup. (Tea tastes better from a cup rather than styrofoam.)
- As the models come down the felt runway, a piano player improvises the ladies entrances and songs that fit the outfits. And a vivacious line dancing teacher describes each outfit from the information given to them by the model.
- The Advisory Council charges a small ticket fee in advance. Only 100 tickets are sold. (We always sell out before the event.)

“Bingo Bash”

Waldorf Senior Center
3092 Crain Highway
Waldorf, Maryland 20601
301-638-4420
schultza@charlescounty.org
Ann Schultz, Center Coordinator

Bingo Bash is held two to three times per year. Each participant pays \$6 to attend. The ticket price covers the cost of prizes and lunch. Special prizes are donation items and funds from the ticket sales. The jackpot is \$20. It usually nets around \$150-\$200. The Senior Council is responsible for all bingo activities.

“Block Party”

Arnold Senior Center
44 Church Road
Arnold, Maryland 21012
410-222-1922
agsuni12@aacounty.org
Suzie Nichols

We held an outdoor “Block Party” complete with pony rides, moon bounce, face painting, carnival games, water balloons, three-legged race, cotton candy, snowballs, popcorn, pork BBQ, hotdogs and entertainment provided by a DJ. The front parking lot was blocked off and the event was held in the parking lot and grassy area in front of the center. Center members attended, bringing their grandchildren. Several summer day camps were invited and attended. Our neighbor, the Providence Center (an organization caring for adults with developmental disabilities), was invited and attended. The event was a huge success for entertainment value and as an intergenerational activity.

“Christmas Market and Cookie Sale”

Calvert Pines Senior Center
450 West Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678
410-535-4606 or 301-855-1170
marquesl@co.cal.md.us
Sandra Marquess

The Senior Council collected new and gently used Christmas items throughout the year, such as Christmas decorations, gift-wrapping and cards. In December, they had a two-day Christmas sale. On one of those days, they also had a cookie sale, with cookies baked by volunteers. With minimal overhead, the council raised approximately \$400 in less than three hours.

“Dynamic Ceramics”

Northern Senior Activity Center
29655 Charlotte Hall Road
P.O. Box 653
Charlotte Hall, Maryland 20622
301-475-4002
MarieNoelle.Lautieri@co.saint-marys.md.us
MarieNoelle Lautieri

Dynamic Ceramics is lead by a senior volunteer who previously had a business in ceramics. She oversees the program to seniors, at no charge, who like to spend time involved in a craft creating gifts or products for others. Most supplies are donations received from folding ceramic programs or from a family’s cache after losing a loved one who was an enthusiast. These generous products are prepared for sale after sanding, painting, glazing, decaling, and firing.

The group meets weekly to affix decals and paint borders on porcelain and sells the finished pieces to benefit the Center. Tea sets (cups, pots, and trays) have sold for \$40. The project has created a fellowship of ceramic artisans who come regularly to the Center and prove that ceramics is not a dying craft, if done with purpose and care. To date, approximately \$1,000 has been raised by this group.

“Easter Tea and Old Bag Auction”

Southern Pines Senior Center
20 Appeal Lane
Lusby, Maryland 20657
410-586-2749
lathamef@co.cal.md.us
Elizabeth Latham

Prior to the event, requests were made for donations of gently used handbags and purses. For a \$5 fee, participants enjoyed a tea with light refreshments followed by a live auction of the various handbags. For extra excitement and incentive to bid, golden eggs (some with gift cards) were hidden in the handbags.

“Fat Tuesday Pancake Breakfast”

Nanjemoy Senior Center
4375 Port Tobacco Road
Nanjemoy, Maryland 20662
301-246-9612, extension 20
hopesj@charlescounty.org
Sarah Hope

Our pancake breakfast consisted of pancakes, sausage, applesauce, pastries, coffee, tea and juice. The fee was \$3 for seniors and \$5 for non seniors. The inexpensive breakfast provided time for socialization and congregating. We were able to serve a hot meal to those who may not have had the opportunity otherwise. Following breakfast participants enjoyed Mardi Gras, Black History and Heart Health trivia. All of which are themes and holidays in February. For each correct answer participants received beads. The person with the most beads received a prize.

“Festival of Giving”

Essex Senior Center
600 Dorsey Avenue
Essex, Maryland 21221
410-887-0267
kyoung@baltimorecountymd.gov
Kathleen Young

The Center participated in a local shopping mall’s fundraising event designed to help non-profit organizations raise funds by offering holiday shopping without the holiday lines and hassle. The Mall holds the event on a Sunday evening starting at 6:30 p.m. during mid November. Senior center members, friends, family, etc., purchase the special shopping pass for \$5 at the Center (the \$5 per pass goes right to the center as profit!). The Center could receive as many passes as needed for the event free of charge. Participants enjoy an extraordinary night of private shopping until 9:00 p.m. In addition, there are store discounts, free gifts, door prizes, and free gift-wrapping.

“Fleming Senior Center Day at Cactus Willies”

Fleming Senior Center
641 Main Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21222
410-887-7225
ethornton@baltimorecountymd.gov
Elmira Thornton, Center Director

If you are interested in a fun, easy and tasty fundraising event the entire family would enjoy, then why not consider partnering with one of the “all you can eat” buffet restaurants in your area. Fleming chose Cactus Willies. On the first Wednesday of each month for six consecutive months, members and friends were encouraged to enjoy their lunch or dinner at Cactus Willies. By telling the cashier they were from Fleming Senior Center, a portion of their bill was donated to the center.

Announcements were sent to the local newspapers and local churches promoting this event. Flyers were circulated throughout the community. Our newsletter carried monthly reminders encouraging members and friends to continue patronizing Cactus Willies to support our fundraising efforts.

Within a few months, the center received its first fundraising check from Cactus Willies. Although the income generated from this event was mildly successful, the friendship and social interaction fostered among members, families and friends was immeasurable.

“Fun Raising For Success”

Ateaze Senior Center
7401 Holabird Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21222
410-887-7233
mswift@baltimorecountymd.gov
Margie Swift, Center Director

A committee was developed consisting of senior center members and Baltimore County Department of Aging staff. Strategies and goals were developed: revenues were to be raised to support programs and activities of the senior center. Two promotions have been developed with additional promotions planned throughout the year.

The first endeavor was the creation of a gift certificate to be used specifically for the Fitness Center, Programs and Travel. A local business was approached to fund the printing of the

certificates. The Center Council Treasurer disburses the certificates.

In the second promotion, a local eatery -“Chick-fil-A” - was approached with the proposal to offer an incentive to the senior center for membership support of their restaurant. Chick-fil-A agreed to give the senior center 20% of the ticketed sales for the entire day.

The success of the Fundraising Committee was the spirit that evolved in the development and promotion of the fundraising endeavors, in addition to the monetary gains.

“Get Gold Cash Road Show”

Seven Oaks Senior Center
9210 Seven Court Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21236
410-887-5192
lkennedy@baltimorecountymd.gov
Lisa Kennedy, Assistant Director

The event was sponsored by *Get Gold Cash* to raise funds for the senior center and to provide a safe, private and reputable jeweler for members to sell unwanted jewelry, silver, gold, coins, etc. *Get Gold Cash* specializes in recycling unwanted jewelry, gold, silver, etc., for cash. The program helps businesses/organizations to raise funds while giving members an outlet for selling their unwanted items. It provides a safe and reliable place to sell your items, along with receiving an immediate cash payout. *Get Gold Cash* then contributes 25% of their earnings to the Senior Center.

“It’s Blues & Barbeque Time”

Indian Head Senior Center
100 Cornwallis Square
Indian Head, Maryland 20640
301-743-2125
boggsj@charlescounty.org
Joan M. Boggs, Coordinator

On May 30, 2008, the Indian Head Senior Center held an evening event at the Village Green Pavilion. The event featured the Steve Potter Blues Band, and the night was filled with mouth-watering roasted pork barbeque, potato salad, coleslaw, baked-beans, cornbread, soft-drinks, water, and a variety of desserts. In addition, a 50/50 was held along with games and door-prizes. The event was opened to the community. The Pavilion was provided as a courtesy by the Town

of Indian Head, and the fund-raiser was sponsored by the Indian Head Senior Center Council. This was a very successful fund-raiser, and a most enjoyable evening.

“Longaberger® Basket Bingo”

Catonsville Senior Center
501 N. Rolling Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21228
410-887-0900
catonsville@baltimorecountymd.gov
Marie Dix, Assistant Center Director

This was a community-wide event that is very popular in this neighborhood and its surroundings. The event was held on a Friday evening, open to the community. Tickets were \$13.00 in advance and \$15.00 at the door. Many extra opportunities to raise funds were part of the bingo night such as special basket raffles, gift bag raffles, door prizes, food and drinks for sale, and the opportunity to purchase extra cards. Twenty baskets were filled with donated items awarded to the winners of the games including a gift certificate to a popular restaurant or business in the area. The event raised over \$3,000.

“Monthly Bingo Luncheon”

Essex Senior Center
600 Dorsey Avenue
Essex, Maryland 21221
410-887-0267
kyoung@baltimorecountymd.gov
Kathleen Young, Center Director

Who doesn't enjoy a nice homestyle meal with friends? Better question is where can you get a turkey and gravy platter or a roast beef or baked chicken lunch for just \$4 ... less than most fast food meal deals. The answer ... Essex Senior Center on the first Monday of the month. Volunteers Will and Ray prepare lunch for members as part of the Monthly Bingo Luncheon. It is an event that brings people together. Each month they prepare a menu, purchase supplies and prepare the meals. In today's economy it is an affordable means of spending the afternoon on a full belly. Another benefit to offering the home cooked lunch right before weekly bingo is that due to its popularity the attendance at this bingo is greatly increased and that in turn increases the payout for participants and profit for the center. In addition, since the luncheon is held early in the month it also assists with the promotion of Center events. Flyers are often placed on tables in advance announcing upcoming trips and programs.

“Monthly Dinner and Dancing”

Victory Villa Senior Center
403 Compass Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21220
410-887-0235
rberkshire@baltimorecountymd.gov
Beckie Berkshire, Center Director

Volunteers run this event from beginning to end. First we sell tickets at a table in the lobby for 3 weeks before the event. We only have 70 tickets to sell and each month it is getting bigger and bigger. The center volunteers set up usually around 12 pm and then they decorate the multipurpose room to the theme we have picked out. To ensure the meal is ready the volunteers begin cooking the meal no later than 1 p.m. Around 4 pm they serve the meal and sell 50/50 tickets along with tickets to the other fabulous items we auction off. At 5 p.m. we start the music and dancing. Usually around 6:45 p.m. we will start the raffle tickets and at 7 pm we end and clean up. Each month it has been growing to the point that we usually sell out and St. Patrick’s Day brought in well over \$300. We have volunteers ask for donations from the community businesses so we do not have to buy things to auction off at the dances so the only expense is the music and food. We also encourage people to bring family and friends, we do not limit to just members. Good way to bring in baby boomers not yet old enough to join.

“Old Bay Gift Shop”

Calvert Pines Senior Center
450 West Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678
410-535-4606 or 301-855-1170
marquesl@co.cal.md.us
Sandra Marquess

The Calvert Pines Senior Council has many fundraising efforts throughout the year. One of its biggest money makers is a corner gift shop named appropriately “The Old Bay Gift Shop.” It has some of the best gift deals in town. Everyone knows that “The Old Bay Gift Shop” is the place to get inexpensive, well made, hand crafted flower arrangements, gift cards, stationery, and other craft items. This gift shop makes approximately \$400.00 every month. The volunteer gift shop manager is able to keep the gift shop flourishing by holding a class twice a week where she teaches others to make items that are sold in the gift shop. The monies made are almost all profit and go back to the center to help support other activities.

“Organizations”

Nanjemoy Senior Center
4375 Port Tobacco Road
Nanjemoy, Maryland 20662
301-246-9612, extension 20
wrightj@charlescounty.org
Joan Wright

This is a partnership between the Community Center and the Senior Center where some programs work independently and some work together. Example: When the Community Center had the Blue Grass Festival concert, the Senior Center Participants Council provided the dinner as a fundraiser for the Senior Center.

“Parkville Health and Fitness Fair”

Parkville Senior Center
8601 Harford Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21234
410-887-5338
sditto@baltimorecountymd.gov
Sandra Ditto, Center Director

We offered vendor spaces to those who have given programs at the center during the year. We also did a mailing to the businesses in the area that fit our criteria. We charged a minimal fee of \$125 per table for vendors. We gave free space to two hospitals that offered to do free health screenings. A gourmet box lunch was purchased from a caterer for each table sold.

We reproduced a list of all the vendors and had space for each vendor to sign the form. This was given out to each visitor to the Fair. When a participant had all the Vendors signatures they received a small free gift from the center. The vendors were pleased with all the “traffic” and the attendees were pleased to get the free screenings from the hospital.

“Pennies for Art”

Indian Head Senior Center
100 Cornwallis Square
Indian Head, Maryland 20640
301-743-2125
schultza@charlescounty.org
Ann Schultz

A simple fish bowl is decorated with glittery copper paint, pennies, and an adorable picture of a girl wishing for pennies. The bowl is displayed in the center room with a sign that reads, “Pennies For Art.” Our fish bowl is almost full after about one month. We are fortunate to have a few silver coins and paper bills collected too. This is an easy fundraiser, because it really doesn’t take any work, and it doesn’t tax a person who is on a limited income.

“Quarter Auction Mania”

Cockeysville Senior Center
10535 York Road
Cockeysville, Maryland 21030
410-887-7694
briehl@baltimorecountymd.gov
Bonnie Riehl

Ten vendors participate and donate 11 items for the auction fundraiser. Vendors are charged \$25.00 each to participate. Vendors agree to donate items with specific values for the following bid categories. Bid categories are as follows: 1 Quarter Bid—\$10.00-\$20.00, 2 Quarter Bid—\$21.00-\$40.00, 3 Quarter Bid—\$41.00-\$60.00, 4 Quarter Bid—\$61.00-\$100.00. Once you have your vendors in place, it is time to promote your event and sell tickets. Admission to the event is \$3.00 per person and includes 1 paddle and \$2.00 for an additional paddle. When participants arrive at the vent, they are given a numbered paddle. The corresponding numbered ball is placed in a container. An item from one of the vendors is held up and described, then each person who wants to “bid” puts their quarters(s) in a basket and holds their paddle up. When everyone has bid, one number is chosen from the container. If the holder of the corresponding numbered paddle has theirs up, they get the item; if not, another number is drawn until someone whose paddle is up wins. Then, everyone puts their paddles down; we put the drawing numbers back in the container, and do the next item. Remember — no item is over 4 quarters.

“Sock Hop”

Southern Pines Senior Center
20 Appeal Lane
Lusby, Maryland 20657
410-586-2748
lathamef@co.cal.md.us
Elizabeth Latham

The center was transformed into a 1950's diner complete with juke box, old cars and Elvis. Participants were encouraged to come dressed in poodle skirts, bobby socks, saddle shoes, leather jackets and T-shirts with the sleeves rolled up. Dance instructors gave lessons in swing dancing and participants enjoyed dancing to their favorite 50's tunes. There was a hula hoop and costume contest with prizes for the winners. Traditional diner fare was served, including mini burgers, pizza and ice cream floats. One room was transformed into a drive-in movie where people could munch on popcorn while watching 1950 T.V. shows. Door prizes included vintage soda glasses and other memorabilia. Ticket prices for the event were \$10.00 per person and the event was an enormous success.

“VFW Holiday Meal”

Grasonville Senior Center
P.O. Box 147
4802 Main Street
Grasonville, Maryland 21638
410-827-6010
amartin@qac.org
Ann Martin

Each year in January, the Grasonville VFW Post #7464 makes a \$1000.00 donation to the Grasonville Senior Center from income generated through the organizations legal slot machines. At the presentation event, a traditional holiday meal complete with all the trimmings is served to seniors of Queen Anne's County. Seniors from all four senior centers in QAC are invited to attend the event and transportation is provided by QACDOA. Typically, between 60 and 100 seniors attend this free event. Volunteers of the VFW prepare the meal and DOA staff serves the meal.

Fundraising With Cheese Cake And Other Baked Foods

Cheese cakes, other bakery products and gourmet foods are very popular fundraiser items. They are easy to sell and well-received, and can turn a sizable profit with organizations often keeping as much as 60% of sales returns.

Bakery goods, such as cookies, pies, cheese cakes, cookie doughs, and gourmet food and baked-goods mixes, do well as fundraisers for a number of reasons:

Products are highly consumable, and so do not last and can be sold again every year.

Bakery products and mix programs usually require no upfront expenditures, and so they can be very manageable for a small or cash-poor organization.

Consumers enjoy great quality bakery products in their own homes.

Bakery products are convenient, yet needed items during the holidays.

Profits may be made immediately available to fundraising groups, so there is no long-term turn around.

When bakery product fundraisers are repeated annually at predictable times, buyers will come to rely on them and plan ahead to buy them.

The only real downside to fundraising with baked goods (excluding dry bakery mixes) is that the delivery and distribution of the foods can be tricky. Many gourmet foods (in particular cheese cakes, pies, and cookie doughs) are frozen and must remain frozen until they are used. That means that having people on hand for delivery from the company is a must, and fast distribution and/or storage of frozen goods is also needed. However, if these hurdles can be overcome (either by storing goods or having same-day pick-up), bakery fundraisers often prove to be very successful, repeatable money-makers.

In addition to fundraising with baked goods, ready-to-bake goods, and mixes, the bakery market can also be tapped by selling cookbooks. Personalized organization cookbooks can either be collated, published, and sold entirely by the fundraising organization, or a group can purchase pre-printed cookbooks and have the organization's name printed on the cover. Cookbooks are often popular because they offer a unique set of recipes which can be revised yearly, profits are turned immediately, and sorting and handling is minimized as all items are the same.

Whether the choice is actual baked (or ready to bake) goods or simply the recipes to make them, fundraising with bakery products is usually met with great success. Baked goods are products that are consumed in practically every home and so the potential for outreach is vast. Consumers enjoy having great items with little or no fuss, making baked goods successful annual fundraisers; and any time a fundraiser can be repeated, life is made easier for the next crew of fundraising event organizers.

Recycle Bottles And Cans To Raise Funds

One option to raise funds in a “green” and environmentally conscious way is to organize a bottle and can collection drive. Bottle and can collection drives are **simple and profitable**, and do lots to help the earth while cleaning up your local landscape. Can drives can be run by volunteers, and teach their members a bit about responsibility for the earth in the meantime.

Many states have a refund policy in one form or another and will pay a set amount per bottle or can or pay by the pound for collected and returned containers. Centers should check Maryland’s guidelines to find out what cans and bottles can be refunded. Basically, **all that is needed for a bottle and can collection drive is a collection place, and volunteers to help youngsters collect, sort, and return the collected bottles and cans.** Note that recyclables are usually bulky and that volunteers will need larger vehicles to transport them to the recycling center.

Here’s a basic rundown of how the drive works:

- **Before you start your fundraiser, be sure to ask your local recycling center what the requirements are for dropping off the recyclables, like using specific bins or trash bags, specific drop off times etc.**
- **Get the word out: post flyers and advertise the upcoming collection in newsletters or local newspapers. Be sure to send out an e-mail if you have a mailing list, and post the information on your group’s website as well.**
- **Provide a location for drop off, or place clearly marked collection containers in public places; one suggestion is to cut a can/bottle-sized hole in the center of a piece of plywood and use to top the can or bag so it is more obvious the bin is not to be used for trash**
- **After collection, cans will need to be sorted to remove unacceptable bottles and cans before being returned to a redemption center for cash**

Tip: Be sure to ask if your recycling center would rather have the cans un-crushed.

Groups can also collect cans and bottles as **part of a roadside, beach or river cleanup effort** and do even more for their local environment by cleaning up refuse. Another option that has proven to work very well in many communities is to **place collection bins at local dumps and/or recycling centers**; people who do not care to redeem bottles and cans themselves can donate bagged items easily when they go to drop off their trash and recyclables.

Bottle and can collection drives are **ideal fundraisers for Senior Centers**; bottle and can drives naturally inject a community service element into fundraising efforts, so they are the perfect complement to Centers whose focus is on global and community living and building the consciousness of everyone. With the easy organization and fast cash-in, bottle and can collection drives are a way to make the world and your fundraising efforts greener all around.

Box Tops For Education Fundraiser

There are many ways to raise funds through ongoing fundraising programs; one of the most popular and easiest for school fundraising groups to use is the “Box Tops for Education” program offered by the General Mills Company.

Box Tops for Education—Simplicity In An Ongoing Fundraiser

Very few fundraisers are as easy to implement and maintain as the Box Tops For Education ongoing fundraiser. All your fundraising group has to do to get started is register with General Mills (call 1-888-799-2444 to register). After that, your group gets the word out to as many supporters as possible to start clipping the 10 cent ‘Box Tops’ coupons from participating General Mills products. Participants can turn their coupons into your group (or drop them in a designated drop box) at their convenience. All that’s left for your group to do is tally them and remit them to General Mills for compensation.

Expanded Box Tops Programs

General Mills has recently **expanded the reach of the Box Tops program to include an online Box Tops marketplace and a book club**. Your supporters can shop online at the Box Tops marketplace from more than sixty major retailers (the likes of JC Penney and Land’s End) for other needed items. Your Senior Center receives a percentage of every qualifying purchase. The Box Tops program will also offer your Center book order forms several times each year. Volunteers can buy necessities for your Center will receive one 10 cent box top for each dollar spent.

Boxtops4Education.com

Benefits Of The Box Tops For Education Program

Box Tops is a great program to participate in because it is easy to register for and easy for supporters to participate in. Supporters simply clip coupons from items they need to buy anyway and turn them in. There is no cost to anyone to get the Box Tops program started.

Potential funds raised can reach a very handsome figure if your group is able to access a good supply of Box Tops. Even small to moderate sized centers find it easy to raise one to two thousand dollars with little effort. General Mills caps the Box Tops collection reimbursement at a lofty \$20,000; in addition, the two expanded programs, Box Tops Marketplace and Box Tops Book Clubs, can earn up to \$20,000 each for a potential grand total of \$60,000 for your center.

A Few Tips For Box Tops Success

The Box Tops program is so easy that it’s tough to add a lot of pointers to it. You can, however, make the life of those redeeming the tops easier by asking supporters to trim the tops before remittance, and asking them to check the expiration date on the coupon.

The real key, though, is getting people to turn tops in. **A center incentive program, such as a pizza party (donated from a local pizza restaurant) or other reward for the most successful classroom, can go far towards getting kids to get the word out for you.** Box Tops programs

are most successful with a good outreach for collections and registered marketplace/book club users, which means getting the word out is your big key to success. Once you've accomplished that, your battle is mostly won. **The Box Tops for Education program is an excellent ongoing fundraiser that helps to supplement larger fundraisers and fill in the fundraising gaps.**

Brick Fundraiser

With so many fundraising options these days, it is the unique and creative that get the best response. Brick fundraisers are both unique and creative, and pay lasting recognition to donors in the meantime.

Many fundraising committees make the mistake of looking for the best product that supporters will buy; what they fail to realize is that supporters are happy to lend their support to worthwhile causes, and that they usually could care less about buying anything from them. Many times, supporters only buy products because it is the available means of supporting the organization. A brick fundraiser is not really a product-centered fundraiser; it is a unique way to both raise money and build something memorable.

What Is A Brick Fundraiser?

In a brick fundraiser, an organization sells actual bricks to supporters for a set fee. Often, the brick can be engraved with the name of the supporter and/or a short phrase or quote chosen by the buyer.

The bricks that are sold during a brick fundraiser are used to actually construct something. The structure may be a walkway, a garden wall, patio, or even part of a building. Engraved bricks become lifelong tributes to each and every supporter who bought a brick and donated to the cause.

Preparing For A Brick Fundraiser

Two steps need to be taken before a single brick is ever sold.

First, your group will need to decide **what will be built** with the bricks and a **design** needs to be drawn out on paper, or designed with the help of an architect.

Secondly, a company to **supply and engrave the bricks** needs to be located and chosen. Be sure to ask companies any questions you may have, including cost for engraving and delivery.

After these two tasks are addressed, orders can be taken for the bricks, and be placed with the brick supply company.

Plans will also need to be made for the actual construction of the chosen structure. This should also be discussed early on in the process because if professional help and labor will be hired out, brick sale prices need to reflect that.

Potential For Profits

Brick fundraisers carry a high potential for profit. Individual bricks are inexpensive, and even with engraving can be **marked up from between 300% and 1000%**. With good outreach and support, brick fundraisers can net large profits.

Brick fundraisers are growing in popularity for a number of reasons. One of the biggest reasons of all is that brick fundraisers have not been done over and over, and offer a refreshing alternative to product-based fundraising. In addition, supporters enjoy the fact that they are not only aiding an organization in need, but they are beautifying their community in so doing. Brick fundraisers are well received, and with good planning, marketing, and organization, a brick fundraiser can be a lasting fundraising success.

CD Fundraiser

CD fundraisers can raise significant money while providing supporters with an entertaining, valuable and useful product. **CD fundraisers are not strictly limited to Music CD's; DVD movies and computer software programs are available as well.** By fundraising with a company who is contracted with major production studios, the offerings available to buyers through a CD fundraiser can be very inviting. Top recording artists and A-list Hollywood movies drive interest and sales. Buyers get top-quality entertainment CD's and videos for competitive prices while supporting their favorite groups at the same time.

In addition to production CDs, DVDs, and computer software, some CD fundraising companies also offer the ability to fundraise by selling custom recorded and edited videos of special center events, such as center trips, class graduations, 'year-in-review', piano recitals, concerts and performances. Custom video productions can be a great way to provide memories for a lifetime and raise funds.

Running A CD Fundraiser

CD and DVD fundraisers are normally run as catalog sales. The fundraising supply company will provide catalogs of your choice with a wide selection of music CDs, DVD movies, computer software, or a combination all three. Sellers can then present the catalogs to potential supporters, collect payment and orders, and turn them in at the close of the fundraiser.

Once all funds and orders are collected, the order is collated and placed with the supply company. Upon delivery, the order is sorted and distributed.

An alternative to collecting orders for individual CDs and DVDs is to **sell CD/DVD gift cards** redeemable through the company for any title of the customer's choice. Profits are similar to product sales and distribution, but the fundraising group is saved the hassle of order placing, sorting, and delivering the CDs and DVDs.

There are many CD fundraising companies who offer online ordering capabilities in addition to catalog sales. Online ordering may consist of asking supporters to visit the parent site of the company, place an order, and designate the proceeds of the order to go to the organization of

their choice. Some CD fundraising companies will go as far as to set up a page devoted exclusively to the sponsoring group; demonstration pages are usually available through these companies as examples of what a group's page can look like.

Profiting With CD Fundraisers

Profits from CD and DVD fundraisers are significant. **Many companies boast a profit margin of 50%** to the fundraising organization per CD and DVD sale. Some boast profits as high as \$10 per unit. One question to ask, however, is whether there is a minimum number of units that must be sold in order to reach the best profit tier.

All in all, CD and DVD fundraisers are successful because they provide a product with high customer interest, competitively priced for the consumer. Profits of \$5 to \$10 per unit translate into sales that add up quickly for the group without selling unwieldy amounts of merchandise.

The Warm Glow Of Fundraising: Candle Fundraisers

Candle selling is a 2 billion dollar plus industry (not including accessories). That's a huge market that is definitely worth tapping to raise funds for your organization. **Candle sales consist primarily of the sale of the very popular scented candles consumers buy to make their homes a better place to be.** Scented candles are available in the traditional paraffin variety, and also now in soy-based waxes which are said to smoke less and be more environmentally friendly since petroleum is not needed to produce them. There are advantages and disadvantages to both soy and paraffin wax candles; candle suppliers are well-versed in the pros and cons of each type, and will be more than happy to discuss them with you.

Running A Candle Fundraiser

Candle sales can be run as catalog-based order taking campaigns or as "on-hand" selling events.

Catalog Order

In a catalog order fundraiser materials will be supplied by the candle supplier. Customers choose the size and scent of the candles they want and payment is collected upfront. Upon delivery by the supplier, orders are sorted and distributed.

Disadvantages of catalog sales are:

- Sellers cannot see and smell the candles.
- Distribution is more time consuming.

Advantages of catalog sales are:

On the upside, however, consumers have a wider variety both candle scents and sizes as well as accessories available through catalog sales. Also, your center has no upfront investment in product.

On-Hand Direct Selling

On-hand candle selling consists of your center spending money upfront to buy candles at wholesale price from the distributor, then selling them at one or more candles sales.

Disadvantages of on-hand candle selling events include:

- Need for the center to purchase candles upfront.
- Need to staff sellers at tables for several hours during the event.
- Need to store and transport large number of candles to sales events.
- Limited inventory depending on what the group purchases upfront.
- Group may be left with excess inventory which they either keep at a loss or return to the company; before buying, make sure you know the company's return policy, including shipping charges.

Advantages of on-hand candle selling events include:

On the upside of on-hand sales, candles can be tested for size and scent by the customer at point of purchase. Senior Centers also have the advantage of the convenience of cash-and-carry and impulse buys, without the need for sorting and distribution. Profits are also immediately available to the sponsoring group.

Whatever route your group decides to take for candle selling, a candle sale, particularly near the holidays, can net great profits. Whether through a catalog sale, cash-and carry event, or combination of the two, candle sales are an excellent way to raise sizable funds in relatively short amounts of time.

Fundraising Candy Boxes – Fast Money, High Appeal

Looking for an easy and fast way to make money with an appealing product that virtually sells itself? Fundraising candy boxes are the order of the day.

What's A Candy Box Fundraiser?

Fundraising with fundraiser candy boxes is very simple. You order pre-packed boxes of single-serve candies, distribute a box for each member, and send them off to sell their wares!

Candy Box Fundraiser Selling Options

Depending on the distributor, boxes may be provided with a pre-determined mix, single product, or you may be given the option of buying bulk boxes and mixing the fundraiser candy boxes as you choose.

Fundraising candy boxes can be sold by alternative methods, too – such as **placing a box in a strategic location** (an office, a snack or break room...) with a cashier or collection jar and selling the candy by cash and carry. This option is an attractive alternative to selling candy person to person or door to door, since the sellers' safety won't be a concern. Fundraiser candy boxes can also be used as refreshment sales at events and event fundraisers, too.

Another option for fundraiser candy boxes is to **purchase custom-printed boxes** and fill them with a specialty or variety of candies and sell the complete box, rather than single-sale bars or packages. This would be a more specialized sale that would play off the quality of your product or appeal of your organization.

What Are The Benefits Of A Candy Box Fundraiser?

The simplicity of the sale is the greatest benefit to a fundraiser candy box sale. Items are generally low-priced at a simple, manageable cost (usually \$1.00 per bar or package) and the transaction is a simple matter of trading cash for candy. **In many cases, fundraiser candy boxes are stocked with coveted, recognized candy brands that sell very well** (like Hershey's, etc.), but sometimes a boutique or local candy-maker will be used. Moreover, there is no dealing with order-takers, sorting, and distribution of large-product orders. Sellers can take more candy to sell as they need it and the fundraiser ends with just turning in the money.

Is There A Downside To A Candy Box Fundraiser?

Every fundraiser has its cons. For the fundraiser candy box sale, a few might be:

- Storage of **temperature-sensitive** food items
- Fronting **cash upfront** for product (check with the supplier; some will offer credit terms for some groups)
- **Money and product tracking** – who has what out, who owes what
- Chasing money from **defaulted sellers** – it seems there is always at least one in the bunch
- **Unsold inventory** – candy suppliers cannot accept returned candy

Cashing In On Fundraiser Candy Boxes

Despite the downside, fundraiser candy boxes are a great way to run a low-maintenance, high-profit fundraiser. Fundraiser candy boxes can go for as long as sales are brisk. Fundraiser candy boxes are great fundraisers alone or in combination with other fundraisers to give your fundraising campaign that added revenue boost it's needed.

[eFundraising](#) - offers a variety of \$1 variety packs candy boxes and straight packs of candy.

Fundraising With Chocolate

Everybody loves chocolate! This simple fact is what makes chocolate fundraisers such successful and popular means of fundraising.

Running A Chocolate Fundraiser

Chocolate fundraisers can be either cash-and-carry sales or brochure and catalog order taking events. They may consist of quick and easy candy bar sales or more complex catalog sales offering customers a wide variety of chocolate and gourmet items.

If your chocolate fundraiser is to be a **cash-and-carry sale**, such as a candy bar sale, your center will have to invest some cash into purchasing the candy bars or chocolates upfront. This may be difficult for a fledgling or cash-poor center, but the **convenience of limited distribution and fast profits** may make a cash-and-carry sale worth the investment.

This is especially true if your center has access to selling opportunities during events and shows where large numbers of buyers will be reached quickly. **Some chocolate supply companies may extend credit for the candy bars and/or chocolate as well.** On-hand selling usually equates to

increased sales and profits. One additional advantage of cash-and-carry sales is that they can be run continuously by simply restocking as long as consumer interest will support the sale.

Catalog based chocolate fundraisers negate the need to invest money upfront, but the trade-off is usually limited sales. Catalog offerings are more expensive as they are really gourmet chocolates and so appeal to a smaller group, and are often only appealing when a need is present, such as during the holiday seasons (Christmas, Easter) when customers will purchase them for gifts.

On the other hand, there is less of a need for storage of ordered items, and they are paid for by sellers prior to ordering, so your center will not need to worry about product being taken and not sold or paid for by the seller; you won't have to spend time chasing people for either returned unsold chocolate or the equivalent cash value.

Storage, particularly during a cash-and-carry pre-buy event, is a primary concern. Not only will your group need space enough to store the chocolate, but that space will need to be safe and cool. In addition, before buying chocolate for a cash-and-carry event, you will want to know about some important company policies.

Find out what the **company's policy is for returned chocolate**; some may be willing to accept unopened cases of chocolate, while others may have a strict 'no-return' policy, which means your group could be buying chocolate you can't sell.

Find out if the company will replace or allow you to return poor quality, broken, or melted chocolate should the product arrive damaged. Likewise, make sure the company will stand behind their product quality for catalog and brochure sales.

Finally, **find out what your ability to restock chocolate and candy bars is if you should find sales booming**. By dealing with a company with a generous re-supply policy and low minimum orders, you can order in quantities you are reasonably assured you can sell and reorder as needed. This also helps you order just the popular flavors and best sellers.

Chocolate sales are well received, making them a great resource for fast and easy fundraising. Cashing in on the chocolate craze is a good idea for any senior center in need.

Take A Break For Coffee Fundraising

Americans love their coffee. That makes this manageable grocery item an ideal choice for a product-based coffee fundraiser.

Basics Of Running A Coffee Fundraiser

Coffee fundraisers are run as brochure or catalog based order taking campaigns.

The fundraising company you choose will provide your center members with all the marketing materials they need. Buyers can choose among a variety of coffees, flavors, drinks, and

accessories. **Orders are usually paid for at the time the order is taken.** Orders then need to be tallied and a bulk order placed with the fundraising company. When the order arrives, it will need to be sorted into individual seller's orders. Sellers then need to distribute their products. As an alternative, groups do have the option of purchasing coffee and products upfront and selling them at various events as on-hand sales. The disadvantage here is that your center will have to front the cash for the purchase, and you may limit your profit if you are unable to sell the coffee. Some centers may choose to run an order-taking campaign, but purchase a small amount of extra product for on-hand selling events.

Something For Everyone

Not everyone on your potential buyer list will be a coffee drinker and that's okay. Companies offering coffee fundraisers have anticipated this need and varied product offerings to **also include teas, cocoas, mixes, and chai's.**

Advantages Of Coffee Fundraisers

- Coffee has a wide appeal
- Coffee is a grocery item people buy anyway, so the cost increase is minimized for buyers (which increases appeal)
- Coffee and accessories make great gift items
- Coffee is consumable, so the fundraiser can be run each year, possibly more often if customers really like the product
- Coffee is non-perishable, so refrigeration/freezing of delivered product is not an issue
- Coffee fundraisers **work well in conjunction with food product fundraisers like pies, cakes, and cookie doughs**

Added Advantage

Some coffee fundraising companies focus on responsible product supply and offer this alternative in their coffee fundraisers. Your center can choose products that include **organic** offerings or product lists that are entirely organic. Some groups also guarantee that their products meet **fair trade** and employment standards, and that their coffees, teas, and cocoas are grown, harvested, and processed by farmers and employees working under good working conditions for a fair wage.

The wide appeal of coffee sets this everyday product up to be a very well-received fundraising item. Coffee fundraisers are easy to run and are affordable options for cash-poor fundraising centers. All of these factors combined put coffee fundraisers at the top of many center's fundraiser product lists.

Make Money, Leave A Legacy – Have A Cookbook Fundraiser!

A cookbook fundraiser can be an interesting, profitable way to raise money for your center; and the added benefit is that you get to create a product that promotes pride and community, while leaving a lasting legacy!

Why A Cookbook Fundraiser

Cookbook fundraisers are beneficial in many ways:

- **Cookbook fundraisers become a “community” group project that brings everyone together**
- **Cookbook fundraisers bring many influences together, and can help promote cultural diversity among members**
- **Cookbooks require no special storage conditions (as food products do) and do not expire, so stock can be kept and sold at many events**
- **Additional cookbooks can be printed as supplies dwindle**
- **Cookbooks serve as a historical record of your senior center, its membership, and its diversity and community**
- **Cookbook fundraisers net significant profits (with per-book profits starting around \$5.00)**
- **Group members and volunteers can participate without having to spend money (making this a fundraiser for all income levels!)**

So what’s the downside? There is quite a bit of organizational work to be done, but overall it is comparable to that of many fundraisers. Also, a cookbook fundraiser generally requires an up-front expenditure for either printing supplies or wholesale purchase from a cookbook fundraising company, or local printer and that cost can be difficult for cash-poor groups to manage. The other disadvantage is that there is no guarantee the cookbook will sell at the desired quantity, so there is the potential for loss or low profits – unless you use an on-demand printing service (see below).

Options In Cookbook Fundraisers

There are basically four ways to have a cookbook fundraiser:

1) Collect and organize recipes and hire a printer to make the books.

Requirements for hiring a printer will depend on the printer your group chooses.

2) Use an online cookbook fundraiser company.

Online cookbook fundraiser companies offer support, online resources, programs and downloads. Basically, your members collect the recipes, turn them over to the company, and they do the rest. Some provide software that you use to enter recipes and then the company will organize and print the cookbook. Additionally, some companies offer both services (you do the typing and entry or they will), but also offer a discount if your group does the entry work. Try HeritageCookbook.com, which has been offering their service for several years.

Some online cookbook fundraiser companies also offer support by managing email reminders to the participants on your email list. The downside to the online cookbook fundraiser is that there is usually a minimum order.

3) Use cookbook fundraiser software and you print the book yourself.

Providers of cookbook fundraiser software offer a program similar to that used by the online companies with entry fields that automatically format recipes; but you do not have to be online to use it (similarly, some online programs can be downloaded for use offline and then the data can be uploaded later). After the information is entered and proofed, your center handles the printing and binding. The downside to a software cookbook fundraiser is that your center is responsible

for all the work, and the cost of printing, ink, papers, and binders may be higher than ordering through a dedicated cookbook fundraiser company. The upside, though, is that **there is never a minimum order because you control the process.**

4) Use an on-demand book printing service.

If your center has access to someone with graphic design experience and software programs, you might want to try an online publishing service like LuLu.com), that prints books on demand. Once you upload your book files to the site you can then link to your book from your center's website and your supporters can order directly from LuLu.com, or you can order any amount of books to sell at any of your fundraising events.

There is no downside here if you have someone who can format the pages and upload them to the site. You can buy as many books as you like whenever you like, and you can also easily sell single copies through your website.

A cookbook fundraiser is a fun community project that, with good organization and a strong sales-effort, **can turn in some very good profits while providing a keepsake for center supporters.** It's a great way to create a lasting impression of your fundraising efforts.

Great Deals! Discount Card Fundraisers

Want a fundraiser that supports local businesses, keeps money in your community, has the publicity and support of area merchants, is welcomed by supporters and raises big funds fast? Sound impossible? Read on and learn about Discount Card fundraisers...

What Is A Discount Card Fundraiser?

A discount card fundraiser consists of selling pre-printed cards that are worth a discount from area merchants and service people. Area businesses agree to give a discount of their choosing to all who present cards to them at their business or at the time of service delivery. Your senior center sells the cards at a set rate – usually \$5 to \$10 – and buyers can use the cards for as long as agreed upon by participating area businesses; the expiration should be printed on the cards.

How Do You Start A Discount card Fundraiser?

The easiest way to get started running a discount card fundraiser is to pair with a company that coordinates the drive and prints the cards for your senior center. The discount card fundraising company will contact and negotiate with area merchants and solicit participation. Once participating merchants and service people are contracted, the discount card fundraising company will print the cards and include on the back a list of participating merchants, including what discounts are available at each.

What's In It For Everybody?

During a discount card fundraiser, everybody wins. Area merchants and service people get increased business and revenue; area customers get discounts of local services and purchases

they need; and your center profits from discount card sales profits. Everybody wins because almost all the money involved stays within your local community.

Your senior center benefits from the ease and simplicity of the sale as well. With one simple product, there are no tedious sorting and storage issues. Discount cards are simple for even very young sellers to sell. And if you choose to go the route of cash and carry sales, there is no lingering delivery to contend with.

How Are Discount Cards Sold?

Discount cards can be sold one of two ways:

- One way is to print informational literature and order takers, or obtain them from the discount card fundraising company, and collect orders for the cards. Money is collected upfront, and there is no out-of-pocket expense to your center.
- The second option does require an initial out-of-pocket expenditure, but can result in a fast and easy campaign. In this option, a set number of discount cards are ordered and paid for ahead of time at wholesale cost. Sellers then sell the cards for the agreed upon amount and deliver the discount cards at the point of purchase. This is often preferable for buyers, and instant savings can boost discount card sales.

Discount card fundraisers are often met with great success. With the all around support and inherent win-win-win situation, discount card fundraisers are gaining in popularity by the day.

Let The Games Begin: A Carnival Fundraiser

Want to raise money, have lots of fun, and get everyone in your organization involved all at the same time? Hold a carnival fundraiser! A carnival fundraiser doesn't have to include expensive rides, as long as you have plenty of fun games to offer. Besides booth games, consider sure hits like a pie eating contest and inflatable games, which usually aren't very expensive to rent.

There are lots of ways to make a carnival successful as a fundraiser, which is why many schools and other organizations do it on an annual basis. **The key is to mix it up every year**, so people look forward to coming back, but are continually surprised at the new booths, vendors, or games. Some of the best ways to keep things running smoothly are included below.

Put someone in charge

This may seem obvious, but is often overlooked when deciding who does which job. This person doesn't have to be the one that does everything, but he or she needs to be the one to delegate everything. You need somebody (maybe it will be you) who can ask Mrs. A to be in charge of recruiting vendors for the food booths, Mrs. B in charge of organizing all the games, and Mr. C to bring in the volunteers. However you work it, there's no getting around the **need for someone to follow up** with everyone on a regular basis and make sure the job is getting done.

Meet at least a few times

Some folks will tell you that you need to meet every week for six months prior to the event, while others will tell you that their organization only met once the week before. It really depends

on how much experience you and your members have doing this sort of thing. If everyone knows the drill and understands what they need to do, you probably only need to have a few meetings. On the other hand, if you have never held anything like this before and this will be your first event together, you probably should meet every week for six months before.

Ensure everyone's safety

Once upon a time, schools and senior centers could hold a carnival without having to worry about what bad things might happen. Tragically, that time is gone. Be sure to **put someone in charge of security** at your carnival, who has the build of a club bouncer, the eye of a paranoid parent, and the wisdom of the ages! Post plenty of security where parents can see it, and have a prominent "Meeting Place" where lost children can go and wait for their parents. That way, you—as well as the parents at your carnival—can rest easy, knowing that whatever happens will be handled promptly and with class.

Sell more than just a hamburger

In business, putting several products together and selling them as one package is called "**product bundling**." For example, few people buy just a cheeseburger at McDonald's anymore—they get a #3, with fries and a coke. You can work the same principle to much advantage at your center's carnival. Have food booths with various types of food in one area, different kinds of games in another, and vendors selling various items appropriate for a kids' carnival in another. A side note here: if you can arrange it ahead of time, vendor placement in booths at your carnival is a win-win situation: the vendor gets great advertising and a chance to sell some of their wares, and you get the vendor fee with almost no overhead (just a table with a "reserved" sign is usually sufficient).

Make sure you have enough volunteers

You'll need lots of volunteers to run your carnival. Examples of jobs are:

- Creating fliers, signs, and 'ads' for center newsletters and community newspapers
- Selling tickets before and during your carnival
- Setting up booths, games and decorations
- Running the booths and games and handing out prizes
- If you decide to have music, assign a 'DJ' that is familiar with working the sound system
- Setting up and manning a lost and found station
- Food sales, unless you allow outside vendors to sell their food. When you have outside vendors, you'll need a liaison that works closely with them and monitors set up, and that the agreed upon food and drinks are offered, etc.
- Setting up trash and recycling cans. Cleaning up during and after the carnival
- Tearing down booths, games and decorations after the carnival
- Have several volunteers on 'standby' who could jump in at any time
- Have several volunteers available at the carnival for odd jobs that come up

Make a budget

Be sure you get any needed licenses and reserve a spot for your carnival well in advance of the event. You'll also need to plan for potential vendors, insurance, table and booth rentals, prizes, decorations, advertising, the actual tickets, the games themselves and security.

To make planning easier for a larger center, it may work for you to set a date and see how many tickets you can pre-sell. That way you might be able to better estimate how many people will come, which will make it easier to plan for how many games to set up, the amount you have available for spending on prizes etc. Don't forget to plan for a healthy profit for your senior center!

If you make sure you have all the basics covered, security, fun games and prizes and lots of helpers, you'll have an event that's not just fun, but also adds to your center's bottom line!

Tips For Hosting a Car Wash Fundraiser

Hosting a car wash is a great way to [raise funds](#). Plus, a car wash is a great way for members of your senior center to get to know each other and have fun.

To host a car wash, you'll need just a few items:

Facility

You'll need access to hoses and a good water supply. This should preferably be in a concrete or asphalt parking lot, to minimize problems caused from the volume of water you'll have. A parking lot on a street with a lot of traffic is the best location (perhaps a car dealer's empty lot?), because it helps you to generate business. If you want to provide inside car cleaning, you'll need electrical access for vacuum cleaners. Be sure to get appropriate permits if necessary.

Also – and you might find this surprising – there are many car wash facilities that are happy to loan out their facility on their off day to organizations that need to raise funds for a worthy cause. Check out several local car washes to see if they're willing to work with you and what supplies or facilities they would actually make available to you.

Supplies

You'll also need car washing soap, rags, sponges, tire cleaner and window cleaner. All of these items can be purchased in bulk from your local warehouse store at a very reasonable price. Items like vacuum cleaners and hoses can be borrowed from center members.

Advertising

Advertise one or two weeks in advance and have a 'Plan B' for bad weather. Consider posting an ad in the local paper and the senior center newsletter. You'll also need signs for the day of the event, to attract passersby into your car wash. Tip: Selling 'car wash vouchers' ahead of the event is a very effective way to boost your fundraiser income.

You could also put an 'environmentally friendly' spin on your car wash fundraiser, by promising to use only environmentally friendly soaps and supplies.

Staff

Members of your senior center can be on hand for the actual washing, rinsing and drying of cars. You'll also need a few volunteers for collecting payment. Don't forget to get change before the event, as lots of people will pay in cash.

Though some organizations offer a few different car wash options at different price ranges, it's wise to have one price for one set of services. For example, for \$10, your car is washed and rinsed, windows and tires are cleaned and the car is dried with a soft cloth. If you want an add on as a profit booster, charge another \$5 for vacuuming the inside, if you have access to vacuum cleaners that can easily be moved around and that are OK around water, such as shop vacuums. A car wash fundraiser is a great spring project, and doesn't require a lot of advance planning. Springtime is the perfect time of year, since the weather is nice and people are anxious to get their cars cleaned, particularly if you live in areas with high pollen. You'll be amazed at how this fundraiser brings in profits and makes certain that your center members have some good clean fun!

Silent Auction Fundraiser

Silent auctions make great, low cost fundraisers. They are also great social events, since you'll usually generate a crowd, who'll often stay around until the end for the very last sale. Following are some tips for hosting a silent auction for your center.

Solicit donations

Ask local businesses and individuals to donate items for auction. For example, ask the local day spa to donate a massage gift certificate and the local pet groomer to donate a free grooming session. When businesses donate items that they sell, the cost is minimal to them, and it decreases your out of pocket expenses. Consider if you want many different types of items for your auction, or if you want to concentrate on one type of item, such as art.

Find a venue

You'll need a place for hosting your auction. If your senior center is partnered with a community center, use it to avoid a rental fee. Then spend a little time decorating to dress it up a bit.

Advertise

Let people know about the auction in advance, and let them know some of the items that will be up for auction. If you're charging admission, offer tickets in advance and at the door for a higher price.

Offer food

A silent auction generally means a lot of walking around, looking at items for sale and checking your bids. Consider providing finger food for your guests. If you've charged admission for entry, consider not charging for food. However, if entrance is free, you should charge for the food. Wine, cheese and other small finger appetizers are popular at high end silent auctions.

Stagger Auction Closes

Have the bidding on items close at different times during the night. With one or two items closing at each half hour, you'll generate excitement and keep the evening moving. You'll also drive up prices on your late closing items this way. When bidders realize they've lost out on one

item early in the evening, they'll be willing to place a higher bid on some other items closing later. So, save your most expensive items for the end of the evening.

Set up bidding by fax, phone or internet

To ensure that you get the highest sales prices for your items, you may want to consider providing a brochure that lists all your items and provides a phone or fax number for bidders who are unable to attend the actual event. You'll need a couple of extra volunteers to man the phone, fax or computers to ensure that the bids of outside bidders are included as they come in.

Have one great final item

If you can obtain one big ticket item for the end of the evening, you'll generate lots of excitement that causes people to linger right up until the end of the night. An item that everyone wants is sure to bring in loads of bidders and make the evening even more fun.

A silent auction is a unique, high energy fundraising event. Your participants and guests just might find this event to be the most enjoyable event of the year – and the most profitable.

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVENT: Your Senior Center's Fifth Annual Senior Spelling Bee

TICKETS: \$50

NUMBER ATTENDING: 225

RESULT: \$10,000 - which goes to the council's general operating budget

Make Money With a Valentine's Day Fundraiser

Valentine's Day is one of the best times of year to hold a fundraiser. A Valentine's Day fundraiser offers the advantages of

- Decreased competition – particularly as opposed to the busy times of year for fundraising like Christmas and the Fall
- Demand for novelty products and [candy](#)
- Opportunity for entertaining [event-based fundraisers](#)

Every type of Valentine's Day fundraiser offers a variety of ways to make money. Some, event-based fundraisers especially, can bring in profits in more ways than one.

Planning

When planning for a Valentine's Day fundraiser, do some research to see what your supporters are willing to spend their money on. Planning for profits should be discussed early on, so that your volunteers can choose the most profitable and most manageable path to making money.

Brochure sales

Brochure or catalog sales are good money makers at Valentine's Day and do not require any up-front spending. There are many very good product options, including gifts, novelties, and candy that make great Valentine's Day fundraisers.

Event Admission

If you have access to many participants, an admission fee for a Valentine's Day event can be enough by itself to raise very good profits. Your center may choose to sell tickets ahead of time, at the door, or both; if you find ticket sales to be too cumbersome, you can hire a ticket selling agency to manage ticket sales for you, but the admission to a Valentine's Day fundraising event might not be high enough to justify the expense.

On-hand sales

Cash and carry sales are a great way to reach out to a lot of buyers; better still, you won't have to worry about distribution and delivery of product at a later date, and the profits are instantly available. You will need to either pair the sale with a Valentine's Day event or set up at a location where you will enjoy good foot-traffic. (For products to sell try [candy, snacks or bracelets](#).)

Vendor Space

If you have a well-attended Valentine's Day event, and you do not plan to offer cash and carry sales and/or food, drink, and refreshment yourself, invite vendors to rent space at your event. Either charge a flat rate for a space and/or agree upon a percentage of the profits.

Sponsorship

Many area businesses are happy to sponsor Valentine's Day events for deserving community groups. They will enjoy increased exposure and advertising, and you will enjoy their cash or in-kind donations. Make sure that you advertise your sponsors very well so that they enjoy the benefits of their generosity.

Any of these Valentine's Day fundraising methods can be used alone or in combination to bring in excellent Valentine's Day fundraiser profits. **Often, the best way to raise money is to combine one or more of these methods.** If you have enough volunteers, you could take advantage of a Valentine's Day event to utilize all methods listed here and realize profits that could very well take you through your entire fundraising year, straight through until next Valentine's Day!

All Wrapped Up: Fundraising With Gift Wraps And Greeting Cards

There comes a time when everyone is in need of gift wrap and greeting cards; your next fundraiser can be their year-round supply train.

Gift Wrap Fundraising Why And When

Gift wrap and greeting card fundraisers have been popular for several years now for one elemental reason – everyone uses gift wrap and greeting cards!

Gift wrap fundraisers are obviously best suited to the Winter holiday season, or the months immediately preceding the holiday rush. People will buy gift wrap in abundance with an eminent need, but sales will be low when consumers don't feel an emergent usefulness for the product.

Gift wrap fundraisers do also include wrap selections for other events and multipurpose ‘all occasion’ sets, but sales of these pieces will be largely for future convenience, and will not match the demand for holiday wrapping paper.

Tips For Successful Gift Wrap Fundraisers

- **Timing is everything;** choose a season when large amounts of gift wrap will be in demand in the foreseeable future.
- **Sell the convenience;** remind customers that stocking up now will eliminate the need to run out for gift wraps and greeting cards later, and that holiday or event (birthday, wedding, etc.) shopping can center on the gift, not the mundane, forgettable details like wrapping paper.
- **Sell wrap as ‘hassle-free’;** include all-inclusive sets of gift wrap in fundraiser offerings. Many companies have complete packages that offer not only the wrapping paper, but also coordinating ribbon, bows, tags, dispensers, and more.
- **Sell all occasion and future stores;** include offerings that can be used for a variety of purposes, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, weddings, baby showers, birthdays, and greeting cards to grab and go, will boost sales beyond the Christmas season and serve nearly every customer’s needs regardless of religious affiliation.
- **Plan for delivery time;** be sure that your fundraiser is completed well enough in advance so that customers not only receive their wrap in time for the holidays, they receive it in enough time to use it. **Always remember that customers will want to get their product and start wrapping well before ‘the big day’.** If you fail in this aspect one year, count on severely diminished sales the next. No one wants to buy their gift-wrap twice and be left hanging with useless fundraiser gift wrap to store.

Gift wrap is a highly consumable and necessary item, making it an ideal choice for an annual fundraiser. Your good planning, service, and excellent product will ensure that your buyers will continue to make your center their source for holiday and all-occasion gift wrap year after year.

Go Groceries! Raising Funds With Everyday Foodstuffs

Fundraising companies have gotten very good at combining consumer need with profitability. They understand that sales of unwanted or unneeded products will only get them and their patrons (fundraising organizations) so far. To build lasting sales and demand, fundraisers must find a way to **reach out and supply consumers with items and products they want to buy, not just something they purchase out of empathy.**

The ideal way to combine practicality and profitability is to become a link in the supply chain of everyday, essential items. One of the best ways this can be accomplished is to fundraise by selling grocery and food items. Sure, these products as offered through a fundraiser may cost a little more, but often the difference can be made up in quality or in the justification that at least the item is something that will be usable anyway, and thus, in the long run, save money over frivolous expenditures on worthless products on top of the regular grocery bill.

What's Available

Food product and grocery item fundraisers started out fairly basically with consumables like coffee and gourmet bakery items, but as the logic of this partnership grows into increased fundraising success, more and more food items that might be bought at the corner grocery store are being added to the list. What follows here is just a sampling of the more common food and grocery items that might be offered through fundraisers:

- Oven-ready frozen foods like pies, cakes, cookie dough, and pizza
- Refrigerated meats
- Coffee, teas, cocoas
- Soap, bath, lotions, and spa items
- Snack foods like beef jerky, dried fruits, nuts, pretzels, and popcorn
- Dry mixes for baking (like cookies, cakes...) or cooking (pancakes, etc.)
- Herbs, spices, rubs, and sauces
- Cheeses

Benefits

The benefits of selling grocery items center largely on the fact that **these are products people are buying every week anyway**, and so the potential for sales is great. In addition,

- Profits are usually immediately available
- Many organizations are able to repeat the same fundraiser multiple times in one year (since products are quickly consumed)
- Good products build customer loyalty
- Usually no up-front expenditure is required
- Ordering may be available online to expedite processing and turn around time

The only real **difficulty to food sales is that many times frozen and/or refrigeration is involved**. That means that the fundraising organization needs either adequate storage or fast distribution; it also means that having someone on hand at the time of delivery is an absolute must. However, many organizations have overcome these difficulties by **organizing delivery with the company ahead of time and also planning to have sellers pick up their items on the same day**. Recognizing the logistics involved in storage and distribution, food product fundraising suppliers are happy to coordinate efforts as needed and are excellent resources for distribution tips and tricks.

Fundraising with grocery and food items has become very popular. Welcome, saleable products combined with the ability to repeat the fundraiser regularly (thereby diminishing the planning and learning curve) keep groups and customers coming back again and again.

(For marketing tips, click over to [Marketing Your Fundraiser](#).)

A Sucker For Fundraising – Lollipop Fundraisers

Obviously, lollipops are a classic favorite. But maybe you've never thought of them as a viable fundraising product, too. Well, if not, you should; lollipop fundraisers are popular and well-received, profitable, and economical, too. What more could you ask for in a fundraising product?

What's So Great About Lollipop Fundraisers?

Yes, lollipop fundraisers do have an awful lot to offer. But to be even more specific, here are some good reasons why lollipops should be on your list of products to consider when choosing product-based fundraisers:

- **Lollipops are classics.** That means they are well-liked and recognized. No one will look at what you are selling and wonder just what it is.
- **Lollipops are high-consumption items.** That means that people will either buy more than one, or keep coming back for more, and the fundraiser can be held more than once a year.
- **Lollipop fundraisers can easily involve kids without putting them 'out there' in harm's way.** This is a great inter-generational program with built-in customers and won't have to send kids door-to-door.
- **Lollipops are ideal in conjunction with events and other fundraisers (such as a bake sale, spirit fundraiser, and so on).** It's very easy to put out a lollipop display and sell plenty without compromising ticket sales or sales of other items.
- **Selling lollipops is very easy – a simple exchange of money for product.** In most cases, lollipops are paid for ahead of time and sold on the spot; that means that profits and compensation for pops are immediate.
- **Profits from lollipops are high, as much as 50% or more overall, allowing for a 100% or better mark-up.**
- **Fun lollipops can be labeled for your specific center.** Also, themed lollipops can be sold to match an interest, event, or holiday.

Is There A Downside To Lollipop Fundraisers?

It seems nothing is without its 'cons', and lollipop sales are not an exception, but the downside to lollipop fundraisers is a short list. Other than being candy, and so **not always welcomed by parents or some of your members (for that matter)**. Essentially the only downside to a lollipop fundraiser is that pops are **not 'big-ticket' items** so you have to sell a lot of pops to add up to significant cash. This isn't so bad if you have an event with a lot of traffic or couple sales with a ticket-table or other fundraising event. But then again, put up against higher-priced items, lollipops can do well marketed to those who want to lend a little support without breaking the bank.

All in all, lollipop fundraisers can mean good, quick cash for small effort and headache. Lollipops definitely have their place on the fundraising table!

Tips For Running A Successful Online Magazine Fundraiser

Online magazine fundraisers boast a number of advantages; online magazine fundraisers are **inexpensive, easy, profitable, and ongoing**, bringing in significant profits both at first launch and for many months beyond. They also have the advantage of being boundless – your volunteers/members can inexpensively and easily outreach to people anywhere in the country, and benefit from sales of friends and relatives anywhere.

Online magazine fundraisers do require some effort on an ongoing basis to keep them profitable. Here are some extra things your senior center can do to increase the profitability of your online fundraising campaign.

Tips & Tricks For Successful Online Magazine Fundraisers

- **Launch your online magazine fundraising store via e-mail** and include a convenient link directly to your site.
- **Build as large an e-mail list as possible** for your launch and for all reminder e-mails; include all center members, community members, and local businesses, and strongly encourage them to forward the e-mail to friends, associates, and family members.
- **Be sure to include in the e-mail that this is not just a one-time deal**; that the store will remain open and they should come back repeatedly to renew or order new magazines they see elsewhere.
- **Personalize your online magazine fundraising store space** by using colors that represent your organization; add photos of your volunteers working hard and having fun.
- **Include a strong appeal on your site**; tell visitors all about your senior center, what you represent, why you need money and how online magazine fundraising profits will be spent – show them exactly how they are helping and why that is good!
- **Tell your visitors what's in it for them personally**; in most cases, ordering online through your magazine fundraiser will result in great discounts for your supporters.
- **Create friendly competition among members** by offering incentive programs and setting goals.
- **Utilize address import features** for e-mails and review lists to make sure everyone you know is included.
- **Send reminder e-mails and thank you notes** to keep your campaign visible and promote ongoing participation.
- **Mention your campaign in all communications**; discuss the effort on blogs, websites, and forums.
- **Use any print material resources you have** such as newsletters and local media to advertise your online magazine fundraiser.
- **Re-launch your online magazine store at least annually** so that all new center members are aware of the ongoing campaign, and so that veteran center members renew their fundraising resolve.
- **Creating a large outreach is the key to success** and big profits with online magazine fundraising campaigns. The more people you can communicate with, the more potential you have for orders; since not everyone will participate, your e-mail address list should be as large as you can manage. And list maintenance should be ongoing, ever growing the list so that new customers are added as often as possible.

Beyond Product Fundraising

Product fundraisers seem to be the obvious choice for new fundraising boards. To be sure, product fundraisers do have a lot of ease and convenience to offer, and potential for profitability because the companies offering product-based fundraisers have done as much of the work for their customers as possible. **But product fundraisers can become stale and repetitive, and sometimes it can be difficult to find enough supporters in want or need of the products offered to turn a respectable profit.**

Volunteers new to fundraising may not always realize that they have **many options beyond product fundraising**. And often non-product based fundraisers enjoy greater success because they give supporters fun, easy ways to support an organization at a variety of affordable price-points, without purchasing product they don't really want or need.

One option for staging a non-product based fundraiser is to hold an event of some sort. If well organized and well-run, **event fundraisers** are great successes because they provide affordable, fun, community-based entertainment and/or education. Some event-based fundraising options include:

- **Community carnivals or fairs**
- **Craft sales, bake sales, flea markets, or fairs** where table space is sold (rented) to vendors
- **'Taste of' your town events** – sell table space to local restaurants and caterers, bakeries, etc. and invite the town for samples for a small ticket fee
- **Car washes**
- **Plays/theater/dance recitals**
- **Petting zoos**
- **Child-centered educational events** like bike safety days, child safety awareness programs, youth-group events

Event-based fundraisers are lots of fun and can be hugely successful, but they do have a downside: event-based fundraisers require a lot of planning, man-hours, and initial monetary investment for supplies.

There are several other non-product based fundraiser options that can be completed in record fundraising time, and be very appealing to supporters, such as the following:

- **Discount cards** – sold for 5 or 10 dollars, worth percentage discounts at partnering local businesses
- **Scratch cards** – supporters scratch one or more circles on a card and donate the amount of money that is shown (donations are no more than \$5 per circle)
- **Lotto calendars** - calendars are sold for 10 to 15 dollars, and buyers have the potential to win each day for a month (cash prizes are given for each day's drawing)
- **Raffles** – sell tickets, draw a winner for the prize; 50-50 raffles are especially easy and popular (winner gets half the money collected from ticket sales)
- **Brick fundraisers** – sell bricks engraved with donors' names and use them to build a garden, walkway, or partial building

- **Spare-a-dollar campaigns** – print letters explaining the campaign and simply ask supporters for donations
- Product-based fundraisers give supporters something tangible for their money, but with multiple fundraisers being run in every locale several times per year, product fundraisers can be met with diminishing demand and support. **Non-product based fundraisers and fundraising events are better options when the product fundraising pool is overflowing.**

Don't Forget About These Popular Ongoing Fundraisers!

Ongoing fundraisers – those that can be run with little administrative effort required – can add up to big fundraising dollars over time, and often with very little expense. Be sure to **continually promote these fundraisers in your newsletters and on your group's website**, and you'll always be able to count on an additional stream of income for your cause. **Ongoing fundraisers** are designed so that they virtually run themselves. Registration and information sharing is all it takes to get this kind of fundraiser going. Beyond that, all that is required is an organized effort to collect and/or redeem or claim your group's funds. Sometimes, though, sponsors even take care of that for you and simply put the check in the mail.

Resources And Ideas For Ongoing Fundraisers

There are a number of nationally available, well organized ongoing fundraising programs. There are even a few you can set up yourself and maintain on a smaller, local scale. Following are some ideas and providers of easy ongoing fundraising programs:

National Brand Fundraisers

Several national product manufacturers and large companies are teaming up and offering ongoing fundraisers. Most of these programs consist of a process of collecting and redeeming coupons from product packages in exchange for goods or cash.



General Mill's Box Tops for Education Program is a very popular example; you'll receive 10 cents per label. (Read more about Box Tops For Education at <http://www.boxtops4education.com/learn/default.aspx>)



The makers of Campbell's Soup have offered an ongoing fundraiser based on label collection for many years and will pay your group in the form of educational materials and playground equipment.



Tyson's Project A+ pays 24 cents for each label turned in.

Other more **localized suppliers** have helped communities closer to their business' home such as the Hood milk company with its Sox Tops campaign offered in partnership with the Boston Red Sox, or Kemp's Dairy with it's Nickels For Schools program. Check your local dairy, or pizza restaurant for similar offers.

Ink Cartridge and Cell Phone Recycling

There are several companies who will **pay fundraising groups for collected ink cartridges and cell phones** that meet their acceptance standards. These companies in turn refurbish and recycle the still useful cartridges and parts. This easy ongoing fundraiser is a simple matter of collecting and mailing in ink cartridges and cell phones. **Expect to get paid about \$1-\$3 or more per accepted cartridge or phone.** This easy ongoing fundraiser is great for the environment, too. Read more about Recycling Ink Jet Cartridges, or click over to Funding Factory, which offers a popular ink-jet recycling and cellphone recycling fundraising service.

Loyalty Programs

Some retailers (like Target) and service providers are willing to kick back a percentage of profits to centers whose supporters patronize them. Often a **membership card or registration of some kind is needed to identify supporters and designate the recipient program.** When these patrons make a purchase or hire the services of the partner company, they earn cash or redeemable bonus points. The company benefits from better business, the center benefits from easy money, and the program runs itself until ended by one or the other party.

Homegrown Ongoing Fundraisers

There are other programs groups can set up and manage themselves on an ongoing basis. Bottle and can collections and spare-a-penny tip jars are two fairly easy ongoing fundraisers that don't cost a lot but can return pretty well on the low investment.

The potential to profit from ongoing fundraisers is significant, but it does take a concerted effort to get supporters to participate continually. The effort is small, so most do not mind it, but it is easy for busy donors to forget, so **periodic reminding is a must to succeed with an ongoing fundraiser.** Most organizations find that ongoing fundraisers are better when run as supplemental income of sorts, with two or three larger efforts being run for the bulk of their funds. Either way, there is virtually free money out there to be taken in ongoing fundraisers; you need only to tap the source!

Different Ways To Fundraise With Pizza!

Pizza is a wildly popular food across the nation; that fact needs no repeating. Pizza is a staple food in many homes simply because it is fun and convenient, not to mention great tasting. Now fundraising companies have found a variety of ways to cash in on the popularity of pizza for wildly popular and successful fundraising campaigns.

Pizza Fundraising Options:

Frozen Pizza Sales

Frozen pizza sales run similar to pie and cheesecake sales. The product comes **fully prepared by the pizza company** and all the end consumer has to do is heat and eat. Fundraisers take orders for flavors and quantity, then deliver the product when delivered to them. But like cheesecake and pie fundraisers, frozen pizza fundraisers have the disadvantage of requiring either fast distribution or storage space in freezers.



Make-Your-Own Pizza Kits

Another Pizza sale fundraising option is to **collect orders for pizza kits**. Consumers receive kits to make one to three pizzas with the sauce, cheese, and toppings chosen included. Like frozen pizzas, distribution and/or storage arrangements are necessary.

Pizza Card Sales

A fast and simple alternative to selling the actual pizza or pizza kit is to **sell pizza cards redeemable at local pizzerias**. Centers partner with a national or local pizza restaurant and sell cards worth 'x' amount of pizzas or worth a percentage off their order at a local pizza store; the pizzeria is reimbursed for their product and the fundraising organization keeps a portion of the proceeds.

>>FastTrackFundraising offers Pizza Card Fundraising...

Pizza Night Fundraisers

Similar to the pizza card fundraiser, a pizza night fundraiser **requires partnering with local pizza restaurants**. The senior center advertises the event and on the designated night, a portion of the sales from pizzas sold to fundraiser supporters goes to the center. Some means of identifying participants as supporters must be communicated or distributed (such as via a card, coupon, or simply telling the counter they are supporters). The partnership can be a 'win-win' situation for both the pizzeria and the organization, as sales are boosted for all.

For many centers, **pizza sales as fundraisers are an obvious choice**. Pizzas are also well-liked for fundraising because these **quickly consumed products can be sold repeatedly** and their high demand makes pizza fundraisers virtually self-sellers. When paired with good planning and organization, pizzas are unstoppable fundraisers with wide appeal.

Green Fundraising: Recycle Ink Cartridges

Maybe you don't know that **only about 10% of ink cartridges are turned in for recycling**. Maybe you don't know that it can take up to 3,5 qts of oil to produce just one ink cartridge. Maybe you don't know that there is a super **easy way to recycle those ink cartridges**, help the planet, save valuable oil resources and make money doing it! That's right—recycling ink cartridges could be the most profitable and beneficial (planet-arily speaking) fundraising project you've ever promoted!

Quick-View Of Ink Cartridge Recycling

Setting up and running an ink cartridge recycling program couldn't be easier. A few simple steps and you're there. Here's what you'll have to do:

- **Identify your ink cartridge recycling partner** – this will be a company who buys used ink cartridges so that they can refurbish them and resell them. Most of these companies operate primarily online, and that is where you can expect to find several good ones.
- **Register your organization** – pretty much anyone can set up an account for ink cartridge recycling—and it's all free! At registration, you'll receive all the information you need to start recycling. Soon after, you'll be provided with bags, boxes, or envelopes to send the collected ink cartridges to the company in. In most cases, the postage is prepaid—the whole program could be run entirely free!
- **Start collecting** – you'll need to do something to get the word out about your program; utilize all your information disseminating resources. Blurb the fundraiser in the center newsletter, send out letters explaining the program, write a press release for the local paper, send around an email and/or post the collection on your website. (Note—you don't have to wait until you get your materials, you can start collecting any time.)
- **Remit Collections** – remission guidelines vary by company, but by and large they are pretty open-ended; you just send in your ink cartridges whenever it best suits you. On average, a monthly remission works well, but if you collect a lot of cartridges regularly you could send them in more often. On the flip side, centers that have just a few sometimes prefer to send in the ink cartridges when they've collected a fair amount to make the postal trip worth their while.

How Much Will You Make When You Recycle Ink Cartridges?

The potential for profit is limited only by your access to ink cartridges. **The more you collect, the more you can remit**; on average you'll get between one and four dollars for each accepted cartridge (depending on the type and your company). The nice thing is that ink cartridge recycling doesn't have to cost you a thing and the fundraiser can continue on alongside other efforts without competing. If you can partner with some area businesses and/or organizations that

go through lots of cartridges, you can turn quite a nice profit. At any rate, ink cartridge recycling is something every needy senior center should undertake because the extra income can't be gotten elsewhere as easily.

Safety All Around: Safety Products As Fundraisers

Need, practicality, and usefulness are three elements that can really boost fundraising product sales. When you show your customers that you are selling something that is truly helpful and needed in their homes and their lives, you grab their attention and their orders.

These elements also happen to be characteristic of safety products and so, safety product fundraisers have risen to the challenge of serving consumer need while building firm funding bases for senior centers and other organizations.

Safety products as fundraisers are often hard for consumers to say no to because many times customers don't even realize their own need for safety products until they are presented with a brochure full of safety items they have neglected to stock or restock in their homes and automobiles.

Products For Sale In Safety Fundraisers

Safety fundraiser products offered for sale include a variety of items depending on the supply company and catalog chosen; among the more common offerings are:

- * **First aid kits for home and auto**
- * **Boating and water sports first aid kits**
- * **Automotive emergency kits**
- * **Kitchen and safety fire extinguishers**
- * **Reflectors and roadside emergency kits**
- * **Emergency lights**
- * **Child proofing safety items such as outlet covers**
- * **Earthquake kits**

Obviously, the usefulness of such products is unmistakable. What's more, safety fundraisers are easy to run. The process consists of taking orders from a brochure or catalog, submitting to the company, and distributing once received.

Fundraising And Staying Safe

Organizing a safety product fundraiser is the ideal time to review safe selling and fundraising practices – keeping sellers safe is of the utmost importance during any fundraising campaign.

Before sending young sellers off with safety fundraisers, review the following safe selling practices with all participants:

- No sellers should sell alone; always partner with a friend and use the 'buddy-system'
- Never go inside the home of a potential buyer, no matter how friendly they seem (this includes time of product delivery).
- Do not carry large amounts of cash; ask buyers to pay by check when possible.
- Try to fulfill selling goals by selling to family and friends first.

- Be polite and courteous.

By reinforcing these selling safety tips, all safety fundraiser participants can have a safe fundraising experience. And by supplying family, friends, and neighbors with the safety products they need, your community will be a safer place to live and work as well.

Scratching Up Funds...Fundraising With Scratch Cards

Fast, simple, fun, and profitable – if you think these are great attributes of a fundraising product, you need to know about fundraising with scratch cards. Great also if you have little time to plan and you need to start a fundraiser NOW!

Is It A Lottery?

Scratch cards in general are usually associated with state lotteries, but scratch card fundraisers **are not at all linked to any kind of lottery or payout and they are not raffles either**. They are a fun and fast way to collect money for your senior center without having to push unwanted products.

How Are Scratch Cards Sold?

Each selling member will devote to selling ‘x’ amount of cards; alternatively, you can set the amount of cards each member receives, and do your best to see that each seller reaches their ‘sales’ quota.

In truth, **fundraising scratch cards are not really sold**. Scratch cards are presented to potential supporters. Sellers explain the process to them, and the supporter scratches off a dot. Under the dot is a dollar amount. Amounts generally range from one to five dollars. **The supporter agrees ahead of time to donate the amount of money that appears below the dot they have scratched**. So if a supporter scratches off a dot that reads \$4.00 under it, the supporter pays the seller \$4.00. Each card has a maximum and a minimum amount under the dots, so the supporter will know before they scratch that they will be donating at least the minimum and no more than the maximum (usually no more than \$5.00) unless they want to donate more to the cause.

What If Supporters Want To Give More?

Supporters can keep scratching the card until they have donated as much as they want to give. Donors can scratch as many dots as they want, and pay the sum total of all scratched dots. Of course, they can always scratch more than one card, too, but having donors scratch several dots saves on the wholesale cost of the cards, stretching the supply further.

What’s In It For Supporters?

Essentially, **supporters get the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping an area senior center meet their needs**, for just the donation of a few dollars and a minute of their time. There is no real product to sell, but most supporters do not mind not spending big on something they don’t necessarily want or need, with only limited funds actually staying with the center (with scratch card fundraisers, overhead is quite low – just the cost of the cards – and profits can be as high as 90%). Knowing that everybody likes a little something for their time, money, and effort,

however, most scratch card donation programs will include the gift of a sheet of coupons for supporters.

What Makes Scratch Card Fundraising So Great?

Scratch card fundraising is great because **it raises significant funds with low overhead in a fun way**. Scratching is simple, and there is no subsequent delivery, storage, sorting, or distribution to contend with. It does take 'selling' quite a few scratch cards to see significant income, but for centers with a wide outreach capability, scratch card fundraising is an excellent way to raise immediate cash funds.

What Is Scrip And How Can You Fundraise With It?

In general, the term "scrip" refers to "substitute money". With the right partner, a scrip fundraiser can be a very good fundraising tool!

Scrip – What Is It?

Scrip is substitute money that is given in the form of a certificate or card that can be redeemed like cash with participating retailers and service providers. Depending on the partnering company, scrip can be purchased and **used for a variety of everyday purchases** from gas to electronics, home services, and groceries. For group fundraisers, groceries are often the targeted products, in part because of their wide appeal.

How A Scrip Fundraiser Works

Senior centers buy scrip certificates in bulk at a discounted rate either directly from the retailer or through a fundraising company (in most cases, from a fundraising company). The center buys the scrip at a set value, and then sells the scrip at an increased rate to their supporters; the sale rate may be below the average price of the redeemable product or service so that the supporter enjoys a discount, or the scrip may be sold at the same price and the benefit is fundraiser support only. Supporters who buy the scrip then use it like cash to pay for the designated purchase. Scrip can be purchased **for general sales** of any item at one retailer, or it can be designated only **for particular products and services**.

How Can I Get A Scrip Fundraiser Started?

If you have a willing local retailer, you might negotiate a scrip arrangement with them; since the details of scrip fundraisers can get complex, it is more common (and much easier) to partner with a fundraising company that offers scrip fundraisers. These companies negotiate with major manufacturers and retailers for deep discounts so that their programs are as beneficial as possible to supporters. The one thing that you will need access to is **cash**, because your center will have to buy the scrip before it can be resold. When you work with a fundraising company, most of the work is done for you and all you will have to do is choose your products and services, then buy and resell the scrip.

What Are The Benefits Of A Scrip Fundraiser?

Scrip fundraisers are beneficial because they are generally well-received as long as you have chosen your products wisely. Supporters welcome scrip fundraisers (particularly if they enjoy a discount on purchases) because they can both support your center's fundraising efforts and buy products and services they need anyway, and they don't have to spend extra money to do so. Scrip programs are **potentially very profitable**, too-your profits are only limited by your sales abilities.

Retailers and manufacturers benefit as well because they move their product while gaining good PR, supporting community and center programs, while expanding their customer base. In the end, a well-managed scrip fundraiser can be a big win all around.

Christmas Greenery Fundraiser

Christmas greenery products are an excellent way to make money for your needy center. Christmas greenery is easy to sell and is well-received by customers. A Christmas greenery sale has all the makings of a highly successful seasonal fundraiser. In order to include and address everyone in your fundraiser, be sure to offer items representative of other religions as well.

Christmas Greenery Fundraiser Options

Christmas greenery fundraisers usually refer to the sale of Christmas green decorating products, such as Christmas wreaths, evergreen Christmas swags and Christmas roping. A Christmas greenery sale can also include the sale of Christmas trees, but might be more difficult to manage because of the size of the trees.

Groups interested in holding a Christmas greenery fundraiser have a few basic options:

- **Cash and carry Christmas greenery sales**

For an on-hand sale, your center will need to purchase Christmas greenery products upfront (from a local supplier is best), and then hold a sale at a designated location. There is more upfront cost involved, but the right timing and location can net some very good profits, and there is no worrying over delivery and distribution at a later date. A cash and carry Christmas greenery sale can be managed on short notice as long as you can locate a good local supplier.

- **Craft and sell Christmas greenery sales**

As an alternative, your volunteers could make their own Christmas greenery for cash and carry sales. This works well for any size senior center with hands that can devote meeting time to crafting hand-made products. Christmas greens are relatively easy to make as long as you can locate one or two good instructors that will supervise and teach others to assemble the products. The cost of materials is usually very low, which means there is a good profit potential for Christmas greenery sales.

- **Christmas greenery brochure sales**

Christmas greenery brochure fundraisers are run like any other type of catalog or brochure sale. You will need to choose a fundraising company offering Christmas greenery sales, obtain the needed sales materials, and take orders for Christmas greens. A Christmas greenery brochure

sale is probably the most cost-effective way to hold this type of fundraiser, as you will not need to front the cash to purchase products before they are sold.

The Value-Added Service

Your Christmas greenery fundraiser does not have to be limited to the sale of the actual wreath or green product; you can also offer decorating and accessorizing, perhaps even hanging. Charge accordingly for each additional service, and boost your profits even more. Value-added services are easiest for cash and carry sales. Be sure to offer products in various price ranges.

A Christmas greenery sale can be a great way to fundraise. Christmas greens are products that many people seek out every year, which gives this fundraiser the benefit of being repeatable. Even better, a Christmas greenery fundraiser raises everybody's Christmas spirits, and spreads good cheer as you fundraise!

Easy Profits With Stationary Fundraisers

Stationary fundraisers can include but also go beyond holiday card and gift wrap fundraisers

Stationary Fundraiser Basics

Stationary fundraisers are usually run via the brochure sales method. Your partnering fundraising company will supply brochures and order takers for sellers to present to buyers. Orders are usually paid for at the time of order. After the order taking period is ended, orders will need to be tallied and placed with the company. When the order arrives, the bulk needs to be sorted into individual seller's orders and delivered.

Advantages Of Stationary Fundraisers

Stationary fundraisers have a number of benefits over other fundraisers, and even over holiday gift, wrap, and seasonal stationary fundraisers.

- Stationary is consumable, so the fundraiser can be repeated in the future
- Stationary fundraisers extend the appeal of seasonal stationary and gift wrap products; all-occasion or year-round stationary options can be run as part of a seasonal wrap/card fundraiser or entirely separated from them.
- Little or no up-front expense
- Non-perishable
- Stationary fundraisers can work well in combination with other product fundraisers (i.e., selling the gift and the wrap or selling as affordable alternative to other pricier products).
- Stationary fundraisers open up the opportunity for unique marketing angles such as 'Support Our Troops' campaigns, selling stationary for pen pal programs, or selling to support sponsorships of missionaries, impoverished children, etc.

Personalized Options For Stationary Fundraisers

Centers are not limited to the stationary designs offered by fundraising companies. For a more personal angle, groups can have stationary made from artwork submitted by the children or a talented artist in the group. Personalized stationary fundraising options appeal more to parents,

grandparents, friends, and family members who enjoy using their own child's or acquaintance's artwork as representation in their communications. There's a certain 'brag factor' involved. Another great inter-generational program.

Types Of Stationary Products Available

For both commercially designed and personally designed stationary, a variety of fundraising stationary products are offered. These include (but may not be limited to, depending on your company)

- Greeting cards
- Holiday/seasonal cards
- Personalized CD covers
- Scrap booking prints/materials
- Printed/personalized gift items
- Stationary sets
- Memo sheets
- Gift wraps
- Accessories

Stationary fundraisers are easy to run and work well for centers who have logistical difficulties managing large perishable orders. Stationary fundraisers are one of those events that need to be timed somewhat carefully, but when your center finds the balance in timing and offerings, a stationary fundraiser is one that your volunteers can run year after year with ease.

If you're looking to implement a stationary fundraiser, consider the following choices:

- you can work with a local printer and get wholesale pricing for customized stationary products, purchase stationary through fundraising companies like Sally Foster:

<http://www.sallyfoster.com>

sell customized stationary online through your own free online shop:

<http://www.cafepress.com>

or you could create your own stationary and calendars. Many computers already include free software for this purpose, or you could engage some of your students or team members who like graphic design or photography to create them for you. "Blank" stationary is readily available at hobby shops.

Water Bottle Or Sports Bottle Fundraiser

Whether you're planning on using reusable and customized water and sports bottles, or water bottles that bear your group's label, this type of fundraiser presents yet another simple and inexpensive fundraising option. **Read on for pros and cons and links to suppliers:**

Basics Of Running A Water Bottle Fundraiser

Water bottle fundraisers are run primarily through on-hand sales events. Your center will purchase water sports bottles in bulk, then increase the price and sell them to interested buyers. **Water bottle sales generally do well at sporting or similar events, or as offered to and**

through team members. The disadvantage to on-hand water bottle sales is that your members will have to pay cash upfront to buy the bottles and if you are unable to move them your profits will be limited. Prices for waterbottles for fundraisers vary depending on the type and style of bottle purchased; prices range from \$.55 to around \$3.50 per unit. (*Tip: you may consider filling the bottles with ice water or offering a fill station to promote sales to thirsty patrons.) To organize a waterbottle fundraiser, you first need to identify a water sports bottle supply company (see end of this article) or fundraising company offering water bottle fund raisers. You will then work with a company representative to design your bottle logo and choose the type, color, and style of bottle. Companies will work with you to help you choose a fun and interesting message and you can submit your own senior center logo to go on the bottle.

Advantages Of A Water Bottle Fundraiser

- **Water bottles are reusable**
- **Reusable water bottles help save the environment from discarded plastic bottles**
- **Printed water bottles serve as constant marketers every time they are used and seen**
- **Water bottles do not perish and can be stored for future sales events**
- **Water bottles are continuous fundraising products that you can sell over and over at each event**
- **Water bottles are affordable**
- **Your group can buy just enough to get the fundraiser started, then reorder stock as needed**

Custom Printed Private Label Water Bottle Fundraising Options

There are other ways to fundraise with **bottled water** and still take advantage of these printed “in hand” marketing agents. Instead of buying printed water bottles, you can purchase bottles of drinking water in a variety of sizes complete with custom printed labels for your center. These are often available from bottled water suppliers like GlacierMountain for example in New Jersey. To save on shipping costs, find a local bottled water supplier. You can also order directly from Bottle Your Brand, which offers the option of buying the labels without the bottles. To cut costs even further, your center can buy bottled water in bulk from a local retailer and **print your own labels.**

The disadvantage to these options is that you will need a lot of space for product storage, product is heavy and unwieldy, and of course, you lose the advantage of promoting environmental friendliness. (Be sure to at least have a recycling bin ready for all the empty water bottles.) However, selling bottles of water at a sporting or outside event can be highly successful when you have a ready stock of thirsty buyers, and you still have that ever-important marketing angle regardless of the water bottle fundraising option you choose. Shop Branders.com for water or sports bottles.

Raise Funds With InsiderPages.com

This is a great fundraiser if you already have some volunteers ready to help your center, or you have a good size e-mail list. **There is no selling, no asking for donations, no minimums and no left-over candy bars with this fundraiser!**

About InsiderPages.com:

The website helps you find a local business based on recommendations of others in the area: “Insider Pages was created to help people find the best local businesses through recommendations from their friends and neighbors. At InsiderPages.com, people share reviews of local businesses and find great services they can trust.”

How the fundraiser works:

Since the website’s service is based on reviews of businesses, they’re always in need of more reviews in order to create a useful service for their website visitors. Writing reviews are how your center will earn money: Your center’s members and volunteers, and their friends, families, and supporters, write online reviews of local businesses they use, such as doctors, hairstylists, home contractors, mechanics, or local restaurants. For each review they write, **Insider Pages makes a donation to your organization of \$1.50 for the first review of any business and \$.50 for each follow-on review.**

Let’s say you get 50 people to each write 10 first reviews, that would earn \$750 for your group. The reviews on Insider Pages are pretty short, and writing 10 reviews wouldn’t take much time at all. According to Insider Pages, most people will write between 20 and 50 reviews for a fundraiser.

Note: Reviews of restaurant chains (McDonalds, Outback Steakhouse, KFC, etc.), gas station chains, movie theater chains and national or regional chain stores (Target, Dollar Tree, Home Depot etc.) **DO NOT** qualify; only truly local businesses.

The rules are pretty simple:

1. Participants have to be at least 18 years old.
2. Each fundraiser lasts three weeks.
3. You get a check in the mail for your group!

If you’re not familiar with the website, why not try it out and search for a business in your neighborhood and read the reviews.

To sign up, go to InsiderPages.com.

Low Cost And No Cost Marketing Tools For Your Fundraiser

An organization in need of funding via a fundraising campaign is not in a position to waste money marketing; yet, **effective marketing is fundamental to the success of fundraising**

campaigns. Fundraiser marketing is the only way to let volunteers, sellers, and customers know that you have a need and you have a way to fill it.

The good news is that fundraiser marketing can be done economically; there are many options for fundraiser marketing that an organization can design and implement on their own, and even more that are provided for little or no cost by companies and community organizations.

Community Press Coverage

Coverage by local media like newspapers and television stations (depending on the size or angle of your campaign) has the most wide-reaching, free impact.

One way to achieve this is to send local newspapers and television stations, including local-access cable channels, a press release that briefly explains the event. If space permits, most papers will happily include local fundraising events in their publication. Many will also include releases on their website.

Another way to gain local media coverage is to inform newspapers and TV stations of the event with a call or an email, and invite them to cover it. Photos and articles can greatly boost the bottom line of a fundraiser.

Community coverage should be extended to include any center or community newsletters that list local events; events should be submitted to online community websites and organization websites as well.

Websites

Designing a website, even a temporary one, for fundraising events creates a central informational resource for fundraising events that supporters and volunteers can access to learn more, donate, and volunteer. Advertising-supported websites are available free of charge, and sites without advertising can be had for less than \$10 a month. Be sure to collect e-mail addresses through your website! Assure your supporters that their e-mail addresses won't be shared with anyone and that you won't spam them.

Printables

Printing marketing materials is easy with a little help from a volunteer and a word processing program. Printed materials give clear and accurate information, and can be easily distributed. (Even though printed materials are relatively cheap, it still pays to be environmentally conscious and try to limit flyers, signs, etc.)

Some printables worth the small money and effort include:

- Flyers and posters
- Brochures
- Letters, mailings
- Marketing materials
- Order forms
- Business cards

Information for marketers and volunteers

Often, fundraising companies will provide these types of materials free of charge as part of a fundraising kit, or offer printable downloads from their website. Before putting great effort into designing printed fundraising materials, company offerings should be explored.

Printed fundraiser marketing materials can also be used to set up an information table during other group or community events to maximize outreach.

One of the most effective marketing tools costs nothing at all: **marketing by word-of-mouth** reaches supporters and volunteers at the heart of an organization's outreach; talking up the need and the fundraising plan shows supporters that members are committed to their center, and are an organization worth their financial support. With this and other low- and no-cost fundraiser marketing tools, any fundraising campaign, big or small, can reach their goals.

Online Fundraisers, Online Fundraising Tools

[Click4Funds](#) - A Funding & Communication Toolbar For Organizations To Connect With Supporters In A Non-Intrusive Way. Sign-up is free, it's easy to promote, and best of all, nothing has to be bought or sold. Sign up now for more information.

[iFundDrive.com](#) - We provide 100% free online fundraising for your cause. Sign up your center and invite your members to shop online at great retailers like: eBay, priceline.com, Best Buy, Target, and the list goes on. They shop and we donate to your cause. It's easy and 100% free to you and your members. Everyone should do their online shopping this way!

[FundGet](#) - Free Online Fundraising! Our popular digital products are a great way to increase your groups fundraising power. Just add our online fundraiser to your next fundraising campaign and watch your profits soar. With our program it's free and easy. Satisfaction is guaranteed 100%. Your personalized and secure online store fundraiser will be hosted on our site and will be available to your supporters' worldwide 24x7. Please stop by and check us out at FundGet.ca. You've got nothing to lose and everything to gain!

[Giveness.com](#) - A social forum shopping website dedicated to philanthropy. Enroll your organization and spread the word: Every person who shops through the site can automatically earn money for your cause. Members set up profiles and are able to communicate with other members.

[CMarket](#) - Organize online auctions for your group. Website and support.