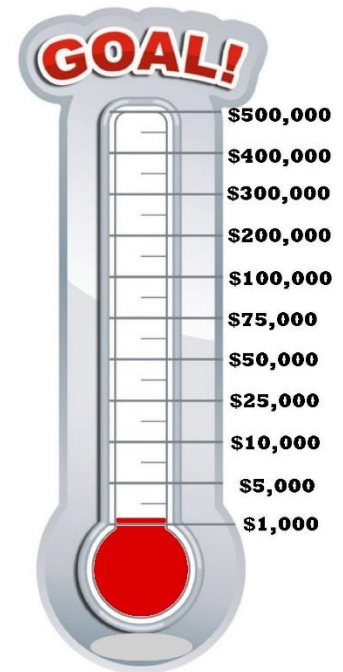


Fundraising Ideas:

Dining in the Dark:

This fundraiser would be a meal where attendees share a meal blindfolded. The meal is served with a powerful message, raising both funds and awareness of the experience of living with some form of blindness. For many attendees, it will be their first opportunity to experience a daily activity from the perspective of someone who is visually impaired. People anticipate based on sight. One of the biggest points of the event is to have people do a task that they take for granted. Following soup, a choice of chicken or vegetarian entrée and an educational speaker, diners tested their tasting skills with a surprise trio of mousses for dessert. The foods should be picked that would be easy to handle without sight. No baby carrots, joked one organizer. She had tried eating those at a similar Dining in the Dark event earlier in the year and found them very difficult. I was shocked at how challenging it was, she said. It was really satisfying when I finally got it. And I was really tuned in to how the others were doing around me. The dinner was a great opportunity to learn more about vision impairment. You realize that, for them, everything takes a little bit longer, whereas, I can eat in my car and on the go, said an organizer.

This would be an interesting fundraiser and could be educational as well. Additional elements could include raffle prizes and/or a silent auction.



Don't Come Event Fundraiser

A don't come fundraising event is a clever way of asking for donations in a novel and humorous manner. First things first! This event will never actually happen -- other than on paper. You send invitations to supporters - and potential supporters - for a spectacular event with scrumptious food, exciting entertainment, and a glamorous guest of honor. The sky's the limit since the event won't actually occur. Let your imagination run wild!

Why in the world would you do this? Because it's a good way to raise funds and have some fun at the same time -- something that's nearly impossible to do when trying to raise money. Your only costs are the printing of the invitations, thank you notes and postage. If you can get some of this donated, that's even better.

Send the invitations to as many people as you want - overcrowding will not be a problem. In addition to your regular supporters, be sure to include local political leaders, businessmen and media personnel. You should also send press releases to the media outlets in your area. They are always looking for humorous current event items. Make sure you include information on how someone can purchase a ticket.

Okay ... so why would anyone buy a ticket to a non-existent fundraising event? Because there are a lot of very busy people who are willing to support a good cause but don't have the time, energy, and/or interest to go to one more rubber-chicken dinner. Purchasing a ticket to a don't come event lets them support a worthy cause while relaxing at home. Plus, they will appreciate your ingenuity.

You should make your invitations classy - printed on good quality paper. After all, the invitation is all they will get for their ticket purchase. Make it just like an invitation to any formal affair. You can use a standard

good quality thank you card. Make sure that the invitations and thank you cards are hand addressed to make them more personal. Oh ... and since the recipient gets nothing for their ticket purchase, make sure you include a notice with their thank you card that their donation is fully tax deductible

Variations: Have a don't come fundraising sporting event where members of your group 'don't play' the Harlem Globetrotters, Green Bay Packers, etc.; a debate between someone in your organization and the President, or some other famous person on a 'nutty' topic; or? Be creative. Be humorous. Have fun. Make money!

Duck Race

Add an insured prize to your Duck Race promotion and not only sell more ducks, but quadruple your bottom line! Offer up to \$1,000,000 (If you can get insurance from a company like Odds On) if the preselected duck crosses the finish line first. Split the contest prize 50/50 with the duck owner and the charity.

Duck Race Contest Step by Step:

- (1)** Select your grand prize package, then advertise the chance to win big for supporting your cause!
- (2)** Participants go to designated locations and “adopt” ducks for making a donation. On race day, the numbered ducks are dropped onto a river to race downstream.
- (3)** If one of the ducks crossing the finish line first appears on a list of preselected list of lucky ducks, Odds On covers the cost of the prize!

Comedy Night

Everyone loves having a good laugh. Why not use a comedy night to bring some laughs to your community and some funds to your organization? Consider hosting a comedy night as your next fundraising event. They're no joke!

A comedy night can be hosted nearly anywhere from a pub or bar to a school auditorium. It all depends on your audience and the type of comedians you book. You can charge comedians a small fee to participate and also charge admission at the door. Additionally, attendees can vote with their dollars for their favorite jokester. As with any fundraising event, snacks are a must. Make sure you sell tasty concessions.

They say that laughter is the best medicine. And even if no one in your audience is sick, a comedy night can still be a great fundraising event. **Local comedians get to test out some of their material and get their names out there. Your audience members get to howl with laughter, and you generate revenue!** Comedy nights can take a lot of planning, but they can be extremely rewarding for every party involved. If you want, you could even make it an annual event!

How to Get Started:

*First, you'll need to put the word out that your nonprofit is looking for local comedians. Advertise online and offline. **You'll need to screen the comedians beforehand, especially if you're inviting children and families to the event. You wouldn't want to drive donors away with inappropriate joke material.** Make sure you also do a few run-throughs of the event. You want your comedy night to flow well and with as few hiccups and mistakes as possible (unless they're part of a joke!). Additionally, you'll need a way to accept payments for tickets and concessions.*

Bakeless Bake Sale Fundraiser

Send this letter to your members: You are invited to NOT bake a cake, pie, cookies, or brownies. You do NOT have to find the recipe. You do NOT have to shop for the ingredients. You do NOT have to mix. You do NOT have to cook. You do NOT have to cut. You do NOT have to wrap. You do NOT have to wash dishes. You do NOT have to clean up your kitchen. You do NOT have to deliver the baked product. You do NOT have to stand in the heat/cold/rain to sell the baked product. You can write a check for \$10.00 to "*name of organization*" and stay home and enjoy doing something yourself or with your family!

Worm Charming Fundraiser

Worm charming, worm grunting, and worm fiddling are methods of attracting earthworms from the ground. So, how do you raise funds with this? It is similar to a cow pie bingo fundraiser ... with a twist. Divide a field up into 3-yard by 3-yard squares. Sell the squares to individuals or teams. Purchasers can select a square or they can be assigned by a drawing. The individual/team that collects the most worms in a set period of time wins. You can increase your return with concession sales, worm charming kits for those who come unprepared, and souvenirs of the event ... photos, hats, t-shirts, etc.

Since many readers will think we are making this up, we have included pictures of actual events (not all of them are fundraisers). If you do an Internet search you will find many others plus some tips to conduct your own Worm Charming Fundraiser. Most festivals are in the UK but Sopchoppy, Florida holds an annual Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival and claims to be the "Worm Gruntin' Capital of the World". The event includes a ball and the crowning of a "Worm Gruntin' King and Queen".

Worms may not be dug from the ground. No drugs or water. No collecting outside your plot. Vibrations only can be used. Acceptable forms of charming include music, garden forks or pitchforks stuck into the ground and vibrated to encourage the worms to surface. Collected worms must be stored in containers provided by the fundraiser organizers. In the case of a tie, an additional time allocation can be made to determine the winner.

Treasure Hunt Fundraiser

To raise actual items for a local women's shelter several church groups were willing to canvas nearby neighborhoods on a "Treasure Hunt". They took in food, toiletries, clothing and monetary donations. One church had a contest between their groups to see who could obtain the most "stuff". Any items not needed for the shelter were passed on to other shelters or sold in a fundraising garage sale for the shelter. People were more willing to give items than money to these strangers at their doors, but all was needed for the shelter.