

# 99 Proven Nonprofit *Fundraising Ideas*

No Matter Your Time Frame or Budget



NonprofitLibrary

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Wild Apricot

A background image of several pink carnations with soft, ruffled petals. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting the delicate texture of the petals.

# Inside Look...

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**A**re you struggling to decide what to do for your next fundraiser? Do you have a high target to hit, and just aren't sure how to get there? Whether you're trying to raise funds for a nonprofit, club, or association, there's a lot of pressure riding on you to find the best idea and to raise enough money to keep your organization going.

To help you out, I've created this comprehensive eBook full of fundraising ideas that can suit any organization, no matter your type, time frame or budget.

These are all ideas I've heard of through working with thousands of other organizations over the years, proven to generate a positive return for your organization if they're properly coordinated.

## **IN THIS EBOOK, YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE:**

- 1. The cost** for each idea, with the lowest-cost fundraisers indicated by \$ going all the way to \$\$\$\$ for the highest-cost fundraisers.
- 2. The complexity** for each idea, which is rated on a scale of 1 to 4. 1 indicates an easy fundraiser that's quick to plan, and 4 indicates an event that takes a lot of coordination with different stakeholders to get up and running.
- 3. The expected return** for each idea, also indicated from \$ to \$\$\$\$.
- 4. Advice and practical tips** from a variety of fundraising experts throughout the eBook to inspire you along your fundraising journey.

Finally, I've sorted the ideas by type, so you can easily find the kind you're looking for. Dig in, and enjoy!

# 01.

## 25 Contest Fundraising Ideas



Who doesn't love a good contest? A little friendly competition is sure to get your supporters' hearts racing and get them riled up to support your cause.

### 1. HOCKEY PUCK SHOT

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

You could run this as a competition to hit a target from a set distance, or to score a set number of goals within a limited time. It can also be run with any other kind of sport, such as most baskets in basketball or the highest score in darts.

#### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

As long as you have a venue, you're good to go!

#### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime works, but consider doing it around the time of playoffs for your chosen sport so that people are extra riled up!

## 2. GRAPE CRUSHING COMPETITION

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 3
- Expected Return: \$\$

Two-person teams donate to have get a spot in this competition. The teams will compete against each other to see who can crush the most grapes. Crushing will take place in a half-barrel with points earned for the most creative stomping style. Heats take place hourly, and gold, silver, and bronze medals are given to winners of each heat. At the end of the day, a grand prize winner is chosen and awarded a trophy.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This is a tiring, messy activity — make sure registrants are prepared!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This fundraiser is best during harvest season, which varies depending on which hemisphere you live in.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

A winery near you might want the help or be willing to donate grapes.



## 3. FREE-THROW CHALLENGE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Put your skills to the test with a classic free-throw challenge. All you'll need is some basketballs and hoops, but you may want to make it more interesting by having music, food and other games available. Winner could be awarded a prize or a trophy — or just pure, unadulterated community bragging rights.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Make sure to coordinate a referee to monitor and declare a winner.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This event could work anytime, but might be nice to do at an outdoor court during a warm weather month.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

A local basketball team may let you host on their court in exchange for the support.



## 4. PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Invite people to pay a small fee to come carve a pumpkin and enter it into the competition. You could give them a limited time to challenge their skills, or take entries all day to encourage as many people as possible to take part. Set a selection of categories or awards for people to win, from Best Pumpkin Carved by a Child, to Scariest Pumpkin, or Most Original Design.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Make sure you have enough pumpkins, and that children have adequate supervision.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Before Halloween, of course!

## 5. BALLOON DART TOSS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Dart toss is a classic carnival game. Step it up by charging a small participation fee and offering a cool prize to the winners.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Be sure to keep general dart safety in mind and ensure children are supervised.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

During a larger event.

## 6. MILK JUG RING TOSS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

The milk jug ring toss is a classic carnival game. Paint your milk jugs with fancy colours to attract passers-by too!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Make sure you have enough rings in case a few get lost along the way.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

During a larger event.

## 7. SHARPSHOOTER

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Run a shooting contest with prizes for the competitors who hit the most targets.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Look into your areas' laws about the use of airguns before organizing or work with a local shooting range.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

If you're planning on hosting it outside, spring or summer would be best. If you're partnering with a shooting range, any time of year works.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Partner with a shooting range or set up a large field.

## 8. PIE IN THE FACE TOSS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Charge students or office workers a fee to toss a pie at the face of their teacher or boss. Kids will get a real kick out of this one! People are sure to build up an appetite watching all that delicious “pie” get throw around. For extra donations, have some real pies ready for sale too.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Instead of wasting money and bakers’ time by tossing actual pies, just use aluminum pie tins filled with whipped cream.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime, or if you’re part of a school, as an end-of-year celebration.

## 9. PAPER AIRPLANE TOSS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Section off part of your parking lot (or other open space) into squares. Put donated prizes into each area and sell registration forms that can be turned into paper airplanes. Participants can toss their paper airplanes to win the prizes. For those who want another go, they can keep buying more forms, and keep making more planes!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Just make sure you have a wide open space available and you’ve picked a day with great weather. No one wants a field full of soggy planes.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This event would work whenever the weather is nice.



## 10. BABY PHOTO CONTEST

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Have team members at your workplace display their baby pictures on a bristol board and ask fellow employees (and perhaps even customers if you work in a store or restaurant) to pay \$1 to vote for the cutest child. This is great for organizations who work with kids!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Remind everyone to bring in photos – it would be too bad if they forgot!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 11. BEDPAN WATER RACE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Have your employees or community members create teams and pay an admission fee. Each team will race around an obstacle course with a bedpan of water and the team with the most water still in the pan at the end wins a prize.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Just make sure you have a wide open space available and you've picked a day with great weather.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Do this in the spring or fall when people are ready to run outside.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

This event would be great to raise money for a local hospital or nursing facility.

## 12. BUCK-A-POUND CHALLENGE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Have members of your team join together for a weight loss challenge. Either have participants donate \$5 for every pound lost and \$10 for every pound gained in weekly weigh-ins, or find a sponsor to make a larger contribution (like \$20) for every pound lost.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

“Participants should have a place to weigh-in weekly. Alternatively, since some people find public

weigh-ins stressful, you could appoint one person who is not participating in the challenge to record and report weigh-in progress. Finding a health-focused sponsor could also make this a more lucrative challenge.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Capitalize on #newyear #newme energy and start the challenge January 1st.

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Reach out to local weight loss centers or gyms in your community that may be willing to support or sponsor your challenge.

## 13. PENNY WARS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Set up two teams with buckets, and challenge them to collect the most pennies. To sabotage the other team, they can encourage people to add other denominations to their bucket, which will count against their score. The team with the highest score wins, and your organization gets to keep the buckets of coins.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Set up a clear scoring system for how much each denomination is worth, and have a referee on hand to settle disputes.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 14. CUTEST PET CONTEST

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Everyone always thinks their own pet is the cutest, so why not give them a chance to show them off? Charge an entry fee for those participating, and you could also charge for tickets for those who just want to come by and watch some adorable animals.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Find an animal-friendly space, and perhaps a prize or rosettes for the winning pets. If getting animals to come to a particular space is too difficult, hold it online and have participants submit images of their pets instead!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 15. PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Invite the amateur and more skilled photographers in your networks to submit photos for a contest to take place during an event. Attendees can pay an entrance fee and then vote on their favorite piece. For a more low-impact version, hold it online and get users to submit using a hashtag!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Promote the contest well in advance so you get a lot of entries, and get permission from top entries to use them in your marketing materials.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Photography classes at a local college might be a good place to start promoting.

## 16. DIORAMA / CRAFT CONTEST

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

There are bound to be some creative members in your community, so give them a chance to show off their skills by advertising a diorama (or other craft) contest. Give participants a few weeks to prepare, and then have a day to show of their creations and judge the winner. You could charge for entries, and also a small entry fee for people wanting to come look at the finished results.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This is an activity that's great for kids, too... and if you make the theme of the contest something that relates back to your organization, you can potentially use the crafts created in publicity later.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This is a good one for fall or winter, when people are likely to spend more time at home doing crafts.

## 17. BEER PONG / QUARTERS TOURNAMENT

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Invite participants to unleash their inner frat bro with a friendly pong tournament. All you need is a large table, ping pong balls and plenty of those those famously red cups. You can charge a small participation fee and offer a cash prize. Tossing those balls will naturally make people want to toss back a few cold ones, so make sure to have some beer and snacks for sale as well!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Depending on your location, you may need an alcohol permit.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

It would be worth connecting with local Greek organizations to see if they would support and volunteer at your event. Not only would their presence add some authenticity to the vibe, but you'd be helping them score those necessary community service credits for graduation!



## 18. CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Cornhole is the perfect game for the no frills, no sweat summertime athlete. Determine the MVPs in your community with a laid-back tournament. You could charge a small entrance fee to the event with a cash or donated prize for the champion. Cornhole also just wouldn't make sense without a cold drink in your hand, so be sure to have lemonade and beers ready for sale!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Depending on your location and offerings, you may need an alcohol permit.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Cornhole screams summer!

## 19. DANCE-A-THON

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Participants collect donations from sponsors to take part in your dance-a-thon, with the last dancer standing (or anyone who makes it through the whole 24 hours) winning a prize. You'll need a large venue (maybe a school hall), refreshments, a team of volunteers, and maybe a DJ.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Because this is a long event, it takes several volunteers to keep it running smoothly, particularly since you'll need to ensure your dancers are sticking to the rules.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 20. HOME RUN DERBY

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Players are given a time limit to hit as many homeruns as possible. The players with the most can then be put head to head for a grand final. You can charge people to enter the competition, and offer a prize for the winning hitter.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Just make sure you have a wide open space available and you've picked a day with great weather.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Do this in the spring or fall when people are ready to relax outdoors.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Check with a baseball stadium near you, or even a local park, to see if you can book their space.

## 21. RUBBER DUCKY TOSS

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Find a wide open space and get hold of a vast amount of rubber ducks. You could either set up a target, and award a prize to the person who manages to throw a duck to land the closest, or give an award for the duck that is thrown the furthest. Use sticky labels on the bottom of each duck to assign them a number, and note down each contestant's name and contact details against the number of their duck.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Spring or summer, when participants will be happy to stand outside and chat as they throw ducks.

## 22. GUESS THE JELLYBEANS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

People can pay \$1 to guess how many jelly beans are in a large jar, but this baby shower classic can be taken up a notch by offering a cash or donated prize to the most astute guesser.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Keep this one running for a few weeks to get the most entries, or hold it during a larger event.

## 23. WACKY WAGERS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

People donate to see wacky fundraising incentives that volunteers set. For example, people might donate \$20 to see their boss dance through the centre of town in a tutu. This can be a fun way to bring your community together, and you can set competitions for who raises the most money with their incentive.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Take to social media to spread the word. This idea relies on people getting to hear about the hilarious incentives and be rewarded by seeing them fulfilled.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime!



## 24. BIRTHDAY POOL

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

If a member of your team is expecting, this contest builds on the excitement around a new baby whilst also raising money for your organization. Take bets on what date people think the baby will be born, with a cash prize for the winner. There are also websites where you can organize these contests, invite people to add their responses and calculate the winner - try babyhunch or Baby Bookie.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Make sure the future mother is comfortable with this activity.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime someone is expecting.

## 25. SANDCASTLE BUILDING COMPETITION

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Do you live near a beach? Prove that sandcastles aren't just for kids anymore. You could also have different categories, such as a separate section for kids and one for adults, or 'Most Creative'. You can also sell cheap refreshments like freezies and pop so your competitors don't overheat.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

If you live in a colder area, you could turn this into a snowman building contest instead! Or, for a winter twist, make it a gingerbread house contest, and sell the creations after for a sweet treat.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Summer, of course!

# 02.

## 5 Ongoing Fundraising Ideas

Some fundraising ideas can be run as campaigns all year round, or can be integrated into larger campaigns. Check them out below!

### 1. CAN BY THE REGISTER

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

The can is another classic. All you'll need is an engaging image that conveys a succinct message to catch customers' eyes at the checkout counter. People are actually more generous with their loose change than you'd think.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

You'll need to find a way to make your message stand out from the crowd.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime.

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Local grocery stores and small businesses are great places to ask about placing a can.

## 2. SPONSORSHIP CAMPAIGN

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 4
- Expected Return: \$\$-\$\$\$\$

Although this isn't strictly an event, building a sponsorship package to get businesses interested in any of your events is a key step when organizing any event. For more information, check out this guide on creating a sponsorship package.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Running a sponsorship drive can be complicated, but it's crucial to build support and recognition for all of your events, and to get recurring support.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Prepare a sponsorship package before organizing your event.

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Reach out to anyone that your organization thinks would be a good fit for a particular event or for your cause.

## 3. JUNK DONATIONS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Some items can't be resold, but can still bring a little profit in if you bring them to recyclers. Have community members drop off their used ink cartridges, dead electronic devices, scrap metal, and more, and you can then drop it off to get a few extra dollars.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

You'll have to drop off the items yourself, and promote this program well enough that your audience knows to bring stuff to you.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime.

## 4. GROCERY STORE REGISTERING

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$-\$\$\$

Some grocery stores will partner with you to give a percentage of sales back. It depends on the place whether or not your supporters have to register with them, or if they can simply give you a percentage, but it's worth looking into.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This can be a great way to get a boost with donations in the short

term, but it doesn't offer any opportunities for following up with the people who give.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Shoppers tend to spend more around holiday seasons, so try to negotiate a partnership around Christmas or Thanksgiving. That way, the percentage you receive is likely to be higher too.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

This might work better with larger grocery store chains who already have a giving program in place.



## 5. CAR DONATION PROGRAM

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Organizations such as Car Donation Wizard or v-Dac make it easy for your supporters or you to donate unwanted used cars in exchange for a donation. This could be run as an annual event, or could simply be a program that you publicize every so often to remind your donors that it's a possibility.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Most of these websites handle the donation for you, so once you've signed up with them they will arrange everything directly with the donor. Just be aware that the websites do take a cut out of the donation value, sometimes up to 50%.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

This can be run year round, with regular reminders to members so it's at the top of their minds when they're looking to upgrade their car.



# 03. 11 Fundraising Ideas For Kids

Although many of the ideas on this list can be adapted for kids, or are well-suited for organizations that focus on serving youth, here are a few that are specifically designed to appeal to a younger audience.

## 1. CARNATION SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Pre-sell single carnations for kids to bring home to parents or give to best friends and teachers on a special day.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Be sure to decide early whether you'll be purchasing carnations from a nursery or growing them yourself.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Carnations typically bloom in late spring.

## 2. LEGO NIGHT

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Charge a reasonable entrance fee and invite children of all ages to build their coolest creations in hopes of winning a prize. You could also sell baked goods and drinks at the event for a little extra revenue.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 3. BOX TOPS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

If you're looking to raise funds for your school, collecting box tops is an easy way to do it. All you have to do is get children to collect them once parents have collected the products, and then set up an account with Box Tops for Education to mail them in.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Checks are mailed to schools in April and December, so you can make a bigger push around those times.



## 4. PETTING ZOO

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Organize a petting zoo in your community by partnering with the SPCA or local farms.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Finding an appropriate location could be a challenge if you're in a city. A field, large garden or sports ground could work, but there is likely to be mud and straw to clear up afterwards.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Spring or summer is best for this outdoor event.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

As mentioned above, the SPCA or local farms are your best bet.

## 5. TEETER TOTTER MARATHON

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

This is a quick fundraiser that follows the idea of a dance marathon, but for kids. Get people to donate for each minute the child is on the seesaw (or the swings) and see how high they'll go!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Make sure you have a playground available to use, whether it's in your neighbourhood or at your school.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This could be a good end-of-the-school-year fundraiser, since it'll be nice outside.



## 6. BREAKFAST WITH A CHARACTER

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Host a breakfast with the Easter Bunny or another cartoon character. Attendees pay a fee and receive breakfast and a picture of themselves with the character.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Don't forget to secure some talented breakfast chefs for the day AND enough brave souls willing to don silly costumes. You can buy a quick photo printer, offer to send the pictures digitally to parents, or get a Polaroid to capture a more vintage feeling.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Consider which characters you want to introduce and schedule accordingly.

## 7. CANDY GRAMS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

During holidays such as Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, Halloween, and winter holidays, students can pay to send a note and candy to another student.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Make sure teachers and administrators are on board and let you know the best deliveries times that don't disturb instruction.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Holidays like Valentines Day, Christmas and graduation are great times to offer candy grams.

## 8. READ-A-THON

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

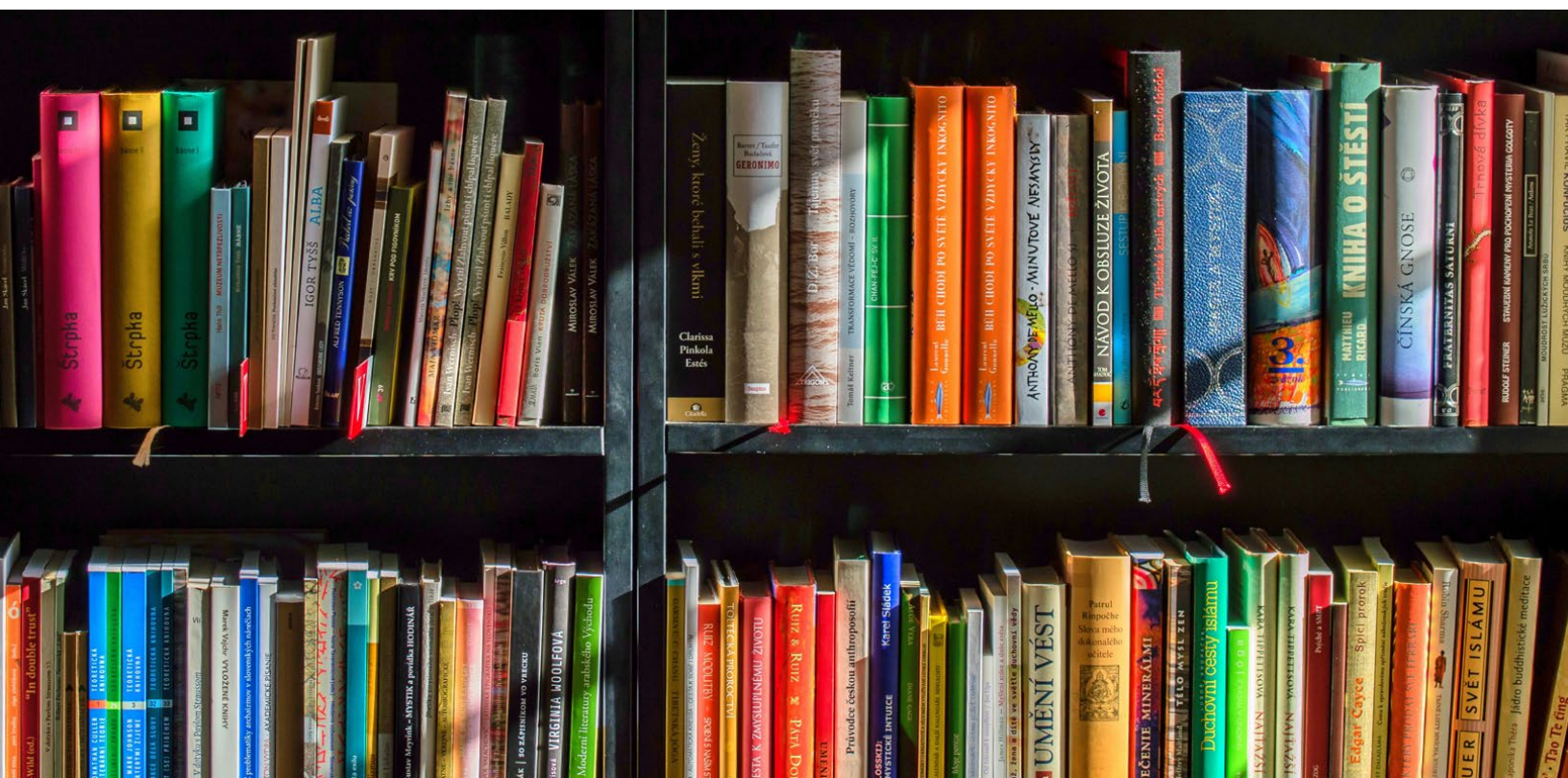
This is an easy way to get kiddos engaged in reading and introduce them to the idea of philanthropy. Children can ask friends and families to sponsor them for each book they read. There's little planning or management besides providing students with the initial pledge forms. You could also offer small prizes for the child in each category who reads the most books or collects the most donations.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

March 2nd is Read Across America Day. Depending on your location, there might be other days that are related to literacy that would be good to highlight.

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Reach out to organizations like Scholastic or First Book to see if they have any additional resources or programming to support your event.



## 9. SANTA

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Posing with Santa is a classic childhood activity. You can also sell photos with Santa for an extra small fee.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

You'll need to hold your photos somewhere that gets decent pedestrian traffic, as well as promoting it well beforehand (to compete with all the other Santas around!) Before Christmas, of course! Try to plan it for early December, before schedules are too hectic.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Consider partnering with your local mall Santa to get a part of the proceeds donated to your organization.

## 10. SLEEPOVER PARTY

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 3
- Expected Return: \$\$

Let parents have the night off! Rent a space, play movies, and organize games to keep kids busy until they fall asleep.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

The complexity of this event and the number of volunteers you'll need depends on the number of kids who sign up, since you'll need enough volunteers to manage them overnight (and enough activities to tire them out).

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Holding it over the summer is a good way to let parents have a break while kids aren't in school.

## 11. PAINTED LOLLIPOPS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Buy a box of inexpensive trinkets (and a few nice things) and another box of inexpensive lollipops. Paint or mark the ends of the lollipop sticks in different colors (blue for a trinket, red for a “grand prize), and stick them in a ball of floral foam to make

a lollipop bouquet. Sell each pop for \$1-2, and every kid wins a small prize in addition to their lollipop.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This wouldn't bring in many donations on its own, so it's worth adding it as an additional activity to a larger event you're running.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.



# 04.

## 6 Online Fundraising Ideas

If you're hoping to get more donations online, or want to set up a recurring campaign, here are a few fundraising ideas you can use.

### 1. TEXT-TO-GIVE

- Overhead Cost: \$-\$\$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$\$

Websites like Txt2Give and Snowball arrange the text service for you, so you just need to decide on a memorable word or phrase for people to donate, and then encourage them to start texting in. Each text they send will trigger a

donation, so it's an easy way to give that doesn't involve filling out forms.

#### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Remember to factor in the cost of your text to give service. Some charge a monthly fee, others charge a small amount per donation, and with some you can pay a one-off fee for an event.

#### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 2. FACEBOOK ADS

- Overhead Cost: \$-\$\$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$\$

You can use Facebook Ads to encourage people to donate, to direct them to your website, or to sign up for your event. These can cost as much or as little as your budget allows – the more money you put into the advert, the more people who will see it on their Facebook feed.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

If your target audience don't spend much time on Facebook, they probably won't come across your adverts, so it might not be worth putting much money into this project.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 3. CROWDFUNDING PAGE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$\$\$

Crowdfunding websites such as Kick-starter or Indiegogo are great for times when you have a project you're working towards. They're a simple way for people to donate online, to follow your progress and see how their money made a difference. Just set up your campaign and share the link on your website, social media and email.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

These websites work best when you provide regular updates for the people who have contributed, so factor in some time to keep everyone in the loop.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 4. SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

The Ice Bucket Challenge was just the beginning! Online challenges have become a big hit, inviting participation across all ages. People love posting and sharing funny videos, especially if there's an important message behind them.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Try to think of an engaging challenge that relates to your community or cause. The only real danger of a social

media challenge is that people post or repost a video and don't actually donate money (make sure you link directly to an online fundraising platform), but ultimately, it's still garnering attention for your cause!

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Make sure the challenge is directly linked to an online campaign so that people actually give and don't just post a cool video.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime.



## 5. SOCIAL MEDIA BLITZ

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Have a day where your social media is focused exclusively on one donation campaign. You can prepare video testimonials in advance to post that day, have a giveaway to drive interest, and do shoutouts to people who donate over the day.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Doing a full day of social media takes some planning. Ask for volunteers to help you film videos, take photos, write posts, and respond to comments throughout the day.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 6. AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$\$

If you can get your supporters to sign up for Amazon Smile, your organization will get 0,5% of each purchase they make. Although it's not a big amount, promoting it won't be a lot of work for your organization and even small amounts will eventually add up!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This fundraiser depends on your members. It's probably only worth setting up if you know that they're fairly tech savvy and shop online.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Because this only gathers a small percentage of each sale, this is a campaign that needs to be run year-round to see donations accumulate.



# 05.

## 11 Quick Fundraising Ideas

Don't have much time to raise donations? Try these quick fundraising ideas out for a little boost!

### 1. PHONE-A-THON

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$\$\$

This is less fun than many of the events listed here, but can still be effective. Grab your phone book, hand out a script, and get your volunteers calling!

#### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Some people don't like being called on the phone, so ensure the script you have prepared respects that.

#### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime.

## 2. DIRECT MAILING CAMPAIGN

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Even though most of us live on our smartphones these days, there's nothing like the feeling of getting a real letter in the mail. Impress potential donors with some personalized snail mail with an honest to goodness stamp on it. Knowing you'd spend 49 cents to share your cause with them just might make all the difference.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

You can't beat the thoughtful, quaint quality of snail mail, but it is undeniably more expensive and inconvenient than online communication. Ask volunteers to donate some time to stuff and seal envelopes to help the job go faster.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 3. DRESS DOWN DAY

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

When the laundry bin's full, most people would pay any amount of money to be able to throw on a comfy pair of jeans in the morning. Offer a dress down day for a small fee to benefit from your co-workers rough mornings!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This one takes practically zero planning and doesn't cost a dime. This can also be modified as a uniform-free day in a school setting.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Try to partner with local offices and expand the program past your own.

## 4. ENVELOPE AT A RESTAURANT

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$\$

Partner with a local restaurant to leave donation envelopes at their tables to get donors to leave a little extra change. This won't garner a ton of donations, but could still raise awareness for your cause (or for another fundraiser you're running).

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Create a nice design for your envelope and a sign that clearly explains why you're looking for donations, so that patrons will feel more inclined to support you.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Hold this anytime, or before running another event to raise awareness.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Local restaurants, particularly ones that you already have a connection with, are your best bet.

## 5. FAMILY TICKET FUNDRAISER

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Take the guesswork about what to do with the kids this weekend away from mom and dad. Sell family tickets to a fun-filled sporting event at a local stadium or field, and raise money through a small refreshment or merchandise sale as well.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Depending on the league, sports tickets can sell out fast. Make sure you plan this event well in advance!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

A local adult or kids sports league would probably love the support.

## 6. GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$-\$\$

Partner with a website that specializes in fundraising through gift cards, such as Fundscrip or FlipGive. Through the website, you can buy a supply of gift cards that you then sell on to your supporters at face value. Whenever they use their gift card to pay, your charity automatically receives a donation of up to 10% depending on the retailer, without the person using the card having to pay any extra.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Spreading the word is key here. Use peer-to-peer fundraising, and make sure those in your network are reaching out to their networks in return. Consider offering a prize to the volunteer who sells the most gift cards as a little incentive.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Holidays are great for gift cards. However, since they can be used for everyday expenses at grocery stores and restaurants too, they can work at any time of the year.



## 7. SHAVING TIME

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Get people to shave their hair for your cause, and others who aren't quite so brave can donate to support them. An added benefit to this event that you could also look into donating their hair if it's long enough.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This event will have to be well-publicized to raise enough funds.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Jump on the Movember bandwagon and run this event at the beginning of December. People sick of their partners' beards are sure to donate to see them shaved off!

## 8. MONEY ROLLS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Attach an empty coin roll to each team member's paycheck and ask everyone to fill them up then return them. The change can then be donated.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 9. BOTTLE AND CAN DRIVE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

An oldie but a goodie. Pick a central location like a school gymnasium or community center, and have people bring in their recyclables to exchange for money at collection site. It's a lot easier for people to just pop them in the bins right outside their door, so consider sweetening the pot by offering to pick up donations or awarding an award or prize to the person who donates the most.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Storing and transporting bags and bags of recycling isn't the easiest or most thrilling task. Get some awesome volunteers to help make this task fly by!

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime.

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

You could also partner with your local bottle redemption company to get the funds directly from them.



## 10. QUARTER MILE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Work together to collect enough quarters to stretch them a quarter mile through a store or parking lot. If you hit this goal, try for a mile!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Obviously, you'll need the space to stretch a quarter mile or more if you're lucky!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This is a great outdoor activity for any time the weather is nice.

## 11. GIFT WRAPPING FUNDRAISER

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Set up a gift-wrapping table in your office or in a mall and ask for a donation per package wrapped. Team members can donate extra wrapping paper they have at home to save on expenses.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

People expect their gifts to be well-wrapped, so confirm that your volunteers have at least the minimum wrapping skills before starting.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Grant some peace in the gift-buying rush by offering your services during the holidays.

# 06.

## 9 Raffle Fundraising Ideas

Running a raffle is a great way to add value to a larger event or to get donors excited. Check out our ideas below for a few variations on the theme.

### 1. LIMITED TICKET VEHICLE RAFFLE

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Secure a large prize at cost, and then sell a limited number of expensive raffle tickets so each buyer has fixed odds of winning!

#### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

To sell expensive \$100+ raffle tickets, you need the right type of donor. This means going to many events and selling tickets over a full season or year to make sure the raffle is sold out and cover costs. It might also not work with every audience.

#### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Anytime.



## 2. 50/50 RAFFLE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Host a raffle where the charity and the winner split the proceeds half and half. This one is especially easy because you don't have to get businesses to donate anything, you just have to collect money.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Dealing with a large amount of cash can be complicated. There may be rules against particular types of gaming involving money in your local area.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

During a sporting event or other larger event where participants are looking for fun ways to win prizes!

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

You need permission from the event host to ensure you can sell your 50/50 tickets as part of the larger event.

## 3. SPA DAY RAFFLE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Invite participants to enter a raffle (perhaps at another fundraising event) to win a relaxing day at the local spa. Often small businesses will donate these services for a good cause.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Getting free services is always a challenge, but work on selling your mission and vision in a compelling way to engage donors.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Services like spa days are particularly popular around holidays like Valentine's Day or Mother's Day, so you might want to try this if you're having another event around one of these occasions.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

You'll need a spa (or other service provider) to agree to partner with you.

## 4. VACATION RAFFLE

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Ask your board to donate airline and hotel points to put together a free trip, or just buy an affordable cruise or driving-distance hotel stay on sale and raffle it off!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Be sure to think through the logistics of securing the donation and coordinating the travel with the winner.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This type of raffle might be best held in the winter, when people are dying for a tropical vacation away.

## 5. WILLY WONKA GOLDEN TICKET

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Does your organization have a special connection to the Chocolate Factory? No need. Just find an incredible prize - a tour, a vacation, VIP seats at a concert - and sell small chocolate bars or candies with a prizewinning “golden ticket” hidden inside one.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

You need to sell and distribute the golden tickets strategically so people keep purchasing until all of the product is sold. Sell at a single event or pre-sell and do deliveries. You don't want the first box of chocolate to be the winner!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 6. HIDDEN DIAMOND

- Overhead Cost: \$\$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Partner with a local jeweler and either buy a precious jewel or have one donated. Then, purchase a bunch of cheap glass “jewels” in the same color and size, and pour them all into a bowl. For a bit of money, your guests can dip a pair of tweezers in the bowl and try to pull out the real gem (eyes closed, of course)!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

If you get good fakes, it will be difficult to tell when the real gem has

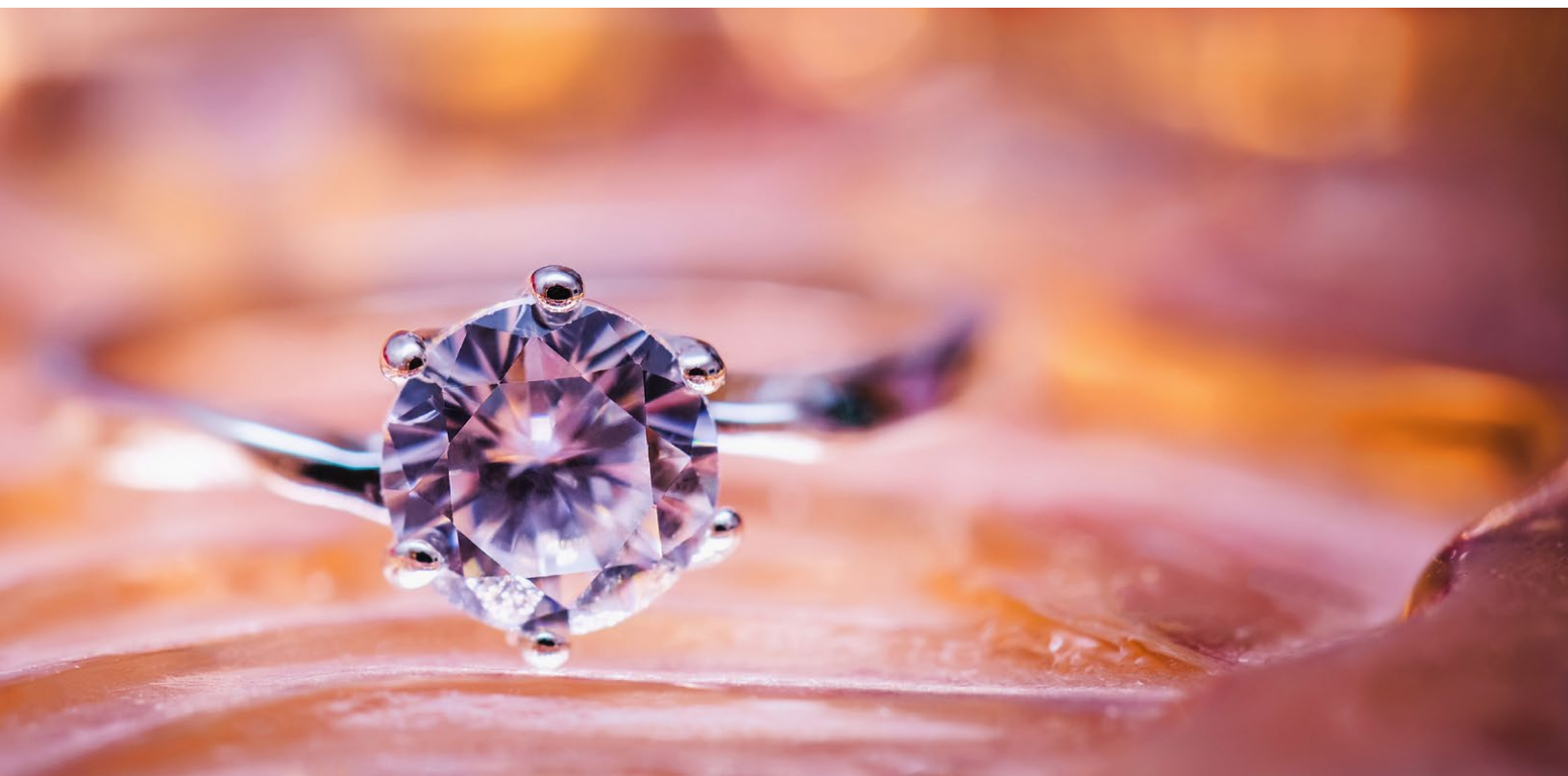
been selected. Be sure to communicate that people should take their choice to the sponsoring jeweler for verification. Try and kick off the event with pre-sales and a big “diamond picking” day so if the real gem is taken out early, you’ve still made good money.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Sell the jeweler on the idea by telling them you’ll send potential customers their way... and when the winner is found, be sure to make a big splash!



## 7. TREASURE CUPCAKES

- Overhead Cost: \$-\$\$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Boost your bake sale by hiding a special token or ticket inside of one particular baked good that will trigger a “grand prize”. You can go from \$1 cupcakes to \$5 cupcakes if that “grand prize goody” is enticing enough.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Choosing an appropriate “grand prize” might be a challenge. Try to keep it connected to your mission, or to something big happening locally that you know your audience will be interested in.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 8. DRIVE A LUXURY CAR

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Give people the chance to win a taste of the high life with a ride in a luxury vehicle. Ask your Mercedes, BMW, Lamborghini type friends if they’d be willing to donate their precious baby for a few hours for a good cause. This could be a raffle or auction prize.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Make sure everything is in order for insurance and safety, since these very expensive vehicles will be on loan!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 9. COWPIE BINGO

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

This is a favorite for the county fair and the rural community, and it might be time to bring it to the city too. Find an open grassy area and paint numbered squares on it. Get your local farmer to bring in one or two cows and some corral fencing (so much easier than you'd think, really). Sell the squares and whichever number lands a cowpie wins the 50/50 proceeds! Cows deliver pies 1-2 times per hour, so you can run this game all day with a well-fed bovine.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

If you know cows and farmers, then you'll understand the challenges and the simplicity of this fun game!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

When it's cool and comfortable for the cows – spring and fall are ideal.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

The space you use might have to be rented from a local park if you want to get additional pedestrian traffic.



# 07 17 Fundraising Sale Ideas

Capitalize on your audiences' shopping habits with the following fundraising ideas.

## 1. CHARITY CALENDARS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

There's just something great about a paper calendar that has pictures from your favorite charity. Whether it's cute puppies in need of a home or firefighters who need new uniforms, if you make sure the production value is high, people will want to have a copy.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Custom calendars are huge around the holidays, so get your order in early to ensure they arrive in time for holiday sales.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Shoot for the holidays so that your calendars are out before January 1st!

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Try to link up with a local photographer to take the calendar pictures and keep costs low.

## 2. SUCCULENT SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Succulents are easy to grow, affordable, and on trend! You can either sell the plants directly with a small markup, or have volunteers repot them into interesting objects (plastic dinosaurs or teacups are sure to be a hit) for added visual interest.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Be sure to decide early whether you'll be purchasing succulents from a nursery or growing them yourself.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Succulents look great all year round!

## 3. PRE-PACKAGED FOOD SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Head to your local wholesale store and pick up a car-load of packaged snacks. Local events, such as school events, sports matches, rallies, and markets, are a great place to set up your sale. The opportunities are endless!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Be aware of regulations around food sales in your area, and ask permission from the organizer if you plan to sell at an event. This can also work for packaged drinks such as Gatorade or water bottles.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Ask around to find events in your community at which you can participate.

## 4. RUBBER WRISTBAND SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

It's hard to believe, but rubber message bands are still very popular – kids in particular love to wear these. Think of a fun slogan or message for your cause and buy these in bulk. Selling them for even \$1 each can turn you a profit.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 5. SELL-A-TRINKET

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

This sale's effectiveness is twofold: you make money by selling the item and you get advertising by those people wearing it. Get a local artist to design it and you'll be promoting their work, too.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Decide whether to design an item and get it made professionally, or to ask your community to help make them. Friendship bracelets and pins can easily be homemade... but beware, it'll need to be nice enough that people will actually wear it!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Art schools in your area might be willing to help out for exposure.



## 6. T-SHIRT SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

The secrets to a successful shirt sale are: 1. Create a design people will actually want to wear on a regular basis, 2. Use the most comfortable and flattering shirts, and 3. Consider printing on demand. Doing this means that you don't have a huge outlay creating stock at the start, and everyone can get the exact size (and color) that suits them.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

While printing on demand does save you money, it also means that each shirt costs more to produce, and it also takes more time. If you're having a shirt sale event, you can rent a screen printing machine - all you need is your design and some volunteers to get everyone at the event exactly what they need.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 7. CHOCOLATE SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

A chocolate sale is one of the more straightforward approaches to charity fundraising. Just bulk buy chocolate, pick a busy location, and start selling!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Find a spot where there are plenty of people passing through, and not many stores to satisfy people's cravings. Schools, sports clubs and local events could all work well.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 8. MEMORY WALL

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Create a wall or other feature that includes memorial plaques. People can pay to have their loved one's name and dates engraved on a plaque, and perhaps include a message to them. This can be a wonderful way to show support for your community, and is ideal for charities supporting those affected by illness or bereavement.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

You'll need a wall or other appropriate space for the plaques. The overhead cost for this fundraiser could also be quite high, but it also has the chance to raise some positive press for your organization.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

If you're relating it back to your charity, try to time it appropriately (for example, Breast Cancer Awareness Month is in October).



## 9. GREETING CARDS

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Recruit some kids to design adorable holiday cards to sell individually or by the box. They can be easily copied and printed on high quality paper at FedEx. For an extra charge, offer to mail them out as well for complete holiday convenience.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This idea also works well if you're participating in a craft sale or have an office where people could drop by to buy them. Holiday season is the sweet spot for this fundraiser.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

You could partner with an art school or a local artist for more professional cards as well.

## 10. DEDICATED BOOKS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

A personalized book makes a great present. Collaborate with a well-known author who is willing to hand write dedications in their books and gather requests for the names and messages people would like for a small fee. This would particularly suit literacy or arts charities.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Figuring out the kind of book to sell will be the hardest part!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime, or connected to an event that relates back to the story you're sharing.

## 11. RECIPE BOOK

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Ask your community for family recipes, and compile them into a book that you can then sell at craft sales, farmers markets, and other events.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Producing a book can be expensive, so consider partnering with a sponsor to cover the cost of these in exchange for their name or advert appearing in it.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

This makes a great present, so make sure it's ready for Christmas.

## 12. COMMUNITY COUPON BOOK

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 3
- Expected Return: \$\$

Collaborating with local businesses to build coupon books is a great alternative to direct donation. Ask each business to offer a deal or two, and compile them into a book of 50-100 coupons to sell to community members at an event.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

This idea has two parts to organize – firstly, collaborating with businesses to get the deals and creating the coupon books, and secondly, organizing sales at various events or online.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 13. CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Buy a large number of Christmas trees in different sizes at wholesale prices, and set up your stand in a field or parking lot to sell them locally. You'll need volunteers to run the sales, and a tree netting machine.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Have a plan in place for any trees that don't get sold, and be prepared to clear up your space – Christmas tree needles get everywhere!

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Christmas, of course.

## 14. BUY-A-BRICK

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

This is a perfect project if your organization is building something new or making a commemorative wall. Ask community members to donate to have their name or message engraved on a brick and be part of the structure.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Get started whilst you're planning a new building project.

## 15. VIP PARKING SALE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

There's always a prime parking spot in a workplace or apartment building parking lot. Auction off exclusive parking rights to the spot for a year and see the donations come rolling in. You could even add a sign with the winner's name to make it officially theirs.

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Be sure to check with the building management first, and to let everyone else with access to the parking lot know that the spot is now out of bounds.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

January, so you can auction off the spot for a full year. You can also auction it off month by month.



## 16. “FAMOUS” PHOTOGRAPHERS PRINTS

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Find a well known photographer (or even a collection of people who are fairly well known locally) who is willing to let you use some of their images. You could use these to create products that are then sold at craft fairs or online.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Printing a calendar or book can be expensive, so shop around for a deal and promote them everywhere you can. Leftover stock can end up costing a lot!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Create cards for Christmas, or calendars for the new year.

## 17. FARMER’S MARKET BOOTH

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

This fundraising idea could combine a few of the other fundraisers we’ve listed. You could sell baked goods, calendars, crafts... anything that your volunteers or staff can make.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

For this idea, you need to have people who are willing to contribute goods they’ve made or bought to your stall, as well as people who are willing to run it.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Farmers’ markets typically run in the late spring or summer. However, you could also do this in the winter if you can find a Christmas fair or other craft sale nearby.

# 08.

## 15 Unique Fundraising Ideas

Looking for some fundraising inspiration that's a little out of the ordinary? The following ideas might help.

### 1. SINGING TELEGRAMS

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

This one is an old favourite. What better way is there to say “I love you”, “Happy birthday” or the occasional “I’m sorry” than with an unexpected singing message? Recruit the Frank Sinatras and Whitney Houston’s among your community to fulfill song requests around town.

#### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

Make sure your customers give a very specific “delivery” time. Unlike flowers or chocolates, the sweet gift of song can’t simply be left on the doorstep.

#### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

Singing telegrams are a delight all year long, but may be a particularly big hit around Valentine Day.



## 2. MEAL WITH A CELEBRITY

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Ask a local celeb (e.g. mayor, popular athlete, local artist or entrepreneur) to donate a few hours to have a meal with a raffle or auction winner. If you're lucky you may even be able to have the meal donated by a local restaurant in exchange for the visit from the celeb.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Reach out to the celebrity early to make sure they can fit you in their busy schedule.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 3. CHAUFFEUR FOR THE DAY

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Whether you want to finally be able to have that second glass of wine out at dinner or are just plain tired of having to drive your kids all around town, who wouldn't love have a personal chauffeur for the day? Ask volunteers to give up a few hours to drive around some lucky souls to wherever takes their fancy. This could also be a raffle or auction prize.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 4. HOUSE NUMBER PAINTING

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$

Offer to paint house numbers on the kerbs of your neighbourhood. All you'll need is black paint, reflective white paint, number stencils, and some volunteers.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Set aside several days to do this, as it will take a while to go around the houses and to paint each number, plus you might have to take a break on days when it's raining.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime that it's mostly dry.

## 5. YOGA WITH ANIMALS

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 3
- Expected Return: \$\$\$

Yoga with kittens and goats (to name only a few) is all the rage right now, so why not try it out yourself?

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

You'll have to find animals who are relaxed enough to do yoga with.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

This is the perfect event for an animal shelter or petting zoo to get involved with. You can also ask a yoga studio to donate their instructor's time for your event.

## 6. DUCT TAPE THE BOSS

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Charge students or office workers a small fee for a strip of duct tape to tape their leader to a wall. Kids will get a real kick out of this one! Make sure you've got some good quality tape and you're set.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

As long as you have a willing "tape-ee", you're good to go.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

## 7. EATING CHALLENGE

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

This event brings together two things people love: food and competition! You can host several competitions at the same time like "How many donuts in a minute?" alongside a 100 hotdog challenge! Ask local restaurants or bakeries if they'd be willing to donate the food used in the contests. They'll get some promotion, and you'll keep costs down.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Always ask about allergies and make sure all food is properly prepared. The last thing you want is to get anybody sick!

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Anytime.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Ask a local restaurant to partner with you.

## 8. COMMUNITY PASSPORT

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 3
- Expected Return: \$\$\$

Collaborating with local businesses to create a passport of special places and deals with the community is a great way to build buzz for them and fundraise for you. Ask each business to offer a deal to include in the passport and agree to “stamp” the page when the deal has been redeemed . You could sell the passports at a local community event and offer a prize to the first community member to stamp all their pages!

### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

To work well, there needs to be quite a few local businesses participating.

### THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:

This could work well outside of the busy season, when businesses will want to encourage more people to visit.

### SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

Any local businesses willing to donate to your cause.



## 9. RENT A YOUTH DAY

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Raising money for a school or youth focused activity? Ask parents and community members to volunteer their kids or students to volunteer to help with yard work, painting, cleaning, or other jobs needed.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Partnering with a school or youth group could help ensure you get enough volunteers to match with the requested jobs. It might also help keep them focused on the task if there's an adult supervising each activity.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

If you start planning at the beginning of the summer, this can be easier to be organized whilst they're still in school, and they could then begin the work just as they break for vacation.

## 10. TEACUP PIG TEA PARTY

- Overhead Cost: \$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Give people the chance to make friends with an adorable animal over high tea!

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

If you don't have any teacup pigs in the area, consider doing this with other unique animals like Sphynx cats or snakes... or just having a good old-fashioned tea party without the gimmick!

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

A pet breeder or SPCA in the area is a good bet!

## 11. KICK THE HABIT

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Get people to donate to kick a habit - it could be smoking, sugar, shopping - anything! Donate the money you're saving by cutting out this habit, or get other people to donate to sponsor you. This could work particularly well for organizations that have a link to a specific habit — for instance, a charity helping lung cancer patients could encourage people to give up smoking.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Tracking that people are actually doing what they say they are can be difficult.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

People are often more inclined to change their habits around the new year or during a religious observance such as Lent or Ramadan.

## 12. VIP TOURS

- Overhead Cost: \$-\$\$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Ask employees or local experts to offer VIP, behind the scenes tours of special community places like museums, government buildings, breweries, etc. This can also be offered as a raffle or auction prize.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

You'll need to get the okay from whichever organization owns the building that you plan to tour, and see if they have any specific rules to follow.

### **SPONSORING OR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:**

Any kind of building that you'd like to tour.

### 13. SKIP A MEAL

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$\$

Ask people to donate the money that would've been spent on a meal, or get sponsors to donate for the meal being skipped. This is a great way to raise awareness for hunger.

#### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Determine how you're going to track participation in advance.

#### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

During Lent or Ramadan, or other religious holidays that focus on abstinence, are great times for this fundraiser.

### 14. FLAMINGO A YARD

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 1
- Expected Return: \$

Grab 20-30 flamingos and plant them in someone's yard overnight. To have them removed, they'll pay to send them to someone else's house. This can work with gnomes, school mascots, forks – just be creative!

#### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

As always, consent is everything. Make sure community members know this fundraiser is happening so they know that they may get "flamingoed" and how to get them moved. Volunteers need to be considerate of the flowers and other decorations already in the yard.

#### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

You could do this seasonally – flamingoes for summer, and reindeer for winter.

## 15. NAME A MEAL

- Overhead Cost: \$
- Complexity to Plan: 2
- Expected Return: \$\$

Work with a local organization such as a restaurant, winery, or brewery, to name a new beer, meal or wine in your honour! Then, determine what percentage of sales from that item will be donated back to you. If you want inspiration, here's what the United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County did.

### **CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:**

Finding a company to partner with might take a while - if you have a

personal connection to anyone who owns a restaurant or brewery, that would be a great place to start. You'll also have to work closely with them to keep track of how much of your product is being sold - consider setting up a shared document they can update daily or weekly.

### **THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS:**

Keep the season in mind when you're choosing your food – partnering with a beer company would work well in the summer, whereas Thanksgiving and Christmas could be opportunities for seasonal products.





# Meet the Author

**T**atiana Morand is a Content Marketing and SEO Specialist at Wild Apricot, a leading provider of Membership Management Software. When she's not writing all the nonprofit content you need or researching the latest SEO tactics, Tatiana can be found traveling the world, petting every cat she sees, or working on her brunch blog at a local cafe.



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