

5 Smart Ways to Plan Successful (and Healthy) Fundraisers

Many school fundraisers have focused on less-than-healthy food items, such as gigantic candy bars and huge tins of sticky sweet popcorn. Here are five smarter ways to successfully raise funds and promote fit, healthy kids at the same time:

1. Plan an active fun(d)-a-thon.

There are variations on this theme to fit every school or group: Walk-a-thons, swim-a-thons, and bike-a-thons are a few of the more common ones. Pump up the music for even more fun with a dance-a-thon, jump-a-thon, or bowl-a-thon. Participants get pledges for time or distance (as well as strong and fit while preparing for the event).

2. Plan a community sports challenge.

There are dozens of variations here as well. The basic idea is to charge admission to a competition between unlikely groups. For example, high school girls' basketball team versus fire department members or a baseball game between high school boys and the school administration. The goals are fun, fitness, and funds raised from admissions.

3. Plan a farm-raiser.

Farm-raisers are programs that bring healthy foods to families, raise money for school groups, and support local agriculture - all at the same time. Farm-raisers come in many delicious varieties, including sales of individual products and holiday gift baskets. For info on a Made-in-Montana success story, visit www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/FTS.html.

4. Plan a local food or plant sale.

Interest in local food and grow-your-own gardening has never been higher. Producers and greenhouses are often willing to partner with schools on fundraisers to offer value-added foods or plants for home gardens. Plan a winter bake sale with tasty whole grain treats from local bakeries or a springtime plant, seed, and garden advice event.

5. Plan a healthy spirit fundraiser.

Put the FUN into healthy fundraising by combining school spirit with a commitment to wellness. Use your school logo and mascot to share the message that students are fit, healthy, and ready to succeed. Kick off sales of special spirit gear (water bottles, travel mugs, shirts, hats, buttons, etc.) with a family-fun carnival or walk-to-school event.