



## Successful Fundraising

With ever-tightening school budgets, fundraising has become a necessary part of student activity programs. Activity advisers and their student leaders have responded with a wide variety of creative and profitable ventures to raise money for their organizations.

Many groups have found that product sales often are a reliable way of raising funds and are usually not very complicated to organize.

In short, you select a product to sell, make or obtain it, take orders or sell it outright, collect the money, and deliver the product. Each step along the way requires careful record keeping and attention to detail, but many groups opt for product sales as a fairly quick and easy way to make money.

If your group is considering selling something as a fundraiser, consider these ideas, which have proven successful at other schools:

- **Candy Grams.** Prepare small cards on card stock (usually about ¼ of an 8 ½ x 11" page) with a design that goes

with the season or occasion and sell them for 25 cents. Buyers turn the completed cards back in to be delivered with candy to a designated recipient on a specified day and time. These are often effective around holidays or other big events such as



Homecoming. The names and candy can be varied to fit the theme: Ghost Grams for Halloween, Heart Grams for Valentine's Day, Turkey Grams for Thanksgiving,

- **Kiss a Friend Good-Bye Grams** for end of the year, and so forth.
- **Balloon Grams.** These work basically like candy grams, but helium-filled balloons are delivered instead of candy. They must be sold for a higher price to cover cost of materials and still make a profit. Be sure to follow safety rules with the helium tanks.
- **Flower Grams.** This is the same concept as candy and balloon grams, but with a twist. Sell different colors of

flowers to represent different messages. For example, a red carnation signifies "I love you," a pink carnation signifies "I like you," a white carnation is for friends, a peppermint carnation represents a secret admirer. A variation on this is to deliver the flowers but don't tell the recipient who it's from; if they want to know they pay a specified amount to find out. The buyer can keep his or her identity secret by paying an extra fee at the time of initial purchase.

- **Singing Telegrams.** Get together with your school chorus or recruit members of your organization who have good singing voices and sell singing telegrams for delivery to classrooms on Valentine's Day or birthdays.
- **T-shirt Sales.** Sell custom-designed shirts for special events at your school, such as a Homecoming shirt with this year's theme. Or, design a multipurpose spirit shirt that can be worn all year with each grade level having a designated color shirt and all shirts having the same design.
- **Photos.** Create a themed backdrop for photos and take

photos of students with their friends or a character such as the school mascot, Santa Claus, a famous person look-alike, or just a seasonal theme. Using digital cameras and photo printers the photos can be delivered almost instantly.

- **Parking Space Sale.** Reserve the best student parking spots and sell or auction them off at the beginning of each term.
- **GST Auction.** Hold a Goods, Services, or Talents auction in which parents, local businesses, faculty members, and others donate items for an auction. Get a professional auctioneer to conduct it or do it as a silent auction.
- **Pizza by the Slice.** Local

pizza places will often give schools a discount on pizza. If you have many students involved in sports or after-school activities, sell slices of pizza in the time between the end of school and the start of activities and sports practices.

- **Breakfast Sales.** Sell fruit, donuts, bagels, yogurt, juice, and milk before school.
- **Walking Bake Sale.** Have all members bring baked goods on a designated day. After school go around to businesses and residential neighborhoods and sell the goodies.
- **Pie Sale.** Prior to a holiday like Thanksgiving, work with a local bakery to sell pies for a percent of the profit. Take the

orders in advance and deliver the pies on the day before the holiday.

- **Submarine Sandwich Sale.** Before the Super Bowl, take orders for sub sandwiches and work with a local sub shop to have the sandwiches available for pick-up on the day of the game. Negotiate a discount with the sandwich shop so your group makes a profit on each sale.
- **Frozen Pizza or Cookie Dough Sales.** Work through a company that specializes in these items. Take orders and collect money up front, then deliver the pizzas or cookie dough the day the shipment is dropped off at school.

## Online Resources

An Internet search for “fundraising” or “school fundraising” turns up a plethora of sites, most of which are companies that offer products or services to help groups raise money. To save you some time, here are the best of the sites found in a recent search.

### Fundraising Ideas

Both the NASC and NHS Web sites feature a section with fundraising ideas from student councils and Honor Society chapters. Visit [www.nasc.us](http://www.nasc.us) and look under “Project Ideas: Fundraising” or [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) and look under “Idea Sharing: Fundraising.” The Michigan principals association also has a listing of ideas at [www.michiganprincipals.org/masc/fundraising.htm](http://www.michiganprincipals.org/masc/fundraising.htm).

### Fundraiser Help

This site covers all types of fundraisers and fundraising events, compares programs for effort and financial results, evaluates fundraiser companies, and has more than 1,000 pages of fundraising tips and ideas for fundraisers. [www.fundraiserhelp.com](http://www.fundraiserhelp.com)

### PTO Today

Aimed at educators and parents involved in PTOs, this site features an archive of articles on a wide variety of fundraising topics. [www.ptotoday.com/fundraising.html](http://www.ptotoday.com/fundraising.html)

## Association of Fund Raisers and Direct Sellers (AFRDS)

AFRDS is an international association of companies that manufacture, supply, and distribute products that are re-sold by not-for-profit organizations for fundraising purposes. Its members are dedicated to promoting professionalism and integrity in product fundraising. [www.afrds.org](http://www.afrds.org)

## Online Shopping Portals

Online fundraising is an opportunity for schools to make money from the shopping habits of their community members. Basically, an online fundraising company partners with merchants who already have e-commerce sites to create a “cybermall” whose main entrance, or portal, is through the fundraising company’s Web site. Shoppers can enter a variety of merchants from one central location, and the school receives a percentage—usually ranging from 6 to 25%—of the shopper’s purchase during that visit. Most companies send quarterly rebate checks to schools, although some send them more often. For more information, check out the following online fundraising companies:

[www.schoolpop.com](http://www.schoolpop.com)

[www.efundraising.com](http://www.efundraising.com)

[www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com)

[www.fundingfactory.com](http://www.fundingfactory.com)

[www.greatergood.com](http://www.greatergood.com)