



## THE FUNDRAISING TOOL BOX

### TOOLS FOR SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

#### WHERE TO START

1. Set your fundraising goal. It's a great idea to set your goal higher than the minimum amount. Some donors may donate on a percentage of your goal. If you set your goal higher than the minimum \$2400 (for example, \$4000), your minimum donations may increase from \$24 or \$25 to \$40 or \$50.
2. Start early. As soon as you register, use your excitement and enthusiasm to get started immediately. It takes time to motivate some donors, and waiting to start a month or two before your ride will not result a successful fundraising campaign.
3. Develop your list of potential donors. Don't be shy! Include everyone you know on your list. Create a list of contacts for those with email addresses and another list for those who may require a mailed letter. Be sure to include a donate by mail form in your letter (we'll have that available for download March 15). Get creative!
4. Create and customize your personal fundraising page. Use this page to share your personal story and engage your donors, with pictures and/or video. Include information about why this ride is so important to you. Keep your page updated with personal messages, your training progress and challenges. Thank those who have already helped out and challenge those who haven't yet but are still considering a donation.
5. Create a customized email. As above in #4, use this opportunity to personally engage donors. Be sure to include a link to your fundraising page.
6. Develop a strategic email plan. Calendar a date to send out your initial email announcing your participation in the California Dream Ride and to ask for their support. A second email should go out in two weeks thanking those who have donated and reminding those who have not yet that you are still seeking donations. Monthly emails should be sent to keep potential donors engaged in your progress. With one month to go, consider sending a weekly email. You may want to tailor your list into groups such as past donors, family members, cycling friends, business associates, etc.) and send a different message to each group.
7. Follow-up!!! Don't rely on emails alone to work your magic. Use every opportunity to interact with friends, family, neighbors, clients and other people in your life. Just because someone didn't donate the first time you asked doesn't mean that they will not donate. Persistence is your best weapon.

8. Use social media. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn are fantastic tools to reach out to potential donors. Keep people posted on your progress and training. You can easily share your fundraising page on Facebook or Twitter.
9. Refer to the extensive list below for fun and creative ideas to generate enthusiasm for both you and your potential donors.
10. Send personalized thank-you notes to your donors. Everyone wants to be appreciated, so be sure to thank **everyone** who donated to your fundraising efforts. Let them know the total you raised and how important their participation is to you. It's a great way to get donors to consider helping out next year.

## ↖ YOUR LIST

Make a list of the names of everyone you know and groups you're connected with. This list should include:

- ✓ Family members (parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, nieces and nephews, in-laws, godparents, and kids)
- ✓ Work associates (current and past)
- ✓ Friends from school (grade school, high school, college and trade school)
- ✓ Clubs
- ✓ Church members
- ✓ Health club, bike clubs and teams, spin class, yoga, etc.
- ✓ Parents' friends
- ✓ Parents of your kids' friends (don't forget soccer and Little League)
- ✓ Book club
- ✓ Community affiliations (chamber of commerce, gardening clubs)
- ✓ Doctor, veterinarian, chiropractor, dentist, hairdresser, accountant, mechanic, therapist
- ✓ Neighbors

Once you've created your list, separate it into those with and without email addresses. Gather mailing addresses for those without email addresses.

## ↖ REACHING OUT

Now that you have created your list of potential donors, it's time to think about your approach. Create fun, informative and engaging emails and snail mail letters tailored to your individual groups. For example, your appeal to people on your list of cycling friends may have a different tone than that sent to your list of family members or business associates.

Include information about what you're doing, why you're doing it, and how they can help.

Some key steps to consider in your approach:

1. Identify the need you are addressing. (Example – California has made great strides in creating a better environment for people who ride, but we have a long way to go to make it so that our streets are inviting to people who want to ride bikes, but don't feel safe on our streets.)

2. Tell why it is important to you. (Example – I ride my bike to work every day and it’s what keeps me in shape. I’m lucky that I have a great bike commute. My hope is that someday everyone in California will have a safe, fun route to ride a bicycle wherever they need to go.)

3. Share what you doing about it. (Example – I am riding with the California Bicycle Coalition’s “California Dream Ride,” a fundraising bike ride to support their Better Bikeways Campaign to make California’s streets better for bicycling.”)

4. Ask your donor to take a specific action. (Example – “Will you support me with a donation of \$50, \$100, or even \$250?” Or – “Will you support me with a pledge of 25-cents per mile?”) Asking for a specific amount produces better results than an open-ended question like “Will you consider making a donation?”

## ↪ **FUN AND CREATIVE IDEAS!**

1. Lead the way by making the first pledge.

2. Have a bake sale.

3. Hold a garage sale.

4. Ask friends and family to donate items for you to auction off on EBay or sell on Craigslist. Ask them to donate one item that they don’t want any longer but is of value to other people. Include kitchen equipment, designer clothes and shoes, sporting equipment, bike stuff, computer and technology related gadgets, and games. Check into EBay’s charitable section, which comes with lesser fees. This can be a great money-maker!

5. Ask your company to match the amount of pledges you receive through their Corporate Matching Gift program.

6. Ask a friend to get their company to match pledges.

7. Research local major corporations and inquire to them directly about sponsoring you completely.

8. Distribute “Extra Change” boxes to friends and family as a place to deposit their extra change at the end of the day.

9. Start your own “Extra Change” box.

10. Speak with your office coworkers. Get them to challenge each other to raise the highest amount. Give movie passes or a gift certificate to the winner.

11. Ask your local bartender to donate a portion of one night’s tips. Create a sign for the bartender to place on the bar stating “All tips collected this evening will go directly to \_\_\_\_\_, who is riding for better cycling in California”

12. Post a message on an internet chat room. It’s amazing how many people you don’t know are willing to help out.

13. Change your incoming message on your cell phone and home phone with a short message

telling them what you're doing and that you need their support.

14. Have a house party! Collect donations while you entertain. Consider a barbecue, cocktail hour, or a hoedown. (Be careful not spend more on the party than you take in.)

15. Ask your favorite restaurants(s) to place a money jar in a high traffic area (cash register, bar, reception).

16. Ask your favorite restaurants(s) to hold a fundraising dinner for you.

17. Have a car wash. Ask friends and family members to help out on a Saturday morning at conveniently located gas station or parking lot.

18. Hold a themed dinner party for 10 or more. Ask guests to donate \$50.00 each, spend no more than \$20 per person on food, and you'll have raised over \$300 by the end of the night. Think Mexican Fiesta!

19. Ask a local movie theater to donate several pairs of tickets. Sell or auction the tickets and use the money towards your pledge.

20. Host a movie night. Grab a great movie, some popcorn and drinks, and invite friends and family over for a minimum donation.

21. Ask a local theater or playhouse to donate tickets to a live performance and auction them off.

22. Consider asking for a Birthday Gift Pledge instead of a gift. It will make birthday gift-giving a lot easier on friends and family this year.

23. Ask a local artist to donate a piece of jewelry or art that you could auction off. Consider asking them to create an item in mass quantity that you could sell, donating a portion of the proceeds.

24. Ask your hairdresser to donate \$2 of every haircut done over a weekend.

25. Host a Fourth of July picnic for donations.

26. Have a mow-a-thon! Coordinate ahead of time with your neighbors and ask if you can mow their lawns for \$50. Offer to water, weed-whack, sweep, clean gutters and do minor repairs. A great way to get your kids involved!

27. Offer to be a personal assistant/errand person for a day for a larger donation, \$200 or more.

28. Utilize newsletters at your company office and intra-office mail to spread the word.

29. Offer to babysit for an evening, giving your friends the night off.

30. Offer to pet sit, charging usual kennel prices, and donate the funds.

31. Be a house-sitter for friends when they are away.

32. Can you carry a tune? Sing at a Karaoke bar for pledges!

33. Host a poker night, with the winnings going to your fund.
34. Collect used books from friends, family and neighbors, and have a book sale. Ask your local used book store for donations of overstocked items.
35. Put out a curse jar in your home and office, and collect a dollar for every violation.
36. Place a notice in your church bulletin about your intent to ride and fundraise for the California Dream Ride. Consider coordinating it with a bake sale, car wash, book sale or garage sale.
37. Offer to help busy parents with tutoring, carpooling or homework for a donation.
38. Ask your kids to come up with fundraising ideas. You'll be surprised at how creative they can be. Lemonade stand? Chores for elderly neighbors?
39. Have any friends who are musicians? Ask them to hold a benefit show and donate the proceeds to your fundraising.
40. Contact the national chapter of your sorority or fraternity and ask them to make a donation.
41. Contact your college or university and ask them to place an ad in the alumni newsletter asking for donations.
42. Be a masseuse for a day. Promote one particular day -- for every contribution of \$100, offer a massage to the donor.
43. Contact local pizza parlors and chain restaurants to learn about fundraising night opportunities.
44. Send a letter to your local Shriners, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, etc., to request their support.
45. Dress up like a clown, magician or super hero at a kid's party for a donation.
46. Contact your local Wal-Mart to inquire about their Sunshine Fund supporting individuals in the community.
47. Consider offering an incentive to all persons who donate, offering a special raffle item such as tickets to an event, a homemade item or housekeeping service, at the conclusion of your fundraising.
48. Start a cycle training group. Seek out friends who would like to join the group and ask a local coach to donate some time towards riding and training. Ask a local bike shop to demonstrate basics mechanics, flat repairs, etc. Charge individuals for the program and donate the money to your fundraising.
49. Use your skills to raise money by offering your services in exchange for a donation, rather than asking for money. Are you a hairdresser? Put a poster on your work station and ask clients if they would be willing to donate an additional \$5 or 10 to their service. Talk about your upcoming trip with enthusiasm!

Maybe you're a personal trainer. Start a six week program with the proceeds going towards your fundraising goal.

Teach piano, guitar or the trombone to a neighborhood child. (Okay, maybe forget about the trombone ☺)

50. Take inventory of the things you pay for every month. Consider your gym membership, hairdresser, car service, massages, bike store purchases, etc. Negotiate free service or a discount on the items in return for putting the money in your fundraising. Send a screen shot of the donation to the donor, and a thank-you note on Facebook and your fundraising page to acknowledge their donation. It's a great way to promote your favorite shops and service providers.

51. Are you good at asking for freebies? Spend some time asking for donation of products, then set up an auction at a local bar. Ask them to consider donating 50% of the profits of beer sales for a block of time. Invite everyone you know to the auction!

52. Ask a house party salesperson (Avon, Pampered Chef, Silpada, etc.) to donate a portion of the proceeds from a party you host, rather than taking the hostess gifts. Ask people who book parties through your party to do the same.

53. Use colored paper and envelopes to mail your potential sponsors. They'll definitely stand out and make an impression.

54. Make up some calling cards with all the important information (your name, the name of the event, your fundraising URL and your address and phone number) to hand out to everyone you meet.

55. Ask your doctor, chiropractor, therapist and dentist to consider donating the deductible for your office visits.

56. Ask your local gym to place a pledge jar at the front desk.