

Healthy School Fundraising Success Stories

Given the high rates of childhood obesity and children's poor diets, many schools are reconsidering whether selling low-nutrition foods is an appropriate way to raise money. Identifying and initiating new fundraising strategies can be a challenge. However, many practical and profitable healthy fundraising alternatives are available. Healthy fundraisers set a positive example and support 1) healthy eating and physical activity by children, 2) nutrition education, 3) parents' efforts to feed their children healthfully, and 4) the fundraising needs of schools. Below are examples of schools that have successfully implemented healthy fundraisers.

PJ Parade

Cherokee County Council PTA, GA

Fluffy slippers. Warm terry robes. Flannel pants and gowns. That was the acceptable dress in schools across Cherokee County on Wednesday, February 11, 2009. Students, faculty, and staff in public and private schools in the County participated in a "PJ Parade" sponsored by the Cherokee County Council PTA to benefit the Cherokee Family Violence Center and Cherokee County Children's Stabilization Center. For a dollar donation the students earned the right to wear their "comfy" PJ's to school. The event raised nearly \$8,500, proving that a little creativity goes a long way.

Visit www.cccpta.com for more information.



Turning Trash (Bags) into Treasure

Mill Creek Elementary School, Independence, MO

Cookie dough isn't the only product that can raise money. When Cheryl Meagher became president of the PTA, there were very few parents involved, so she needed to find a fundraiser that would be profitable and simple to organize. She found a company that sold different sizes of trash bags, and surprisingly, it was a huge success! The students took order forms home, and Cheryl organized and placed the orders. She had the bags delivered and set up in the school cafeteria, and the parents were told what day to come pick up their orders. The fundraiser raised \$2,000 and continued to be a success in the following years. Cheryl calls it her "one-woman" fundraiser because it was so simple that she was able to organize it by herself.

Contact: Cheryl Meagher, cherylmeagher@gmail.com

No-Bake Bakesale

Mount Airy – Parr's Ridge PTA, Mount Airy, MD

Let's face it. For many people, "school fundraising" is synonymous with "school bake sale." However, more and more schools and PTAs are reconsidering whether bake sales are an effective and appropriate way to fundraise. Mount Airy – Parr's Ridge PTA is one of them. In 2011, instead of asking parents to make, sell, or purchase unhealthy baked goods, the PTA decided to have a "No-Bake Bakesale." Using clever flyers, letters to parents, and an easy online donation portal, students and PTA members asked parents and community members to support the schools by simply donating the equivalent of what they might have spent buying or making baked goods (or how much they might have spent on another fundraiser). The fundraiser was a huge success, raising nearly \$35,000 for programs, supplies, and field trips at the school.

Contact: Twilla Zirkle, rossandtwilla@msn.com

Fruit Sale Success

Windsor High School, Windsor, CO

Every August, the Windsor High School After Prom Committee holds a fruit sale to raise money for the high school's after-prom party in the spring. While the fundraiser had always been a big hit in the community, 2012 was its biggest year yet. With the help of parent volunteers and members of the school's Future Farmers of America (FFA) club, the committee organized the sale of nearly 12 tons (960 boxes) of fruit, raising almost \$8,000. According to the fruit sales' chairwoman, the fruit sale is not only important from a fundraising perspective, but it also shows the community that Windsor High School is doing all it can to provide students with a safe, fun place to go after prom.

Visit www.whs.weldre4.k12.co.us for more information.



Cartridges for Kids

Houston Elementary School, Mineral Wells, TX

During the 2009-2010 school year, Houston Elementary School's theme was recycling. With a supportive campus, community, and PTO volunteers, librarian Beth Henderson was able to enlist more than 30 business sponsors to participate in the school's Cartridges for Kids fundraiser. She sent fliers home twice a year with each of the 600 students, put fliers in the Chamber of Commerce packets twice a year, handed out fliers at every school night event, and spoke to various clubs and organizations throughout the community. She also posted information about the program in the school's monthly parent newsletter, the At-a-Glance column, and letters to the editor. Houston Elementary School also participated in a recycling collection drive to increase donations. Students who participated in recycling events received "Houston Bucks," which they could use in the school store or use to purchase "rewards" (such as eating lunch with the principal). Throughout the course of the year, the school raised more than \$800 to support a paperback book program for the library.

Contact: cfkprogram@wm.com



Boosterthon Fun Run & Roll

Kincaid Elementary School, Marietta, GA

In 2008, members of the Kincaid Elementary School PTA partnered with the Boosterthon Fun Run Company to plan a school-wide "Fun Run & Roll." Because this was a new program, the PTA spent weeks publicizing the event through e-blasts, flyers, morning announcements, school and PTA newsletters, and telephone messages. They also held a kick-off party for teachers and organized a high-energy, interactive pep rally with the student body to explain the concept of the fun run. Each class kept track of new pledges, and the Boosterthon team awarded classes and students with the highest pledges. The Boosterthon Fun Run & Roll included every student at Kincaid, regardless of financial participation or physical abilities. Students ran, walked, or rolled for 30 minutes and averaged 25-35 laps per student. Parents were encouraged to watch the Fun Run and be "cheerleaders," and teachers and administrators counted off laps as students completed the course. The fundraiser received overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents, teachers, and administrators, and in the end, raised more than \$37,000 to fund PTA programs.

Contact: Patrick Bailey, PatrickB@funrun.com

5/10/15 Reading Challenge

Westwood Elementary School, Woodstock, IL

Tired of traditional sales-based fundraisers, the Westwood PTO decided to create their own. The "5/10/15 Reading Challenge" encouraged students to find five (5) people to pledge ten (10) dollars for the student to read fifteen (15) minutes per day for a week. A total of 158 students participated. As an incentive for participating, students were able to earn school spirit gear and gift certificates to the school store and local businesses. In addition, Principal Jared Skorburg promised students that for every \$2,000 dollars, he would spend one hour on the building roof reading aloud to students. At the end of the week, the students had raised more than \$7,600 for additional technology in classrooms, benches around the playground area, and funding for assemblies and field trips. In addition, Principal Skorburg spent an entire October morning reading to students from the roof.

Visit www.healthiergeneration.org/schoolsdisplay.aspx?id=5555 for more information.



Healthy Husky Campaign

Pleasant Hill Elementary School PTA, Leander, TX

The Pleasant Hill PTA used to look to outside organizations to help raise money for the needs of the school. However, in 2008, the PTA decided to try something new. They worked with the Fine Arts Department and decided on a Healthy Husky Campaign—a walk-a-thon to raise money for the school. Students gathered sponsorships and set goals for how many laps they thought they could walk in 30 minutes. Husky Spirit Wear items were awarded according to amounts raised, and extra prizes were awarded to the student and the class from each grade level that walked the most laps or raised the most money. On the day of the walk-a-thon, the Fine Arts teachers laid out a curvy course for the Huskies to follow. A balloon arch marked the start/finish line, and music played as students walked the course. Parents, teachers, and staff were invited to walk, and volunteers helped put dots on hands to mark laps completed. The Healthy Husky Campaign raised more than \$17,000, and in total, the PHE Huskies walked 1,111 miles.

Contact: Christine Jovanovic,
christine.jovanovic@gmail.com

Breakfast Cart

Williston Junior High School, Williston, ND

Once upon a time, students at Williston Junior High School could purchase candy bars and other sweets from the student council's "Candy Cart" every morning before class. But a group of parents and nutritionists sought change. They met with the student council and offered suggestions for healthier options. They also allowed the student council members to taste a variety of items, including "Grip n' Go" milks, 100% juices, and multigrain bars. The students decided to sell the healthy alternatives, and renamed their fundraiser the "breakfast cart." To increase sales of the new items, the parents provided stickers, flying discs, and pencils as promotional incentives. Sales at the new breakfast cart remained the same as previous sales with the candy cart, and students now have the opportunity to start the school day with more nutritious options.

Contact: Sue Grundstad, sgumdbn@yahoo.com

A Delicious Cup-a-Joe

Marion High School, Marion, SC

Hoping to find a unique school fundraiser for the holiday season, Marion High School Student Council Advisor Rita Lewis Smith found a company that offered gourmet coffee, tea, and gift sets. The fundraiser was timed so the items would arrive to serve as stocking stuffers for the holidays. The items were priced between \$12 and \$18 and included gourmet coffees, such as Cuckoo for Colombia, Jamaican Me Crazy, and Gotta Have my Cocoa Joe, as well as a variety of teas and some sugar-free items. Even under a restricted time frame, the student council raised nearly \$600. The fundraiser received great feedback from parents, teachers, and students, and the school plans to do the fundraiser again.

Contact: Rita Lewis Smith, rlsmith@marion1.k12.sc.us



Custom-Labeled Water Bottles

Licking Heights Local School District, OH

According to a Licking Heights district representative, "Being a small school district, I wasn't sure the small cost of Amanda Hills's custom-labeled water would be justified, until it became a great seller and a source of pride and school spirit! Everyone on the Amanda Hills staff is extremely helpful, delivery is always dependable, and the product is first-rate." Amanda Hills Spring Water Co. says that, while schools set their own price per bottle depending on quantities sold and demand in their particular market, most schools can generally see a return of 150%-250% or more on each bottle sold.

Contact: Dan Tamkin, art@amandahills.com

Fitness Fundraising Success in Brooklyn

Public School 269, Brooklyn, NY

In March 2010, P.S. 269 in Brooklyn, NY's "Little Haiti" neighborhood, partnered with the New York Road Runners youth fitness program, Mighty Milers, to raise money for the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. NYRR provided the school with the tools necessary to host the fundraiser, and students collected pledges based on their mileage goals. According to former school principal Phyllis Corbin, the Haitian relief effort was the perfect project for P.S. 269, as many students and staff lost parents, siblings, and grandparents in the earthquake. More than 400 students and community members participated in the quarter-mile charity run, and together they collected more than \$3,000 in donations. The event was so successful that the following year, the school held another fitness fundraiser and raised more than \$5,000 for the Wounded Warrior Project.

Contact: mightymilers@nyrr.org



Teacher Jog-A-Thon

Rogers Middle School PTA, Long Beach, CA

Instead of asking students to participate in a jog-a-thon, the Rogers Middle School PTA decided to recruit the school staff to commit to running in their place. Students were asked to "invest" in their teachers by sponsoring them. The teachers really went the extra mile and dressed up in simple to elaborate costumes. They stretched for a few minutes and "ran" for eight, so the whole activity only took 45 minutes to get everyone out to the field, introduce the runners, stretch, run, award prizes, and get the students back to their classes. Everyone had fun participating and watching, and students felt a sense of pride and respect for the staff and teachers. The event raised more than \$16,000 towards the purchase of classroom air conditioning units, chairs for the library, computer technology, student field trips, and basic classroom supplies and equipment.

Visit www.lbrogers.schoolloop.com for more information.