

THIRD-PARTY FUNDRAISING

Third-party fundraising is a way you can raise funds for a cause with very little work on your part. It is best suited for small congregations or those who have a predominately older membership unable to do the cooking, serving, selling and schlepping they used to do in their younger days, or congregations with very busy younger adults – especially those with families who are juggling multiple schedules.

Third-party fundraising means letting someone else do the work while you get a portion of the funds raised. It might mean a business provides a grant or donates an item for a silent auction. It might mean a restaurant provides a meal or a bakery provides the items you sell – or it might be a restaurant or business giving a portion of sales during a specified time. Check with businesses in your area – and don't be afraid to propose collaboration to a business that does not do it regularly. This is especially true for a vendor you use for church business.

Outreach Ministries or Children/Youth

Most businesses are not interested in supporting a church's operating budget. So if you are seeking funds from them, it is best to do so for an outreach project or for something that will benefit the larger community. A focus on children and youth is always good. But it can also be something for older adults, those in need, or even just the community at large. For example, you might raise funds to install wifi in your parish hall so it can be used by community groups, or to install or upgrade a playground or classrooms that are used by a preschool at your church or by neighborhood children, upgrade your organ or audio system so you can do a concert for senior citizens or start a choir school for disadvantaged youth, renovate physical space so you can convert it to community use, etc. You need to find a way to frame the project in a way that appeals to non-members – ask yourself: Why would someone who was not a member of our church want to support this project? What difference will it make?

One way you can benefit your church budget is to take all outreach monies out of the budget and then use your member's time and talents to generate funds for outreach work. That obviously benefits the operational budget but, more importantly, it connects your church with your community (and you'll have to explain this to your members – especially those who are passionate about outreach ministries).

The church used to be almost the only game in town when it came to doing good. No more. There are an endless number of nonprofits that do good and now businesses have discovered that they can generate good will by doing good. So we are not the primary provider of good works in our communities anymore. But we can give people an opportunity to make a difference by contributing to or buying something from a church that's raising money for a worthy cause. That's especially true for families with children and young adults who *want* to make a difference. And doing this shows them another face

of the church – one they are more likely to appreciate than the one they have in their minds!

So use this opportunity to connect with people who would not otherwise come to or connect with your church. Use this opportunity to share information about the outreach ministry you are supporting. And use this opportunity to build relationships with the people who come to your event or even just visit your website. Make sure you are “the Christ” to each person who buys or contributes or helps make a difference through your event or fundraising effort. In many ways, raising money is just an excuse for connecting people in need with people who want to make a difference. The church is there to help them do that “in Jesus’ name” – we are there point to God who is working in and through everyone involved in the event.

Just putting money in our church budget and quietly writing a check to various charities might make us feel good – but it doesn’t invite others into those ministries and it doesn’t give us an opportunity to connect with people outside of the church. The model of churches supporting charities or giving to those in need worked when most people belonged to a church. But today we need to find ways to make our outreach ministries visible. You do that by doing your fundraising and your activities publically – and intentionally invite the community to join you in doing good.

Getting Started

Start local – visit business owners in your area or vendors who provide your church or its members with goods and services. Reach out to those who already offer grants or work with nonprofits and start there. Then approach other business and ask if they will provide a similar donation or assistance.

Build a relationship. Meet with the manager or owner BEFORE you ask for anything specific. Explain what you plan to do and ask them what they offer or how they might help. Then ask them what you could do to support them and their business. For example, offer to put signage at the event crediting them for their donation or offer to have copies of their menu or a business card or brochure at the event for people to pick up.

Make it easy. Ask them what is easiest for them to do: give money, donate items, ask their staff to donate time, etc. Offer to pick up donated items; ask when it would be most convenient for them.

Start early. VERY early. Most businesses allocate an annual amount to donate and once that is gone, they say “no” until the next year. So January to March are the best months to ask – even if you are asking for your Christmas fair in November or December.

Start small. Ask for something modest. Demonstrate that you will be courteous, respectful and appreciative. WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE! Even if you’ve said “thank you” a dozen times, still send a written note. Say what their donation helped make possible. Include a

picture – e.g., showing the signage or someone picking up their brochure or, if relevant, a picture of those in need receiving the food or whatever you did for them.

You want to build a relationship with local businesses. So start small and earn the right to ask for more. At the same time, don't over-use any one donor. Establishing a routine makes it easier on everyone – so, the local bakeries know that you will be asking for donations to your May Breakfast or fall fundraiser every year.

The following pages are designed to give you some ideas. The “idea generators” are not comprehensive – ask your member to look them over and come up with their own ideas. And see which ideas generate the most interest and enthusiasm.

EXAMPLES

PERCENT OF SALE DONATION

Corner Bakery Café (locations in Warwick, Middletown and Cranston) will donate a percentage of sales during a given time period. Ask your parishioners to eat there and encourage them to invite family, friends and neighbors.

<http://www.cornerbakerycafe.com/> (NOTE: The Corner Bakery Café gives the diocese a discount on supplying box lunches for events – make sure they know you are part of the diocese when you ask for their contribution.)

Applebees does a flapjack fundraiser – you promote it, sell tickets and provide volunteers to greet, serve, etc. They provide the food (and cook it) and the restaurant. You pay them \$4/guest and keep the difference (charge \$12-\$15).

<http://www.flapjackfunds.com/program.php?id=2>. They have a great guide to setting this up: http://www.flapjackfunds.com/programdocs/18_1_Flapjack-Organization-Overview%201-27-14.pdf. Check to see if your local Applebees is willing to offer this option.

Not Your Average Joe's Kitchen and Bar (Warwick) gives 15% of one day a month's sales to a charity. Because they only do one day, it is best to partner with a charity so they can have a wider reach that day as both you and your charity will be promoting the day.

<http://www.notyouraveragejoes.com/giving-back/>

Pizza Uno does a state-wide Dough Ri\$ser fundraiser where they give up to 20% to a charity. Check to see if your local restaurant will give you a most modest % of sales if you do a fundraiser with them.

Angelo's (Atwell's Ave., Providence) will donate a percent of sales (business cards you give out to people will get you 5% of the bill when presented at the restaurant) as well as a \$10 gift certificate (good for a basket of goodies you sell) and proceeds from their toy train display (\$100-200). <http://www.angelosri.com/community/>.

Flatbread Pizza, Providence does a charity night every Tuesday night. They donate \$3.50 for each large pizza sold between 5 and 9 pm – so you want to get your family, friends and neighbors to have a pizza party that day. You have to book pretty far ahead so contact them early. <http://flatbreadpizza.com/donations/>. They also do food donations.

FOOD DONATIONS

Fast food and pizza restaurants, donut and coffee shops – many of them will donate food but it depends on the local franchisee. Ask. The worst they can do is say “no.”

Applebees, IHOP, Panera (and others) are all part of the Doherty Group – several of them provide food, donations, sponsorships, etc. <http://www.dohertyinc.com/>

- Panera Bread: <http://www.panerabreadhbg.com/donations-and-partnership-requests/>. Plan ahead (at least 2-3 months) and start small.
- Applebees (see above)
- IHOP focuses on a single charity one day a year (in RI it is Hasbro Hospital). However, the word on the street is that some local IHOPs will (or maybe used to) donate food or a share of sales – especially if you get people to come at a low sales time. Ask. The worst they can do is say “no.”

Dave’s Marketplace:

<http://www.davesmarketplace.com/pages/cfCommunitySupport.cfm>. Note that while they will not give to “religious programs” they do give to religious organizations so make clear that you are raising money for a charitable cause.

Eastside Market:

The Friendship Fund is a receipt/rebate program and is open to all non-profit groups. Participating groups encourage their members to collect Eastside Marketplace receipts. When those receipts are returned to Eastside Marketplace by the charitable organization or non-profit group, we make a donation equal to 1% of the total to that organization. <http://eastsidemarket.com/community/>

Whole Foods Market:

Each store donates food to area food banks and shelters. “Then several times a year, our stores hold community giving days (otherwise known as “5% Days”) where five percent of that day’s net sales are donated to a local nonprofit or educational organization. The groups that benefit from these 5% Days are as varied as the communities themselves. Last but not least, team members are constantly volunteering their time and expertise to an assortment of local non-profits.” <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/mission-values/caring-communities/community-giving>

SELL SOMEONE ELSE'S FOOD

You don't always have to do all of the work. Food is always a good fundraiser. And food makes almost any event better and you can increase your income by adding food to an event. So if you have a concert, offer pre-concert "heavy appetizers" and drinks for people who will use that for dinner. If you have a yard sale, include a bake sale. If your town has a festival or sidewalk sale days and you are located downtown, sell goodies to passers by. You can even provide lunch after church (some churches make a major portion of their income from lunch sales every week).

Pick-up Dinner: A perfect example is St. John's, Barrington's sale of lobster rolls: \$15 gets you a roll, chips and water. Order ahead or pick up between 5-7 pm on Fridays. Different church groups recruit a couple of people to take money and hand out the food. A local restaurant provides the food for c. \$10, St. John's sells it and collects c. \$5 per dinner....they sell about 80 a week (c. \$300-400 "profit") all summer long! And they generally sell out in about an hour. Visit your local restaurants to find out who is willing to work with you. It might not be lobster rolls, but it needs to be something that is popular – and it will work best if your church is located on a busy street with an easy way to drive in, pick up and leave without creating a traffic jam!

Bake Sale: No one said you have to bake it to sell it. Ask your local bakery to give you a wholesale rate for (or donate) baked goods and sell those items at your event.

Treats Sale: If your town has a festival or sidewalk sale day, check out what others are selling and figure out what's missing. Drinks, pretzels, popcorn, ice cream, etc. all are good sellers. And some of those items will be provided by local businesses at a wholesale price – or even donate some of them. Just make sure you aren't competing with someone who's trying to sell the same item a block away.

Dinner: See if a local restaurant will provide a meal at a discounted price – or even donate it. St. Mark's, Warwick had a parishioner who provided an Italian dinner. Parishioners just had to sell tickets, attend and enjoy. An unaffiliated restaurant probably won't be as generous, but even if they split the proceeds with you, it can be a good deal.

Pizza: Pizza restaurants are often willing to donate pizzas or offer you a two or even three-for-one sale. This can be an easy fundraiser – especially if you can tie it to an event where lots of people will be around at lunch or, preferably, dinnertime (people eat more, so spend more for dinner). Sell by the slice (makes more money) at the same price as the pizza shop and pocket the difference. Or sell whole pizzas using the same format as St. John's did for the Lobster Roll Dinner – make it a Friday Family Pizza Night and have people drive by to pick up their pizza between 5 and 7 pm. Ask a local vendor to donate sodas to sell at full price and you're all set.

SELL SOMEONE ELSE'S STUFF

There are a host of companies that offer things you can sell. Some of them are worthwhile; some of them are more work than you can earn or more beneficial for the company producing the product than for you! So do your homework.

If you have an annual event like a yard sale, silent auction, or fair look around the area and see what local producers are selling. Ask if they will donate or at least sell you their products at a reduced price. That way you support local businesses (and Rhode Island needs all the jobs and business we can generate). Aquidneck Honey in Middletown, Catanzaro Food Products in Pawtucket, Iggy's in Warwick, Peter Pots Pottery in West Kingston, Shore Soap in Newport or Stella Marie Soap in Warren, Jack's Snacks Dog Bakery in Cranston, Fair Lead Leashes and Collars, Island Mist Bath and Body on Block Island, Kenyon's Grist Mill in West Kingston, Autocrat or Dave's Coffee Syrup, Sauce by the Side in Exeter, Vega Foods in Cranston, Dotterer's Mustard in Newport and Casswell-Massey, America's oldest retailer are just a few local items you might consider.

SPONSORSHIPS

Local businesses may sponsor a sports team, a choir or a group building a Habitat for Humanity House. They will also sponsor an event or program – set sponsorship levels (e.g., Platinum, Gold, Silver, etc.) and list your sponsors in the bulletin/program you give attendees.

Select businesses that are aligned with your mission – or at least aren't at odds with it (e.g., a bar sponsor for a church event!). Approach each business with a sponsorship agreement and ask them FAR in advance. In some cases you may need to plan a year in advance, so don't wait until the last minute to ask. Be prepared to offer something in exchange for the sponsorship. Most businesses consider a sponsorship as a marketing expense so you need to give them an opportunity to market their goods and services (which is why you want to choose who you ask accordingly). Posting a sign, having your sports team wear T-shirts with the sponsor's logo on it, passing out a marketing brochure, letting them set up a table at your yard sale where they can talk to potential customers, etc. Whatever you can do to help them connect with new customers makes the sponsorship worthwhile.

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS

Consider submitting your solicitation to the Providence Journal (<http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20131218/NEWS/312189966>) or your local newspaper. Encourage local papers to do a similar list and include your solicitation. So if you have a food pantry, Thrift Shop or other entity that people can donate goods or money to, list it – ask for donations as well as tell people about when they can come to shop or pick up food.

If your town regulations permit a sign, consider posting an appropriate sign that tells people how to donate (e.g., “Donations to our Food Pantry can be left in the box to the left of the door”). Then put a larger sign next to the street: Food Donations Accepted.

GRANTS

The Diocese is assembling a Small Grants Team – a group of people who can help you find grants and apply for them. As the Center for Reconciliation staff research grants, they are funneling information about smaller grants to the Small Grants Team so, over time, we will have a list of grant sources available to congregations. Meanwhile, you can find grants simply by typing “rhode island grants for nonprofit organizations” into Google and following links to various companies to check their policies. Some will not give to a religious organization. If you are looking for an outreach grant, consider partnering with a local agency that provides that service and write a grant with them. This is also a good strategy for an Episcopal Charities grant. If you are looking for building grants and you have an historic building, check out groups like the Champlin Foundation or preservation foundations. Several of our churches have gotten grants from various agencies – check with your neighbors to see where they have been successful.

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