

Healthy Fundraising: How You Can Help

2020 FCE Leader Lesson

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Goal of Lesson:

- To inform members about using CVU hours to assist with fundraising efforts at local schools, service departments and community organizations
- To discuss reasons for healthy options for fundraising

Lesson:

Investing. Fundraising. Donations. Gifts. These are all words that come to mind when we look at ways to increase the financial pools that we can draw on for programming or causes. Many schools hold various fundraisers throughout the year to assist with sports teams, special programming, scholarships, introducing new programs, completing projects or maintaining overall excellence. In order to do this, schools and programs must have effective and feasible methods to raise necessary funds. Within Family and Community Education clubs, members are consistently seeking to serve their community and come alongside their teachers, fire, police, and EMS departments; as well as their church families. Fundraising is just one way to help support these organizations and be able to count the work you assist with your certified volunteer hours.

Unfortunately, a vast majority of fundraisers are geared towards unhealthy foods such as candy and snack sales, and unhealthy meal options. The good news is that many healthier fundraising options do exist! Here are some ideas for fundraising while promoting health at the same time:

- Farm to Table Fundraiser Dinner – Instead of hosting traditional spaghetti or BBQ dinners or pancake breakfasts, talk with local farmers and vendors to serving fresh/local foods. Alternatively, if you have incredibly successful spaghetti dinners – offer or serve spaghetti squash or whole grain pasta instead to increase the health benefits such as reduced carbs, reduced sugars while increasing energy, vitamins and nutrients. Also, add healthy sides such as fruits and vegetables to your meal in opposition to chips, cookies and potato or pasta salads.
- Produce or Plants Sale– Collaborate with a plant nursery, farmers or grocery stores to assist in selling produce or plants for a percentage of the profits. Other organizations sell seeds or have specific fundraising programs that you can share collaboration. Encouraging families to grow their own foods will make healthy choices more easily accessible, this is also a fantastic way to include everyday agriculture in your communities. Consider hosting a how-to-grow-your-own-foods demo or class, either in person or via video, to promote this event. Your local Extension office may be willing to assist with this. This would double as nutrition education as well for your children, community members and improve the lives of Tennesseans! Holidays are great for evergreen wreaths sales or specialty items for the holidays. Some other companies have specific school-targeted fundraiser packages that are not food related, these can be quick and easy fundraisers that keep your families healthier.
- A Day at the Park – Coordinate with your local city, county, or state park coordinators to use their parks and encourage exercise and healthy snacks by having a family fun day. Set up healthy snack stations (trail mix, granola, flavored water, baked chips, etc.) and

activity stations (hula-hoop contest, jump rope contest, tire run, etc.). Bring in additional vendors with activities and healthy programs. Sell various school spirit items, photo booth, meet-n-greets with elected officials, police officers, firefighters, paramedics, pastor and church staff etc. to assist with fundraising. Carnival games are always a big hit with families.

- Scavenger Hunt Challenge – Host a day, weekend, or weeklong scavenger hunt. Collaborate with the farmers market, grocery stores, library, churches, schools, parks and local businesses to hide healthy clues at their sites. Charge a fee to participate and then encourage families to get out, increase communication to decode clues and be the first to discover the hidden prize. Some award ideas could include a healthy prize like reusable water bottles, ticket(s) to a school game or state park pass for the winning family. Encourage social media interaction by having families take “healthy selfies” at each location to promote your cause. This is also a great way to advertise partners or collaborating organizations.
- Movie Night at the School/Church – Host a movie on the lawn during the summer in which families pay a small fee and have healthy snacks available in place of candy and buttery popcorn. Healthy snacks such as fruit, nuts, seeds, trail mix and low-fat popcorn are great alternatives.
- Cooking Show – Have a cooking competition between schools, churches, service members or organizations to see who can provide the healthiest and tastiest meal. Have participants pay a fee to join, sell tickets for others to attend a live cooking show. Prize money can be divided up from the money raised amongst the top three winning teams.

Have teams provide their own healthy groceries and recipe or get local businesses to sponsor the ingredients. Get local chefs to volunteer to judge and bring out the local media to record your event.

Be sure to check with your school supervisors, local departments, organizations, or church staff to understand any limitations or guidelines before scheduling fundraisers. When it comes to executing the event, remember that healthy people benefit the entire community. Demonstrate to families, children and your community why nutrition and health matters with consistent messaging at events and programs. Include information on nutrients, improved health and physical activity in school newsletters, classroom environment and extracurricular activities.

As FCE members, it is important to give back to our communities but to also share educational benefits with the people we are contacting. See what other healthy fundraising ideas your group may have – and then get started! What all can you raise this year?

References:

Healthy Fundraising: How to Fundraise While Promoting Health by: Sarah Ransom-University of Tennessee FCS Extension Agent <https://healthy-food-choices-in-schools.extension.org/healthy-fundraising-how-to-fundraise-while-promoting-health/>