



Fundraising Guide

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Vision of Fundraising

“Fundraising is...a way of announcing your vision, and inviting other people into your vision with the resources that are available to them. Fundraising is proclaiming what you believe in and proclaiming it in such a way that you offer the other person an opportunity to participate in your vision. “

-Henri Nouwen, *Spirituality of Fundraising*

Fundraising for an Amor trip can seem like a daunting task. The purpose of this guide is to hopefully make it less so, and to inspire you with a few ideas of things that have worked for other groups that have come on trips with us.

The easiest mistake to make in fundraising is to focus on the what instead of the why. Giving people the vision of why you want to raise these funds and what you are going to do with them is far more important than putting together the perfect event.

By inviting people to contribute towards the vision of your trip, you are giving them an opportunity to partner with you. People who may be unable to participate personally can still be involved in your trip. Invite people to pray along with you about the various stages in your preparations, the trip itself, and processing what you learned after the trip.

Most importantly, follow through after the trip to share the experience. Whether you make a video, keep a blog of the trip, or just take your supporters out for coffee, the most important part of the fundraising process is to follow up. Whether you focus on the family you built alongside, or the life change of the participants who went to serve, your supporters will want to know what happened.

Fundraising Methods

For basic fundraising, there are two main options; **write letters** to ask people to support the trip and to **hold an event**. Both of these things can be expanded by social media.

Letter Writing

Writing letters is the simplest option and often the most effective. People in general are generous and are willing to support a good cause as long as you can effectively share why it is important. If you are raising funds as a group, each person who is going on the trip should reach out to people they know individually. Reaching out to people who are already involved in your life gives you a chance to deepen the relationship by sharing the heart behind why you want to do this trip.

A good fundraising letter includes at least three elements. First, thank them for the ways they are already involved in your life. Always thank people for their past involvement before asking for something new. This part of your letter should be personalized to each recipient. Secondly, paint the vision for what you are asking for. Be as specific as you can about what you hope the trip to be and the impact you are hoping to see. Tell your supporters about how you plan to make that impact happen. Thirdly, make it easy for people to contribute if they choose to. If you are using a website then make the link obvious or if you are asking people to write a check then include a return envelope.

Fundraising Events

Putting on a fundraising event is usually more work but can be a fun way to get a larger group of people involved in supporting your trip. Remember that anything you spend to put the event together gets deducted from the proceeds, so simple is often better. A good place to start before planning an event is to have a brainstorming session. Get your group together and write down every idea you come up with. Then look at your list and fine tune it taking into consideration your resources, space, talent, and community. You will be surprised with the results and may come away with several fundraising events.

Amor is happy to create a fundraising page to help you collect the funds for your trip. We will set up a page within the Amor website where you can direct supporters to give directly towards your trip. Once your Amor trip is registered, talk to your Amor Trip Coordinator about what you need in order to set this up.

Alternatively, websites like GoFundMe or Crowd Rise can be helpful if you want to be able to accept credit card donations without going through the Amor website. Whichever platform you choose, the key to success is telling your story well and making sure that each member of the group promotes the page to their social network.

Below are a few event ideas to get you started. The success of your event hinges on the team getting behind it and promoting it. So pick something fun and run with it!

Event Ideas

Host a Dinner

Host a dinner and sell tickets ahead of time. Have volunteer cooks assist with the preparation of the meal. Use the evening as a time to tell people about the vision of the trip.

Odd Jobs

Have participants offer to do odd jobs to family and friends. Depending on where you are located, spring clean up, fall leaf raking or winter snow shoveling can be good times of the year to target. You can even have participants offer up a special skill they possess. Ask people to make a donation for the odd job that was done.

Shareholders

Supporters and friends can buy a "share" in the trip. Provide "stock" certificates of their importance to the trip and be sure to share the experience with them after the group returns home.

Bake Sales and Car Washes

Be creative and add a new angle by having a "sugarless bake sale" or a "chocolate-lovers bake sale". For a car wash fundraiser, add a twist like a "car wash and wax" while people pay to hit leaders of the group with water balloons or whipped cream. The most successful car washes are FREE with the group asking for a donation for each car washed.

Yard Sale

Collect item donations from others such as clothing, furniture, car parts, appliances, etc. for a profitable yard sale. Be sure to promote the cause while doing so for additional exposure.

Aluminum Can Collection

Set aside a central location or a private garage to collect aluminum cans for redemption at the local recycling center.

Piggy Bank Collection

Give people a small piggy bank shaped like a house to fill with change. Set a date for collection to return to you then announce the total raised.

Trivia Night

Collect donations for prizes, like movie tickets, things for a gift basket, babysitting, etc. Then host a trivia night charging admission for each player. Use the donated prizes for winners. You can sell refreshments and homemade baked goods as well.

Dinner and a Movie

Host a spaghetti dinner and movie night, charging admission. Also, hosting a concession stand for treats during the movie. Have some trip participants volunteer to babysit for families that may need a date night!

Carnival

Set up games: bean bag toss, water dunk tank, dart at balloons, face painting, etc. Sell hotdogs, chips, and drinks. Have a raffle. Have some trip participants share about why they are going on the trip.

Walk-a-thon

Choose a date and a route, make up some pledge forms, and advertise with posters. Have participants gather donations or pledges.

Battle of the Bands/Concert

Gather some bands from your community. Book a venue and advertise with posters, and social media. Hold a concert in which the audience chooses the winning band. Or ask bands to donate their time by performing a benefit concert for your cause. Charge admission for the event.

Craft Sale

Have local crafters pay for booth space to sell their crafts. Have a small entrance fee for shoppers. Sell donated desserts and drinks.

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament

Organize a basketball (or any other sport) tournament with the winning team receiving a donated prize. Charge each team a base fee or charge a small admission to the event.

Restaurant Night

Many restaurants will donate a portion of proceeds towards a cause. Search online for restaurants in your area that offer this, get in touch with a store manager, and apply. Once it's approved, promote with posters and social media. Have all participants share with their social circle to get as many people to show up as possible.

Social Media

Social media can be used to enhance any other type of fundraising that you do. It can be used to raise money on its own and it's usually free to use! Here are a few ways to use social media to help you raise money and awareness for your Amor trip.

Start a Blog

Have your group write blog posts about why they want to go on a trip and what they will be doing when they get there. If your cell phone data allows, you can write the blogs on your trip to keep supporters updated. This can help people feel more involved as they watch your group journey through preparation, the trip itself, and then afterwards. It can also be a great tool to help participants express their emotions and thoughts as they debrief their trip.

Awareness

Have your group change their profile pictures on social media profiles to a logo or image representing Amor or your trip to raise awareness for the trip. The image could link to a webpage with more information about the trip or even a donation website.

Hashtag

Create a simple and unique hashtag for your group's trip. Then have participants and supporters use the hashtag when they share an image or status update that includes anything regarding the trip. This is an easy way for supporters, friends, and family to see what is happening before, during and after your trip. It's also a great way to keep track of all the memories!

Spread the Word about Events

Anytime you have a fundraising event, encourage your group to use all of their social media outlets to spread the word about the event. This can help reach a broader audience and could help increase attendance.