

3. UNIT ACTIVITIES

3.10 FUNDRAISING

There are four primary sources of funds available to your unit. They are: refunds,* grants, fundraising projects, and donations or endowments. Which way is best for you? Only you, your executive board, and your general membership can answer that question, but before you tackle it, first answer these questions:

- What will we do with the money raised?
- How much money do we need?

Once you have a good idea of where the unit is going and what it is planning to do in the forthcoming year, you'll have a good idea of what it will cost.

Guidelines for fundraising include:

- Make the purpose for fundraising meaningful to members and others...explain why you are raising funds and publicize your efforts to the public.
- Directly relate the use of the funds raised to children with exceptionalities, if possible.
- Be sure you have support for the project, not only verbally but with an active group of volunteers.
- Do extensive preplanning to take care of the unexpected.
- Move slowly, especially if this is your unit's first try at something like this. Try a few smaller fundraising events before a large one.
- Plan for fundraising events just as your unit plans annual professional programs—not too many and well-spaced.
- Know what other groups are using as fundraising activities and try not to compete.
- Be creative. The public has seen a lot of fundraisers and you want to catch their attention as well as their support.
- Carefully spend money to make money. Advertising your fundraiser could double or triple your results.
- Contact service organizations in your community. Clubs such as the Junior League, Elks, Rotary, Civitans, Lions and Jaycees are willing to sponsor or conduct an activity and donate the money to a worthy cause (CEC). Other times these organizations are looking for worthwhile activities to support. Convince them that your CEC unit is worthwhile.
- Contact commercial businesses and industrial firms in your community. Donations of money or materials to a worthy organization is good public relations. When these donations are made, be sure that the business gets the good public relations and publicity it's expecting.
- Think big. One activity that makes \$1,000 is easier to manage than 10 bake sales.
- Remember: Fundraising can be successful when it's quick and easy.
- Use your fundraising activities as public awareness activities. Make sure all publicity for your events and everything you sell has "CEC" on it. Make sure everyone who makes a purchase or a donation knows what the Council for Exceptional Children is and what it stands by including a summary sheet of your unit's activities.

*The rebate check for all members in the state/province is mailed directly to the state/provincial unit. Distribution of refund monies to chapters is determined by the state/provincial unit. Divisions and subdivisions do not receive refunds from CEC Headquarters.

Special Events

Special events are an excellent way to make money,* advertise an organization, and attract new members while providing fun for everyone. Here are some ideas:

- Publications: cookbooks, how-to books, resource directories
- Sales: garage sale, flea market, bake sale, arts and crafts show, book sale
- Auctions: goods, services
- Shows: fashion show, talent show, antique show, car show
- Services: catering, car wash, odd jobs, recycle cans, parents-night-out (childcare)
- Marathons: walk-a-thon, swim-a-thon, bike-a-thon, rocking chair-a-thon
- Sports Events: games, tournaments, lessons
- Eating Events: pancake breakfast, spaghetti supper, box lunches, potluck dinner
- Social Events: dance, concert, casino night
- Professional Development Activities: seminars, workshops, conferences

Other fundraising activities to keep in mind:

- Sell coffee, popcorn, tea, fruit, baked goods, pizza, nachos, etc.
- Sell tote bags, holiday items, plants, jewelry, T-shirts, visors, etc.
- Sell buttons. Make your own! Easy to assemble, and cheap too!
- Sell carnations or roses for Valentine's Day or Mother's Day.
- Sponsor a member get-together to make creative crafts to sell.
- Hold any type of drawing or raffle.
- Sponsor public interest activities such as a race, bingo, Las Vegas night, carnival, etc.
- Sponsor a night at your local playhouse or theater. Contact the playhouse or theater for special package group rates. Purchase tickets and resell them for a profit.
- Have a combined fundraiser with another nearby CEC unit, if possible.
- Sponsor a midnight bowling tournament.
- Sponsor a basketball game against a local radio station.
- Work with a local miniature golf course to sponsor a miniature golf tournament.
- Hold a celebrity lock-up. Individuals from your school or other local officials or celebrities are jailed and must make "bail" to be released. Or, have individuals pay to have someone "arrested."
- Copy "public domain" computer software programs to sell. (This is a good idea for an activity to conduct at conferences where there are plenty of computers to use.)
- Have a photo contest. All entries pay a nominal fee to be entered, and offer ribbons or small prizes for the "winning" entries in various categories (most artistic, cutest children, funniest pets, best photo of local landmark, most colorful, etc.). Have a group of three or four persons to judge the photos.
- Sell cookbooks of your members' best recipes (and illustrated by children!).
- Produce a desk or wall calendar with quotes about and/or pictures of children. Include school holidays, workdays, etc.
- Produce a handbook of ideas and activities for teachers.
- Sell greeting cards or stationery featuring children's art. Sponsor a contest for children's art and use the winning entries into cards or stationery. Be sure to award all the children who participated with a "thank you" certificate for their entry.

*Be sure any necessary permits have been obtained before the event.