

Variety of Illinois

Kid's Care Guide

Bagger for a Day:

Sometimes it seems that your local grocery store can be too busy and that you always end up bagging your own groceries.

This quick and easy fundraising idea lets you provide a nice service to your community and raise funds at the same time. Find a busy grocery store that is willing to help your group and pick a busy day of the week. Print off flyers that explain your group and what you are doing in the store that day.

Hand out the flyers to people entering the store. Give your "baggers" a quick lesson on how to properly bag, for example heavy items on the bottom and eggs and bread on the top. Have a tip jar at each register. You may want each bagger to wear a nametag with your group's name on it as well.

Bag each person's groceries quickly and with a smile. Offer to push their cart and help to unload them into their car. This should be done with adult supervision for safety reasons.

Bake Sale:

This is an easy fundraiser to run as part of a larger event, such as a holiday craft sale, or sporting event. You will want to give a call out to all of the bakers in your group and have them make their specialty.

Ask that they send a list of ingredients with their baked goods. Make sure you have an assortment of different types of desserts ranging from cookies and muffins to whole cakes and pies.

You will want to package items individually (single cookies) and in larger groups (plates of cookies) so that you have something for everyone.

Clearly label all items with a price and ingredients list. Clearly mark anything with nuts so you don't have any allergic reactions. On the day of

the sale, set everything up on a long table.

Have a cash box and have at least twenty dollars in small bills and coins for making change. Sell bottled water and soda to wash down the yummy goodness!

Birthday Party for Variety:

Invite your friends to your Birthday party and instead of gifts ask for donations for your cause.

Make a heart shaped Birthday cake and invitation. Organize games focused around movement and giving back. Use all the games provided to plan a memorable Birthday that benefits others.

Board Game Tournament:

Create a fun twist on a card tournament and do something that everyone can participate in. Have a Board Game Tournament.

Pick a favorite, such as Sorry, Trouble, or Monopoly. Assemble 4 person teams that will work together to accumulate points or you can allow individuals to participate.

Charge an entry fee for each team, in order to earn money for your charity. Give a portion of the proceeds as the winning prize or get prizes donated from local businesses.

Decide if you are going to play with a time limit for each game so that everyone has the same chance and to keep things running on a schedule. Decide on any "House" rules beforehand. Set up bleachers for the audience and consider having a 50/50 raffle or raffle for door prizes.

Definitely have a concession stand with coffee, soda pop, popcorn, chips, hot dogs, and bottled water to earn extra money.

Break the Balloon:

Pop, pop, pop! What can be more fun than popping a balloon? Winning something for doing so, of course.

This is an easy fundraiser and can be incorporated into other events, such as a dinner fundraiser or fair. You will need balloons, a helium tank, string,

and slips of paper with prizes printed on them.

Go to the local retailers and explain who your group is and what you are raising funds for. Ask if they would like to donate a prize in exchange for free advertising at your event. On the day of the event, place the prize slips into the balloons, fill them with helium, and tie a string to them.

All balloons should have a slip of paper, even if it is just a thank you for participating, so they all look the same. You may want the balloons to all be the same color to distinguish them from others at the event. Sell the balloons telling people to hold onto them until a big announcement.

After all the balloons have been sold, instruct everyone to pop their balloon and see if they have won. It will be humorous to see the different methods of popping the balloons. Instruct the winners to come up and claim their prize.

Cake Walk:

This traditional fundraiser is a piece of cake to organize! It can be a small part of a larger fundraising event, or a successful fundraiser on its own.

Ask for volunteers from your group to bake the cakes, and sell tickets. Make sure you have access to a venue with enough room for tables to hold the cakes, and for a circle of chairs with space to walk around them.

Be sure to bring a portable stereo for the cake walk music. A microphone and lively announcer calling the plays will make it even more fun. Serve punch to make it a more social event.

It's also a good idea to supply paper plates, forks, and napkins for those who want to enjoy and share their winnings right away.

You can even have separate cake walks going on—one for adults, and one for kids. It's sure to be fun for the whole family!

Car Wash:

This is one of the most used and recognizable fundraisers. It is very simply known as the Car Wash.

You will want to find a place to have the car wash at. There needs to be a source of water that you can use. A school, gas station, or church on a

busy main road would be a good location.

You will need to have all of your own supplies, such as a garden hose, buckets, sponges, towels, and car wash soap. Pick a date for your car wash, and plan a rain date as well. A rainy day would completely ruin your car wash.

Make signs for members of your group to hold by the street to bring in the cars. Advertise with flyers, your city's cable station, and in your local newspapers.

Charge a set amount for a car wash, or accept donations. You may earn more by leaving it up to each individual. Have some small bills on hand in order to make change. Most of all, remember to have fun. Your proceeds will reflect it.

Celebrate National Talk like a Pirate Day:

Arrr, matey! Fundraisers don't always have to be serious and boring. If you want a fun and hearty change, why not try a fundraiser on National Talk Like a Pirate Day?

A day that everyone can stretch their swashbuckling vocal skills, and you can get your office or school involved in a fun activity that will get everyone's brains working.

If you want to raise money on a small scale, why not charge your class or small office a certain amount of money to be allowed to dress up like a pirate? Much like a casual Friday at the office, everyone pays \$1 or \$2 and then comes to work in true seadog costumes. This idea can also work for uniformed schools, or even just for public schools where kids want to dress up.

You can even make it more fun by having a costume contest with prizes for employees or students who really go all out. Kids will have fun with this one – everyone loves to be creative.

Why not implement a Pirate sea-chantey singing contest? Participants get pledges from their friends, parents and relatives and then go up against other swashbucklers to see who can sing the longest or the best. They can even lead the audience to get everyone involved.

As well, you can set up a booth to record everyone's best pirate speech for

a small fee. The money goes to charity and the one with the best silver tongue can win their own buried treasure!

If you're affiliated with a yacht or boat club, you could set up a Pirate Fair or Carnival to raise money for your organization.

Have live interactive pirate shows, face painting, a costume contest and a boat contest for boat owners. Have them dress up their boats like a pirate ship and give a prize to the best one. Some marinas and yacht clubs even get tall ships to be available for touring. You can also host a "dig" for buried treasure for the kids – bury a prize in a sanded area and sell maps to kids and parents wanting a go at finding it.

It's a lot of work to talk like a pirate all day, and some people may get tired of the constant pirate speech. If this happens and none of these other fundraising ideas appeal to you, you can always raise money to see how much it will take to get your honorary pirates to return to normal!

Christmas Cookie Baking:

Most people have already been rushing around for more than a month, first getting ready for Thanksgiving, and now preparing for Christmas.

There's shopping to do, decorating, possibly travel to plan, or preparing homes for guests, and they have to do it all while still keeping up with the day-to-day tasks and activities.

It's a miracle if anyone has any time left over to bake anything from scratch. That's where your group comes in. Offer baked holiday cookies that members of the community can buy by the dozen. Decide on a few varieties to make, and they don't have to be complicated. Simple sugar cookies or gingerbread will do.

You can get fancier if you like, and offer premium cookies at a slightly higher price. If your volunteers have the time, inclination, and skill, you can also offer larger baked goods like cakes and pies. Ask people to place their orders a week or two in advance so there's plenty of time for preparation and baking.

And for that inevitable emergency request, add on a small last-minute fee. This way, families still get homemade treats rather than store-bought, and your organization raises money for its cause. Everyone has a happy

holiday!

Cooking With Your Charity:

This is a fun and easy fundraiser that has endless possibilities.

Create a "Cooking with your charity" cookbook to sell and raise money. Ask for recipe submissions from your group to include in your cookbook. Try to focus your recipes on a central theme such as Italian food, quick cooking meals, desserts, recipes you can cook with your children, etc. Group all of the recipes into categories such as appetizers, main courses, salads, and desserts.

You will need to decide if you are going to enter all of the recipes into a word processing program for uniformity or copy them as they are submitted. Handwritten recipes can offer a personal touch. Some schools may have a binding machine you can use.

You could use a professional printer. Check to see if they offer a charity discount. You could print and staple your book together. Sell your cookbook at local events and perhaps have a dessert or appetizer from the cookbook as a sample.

Dunk Tank:

Who doesn't like the thrilling satisfaction of throwing a softball as hard as they can to dunk someone in a tank of water?

It's fun, and a great way to raise money anywhere, especially during the summer. If your group already owns a dunk tank you've used at other events such as fairs and carnivals, you're all set. If you don't have one, you can rent one.

Talk to the rental agency to see if they'll offer a discount on the rental fees to support your charity. A dunk tank can be set up just about anywhere that will see a lot of foot traffic, where you can entice people to throw a few balls for a small fee. Talk to local businesses about setting up the dunk tank outside their building for a day.

Try movie theaters, big box stores, malls, restaurants, or home improvement stores. One great way to get support for your small fundraising event is to talk to a pool supply store or a boat dealership about setting up in their parking lot.

What better way to get people thinking about swimming pools and boating than seeing someone splash around in cool water?

Wherever you set up, you'll need access to a water source to fill the tank, and keep it topped off as water gets splashed out throughout the day.

Get a group of volunteers together, to collect money, hand out the softballs, and encourage passersby to participate. Try to also rent a party tent to provide shade for your volunteers. You'll also need some people willing to be dunked. They can wear brightly colored, funky outfits, and good naturedly heckle everyone who tries to dunk them.

Be sure to have plenty of towels on hand to keep your volunteers dry and warm when they're not in the tank, and allow them to switch out every thirty minutes or so. Happy dunking!

Face Painting:

Children love to have their face painted.

This is a popular activity at carnivals and fairs. Set up a face painting booth at your next craft show or fair.

Enlist the help of some talented artists from your group to help paint faces. Have a practice session before hand so that you will know what you are doing.

Face painting kits can be bought online and at some party supply stores. Shop around for the best deal. You will want to have seats, water for cleaning brushes, wet wipes, face paints and examples of face painting that the kids can choose from.

You could charge as little as a dollar for simple art work or up to five dollars or more for elaborate ones. As your young customers walk around they will drive more customers to you.

Offer instant photos of the face painting for a dollar more, so they have a lasting memory. This will be a fun fundraiser for everyone.

Garage Sale / Yard Sale:

Who doesn't have stuff floating around in their attic, basement, or spare room that just isn't used or needed anymore?

Clear out the clutter and help your cause at the same time. Ask your organization's members, and the community, to get involved and donate their unwanted items to a group garage or yard sale.

Find a venue such as a school sports field or a church yard large enough for several tables while leaving room for browsing.

Get volunteers and item donors to help mark everything with price tags before the sale begins. You can even offer simple concessions like hot dogs and sodas for hungry shoppers, and earn a little extra cash.

Have a backup location ready in case bad weather puts a damper on the outdoor event. Most schools and some churches have auditoriums that can accommodate events like this.

Grab Bag:

This fundraiser is similar to a What's in the Box Auction and a White Elephant Sale with a couple of important differences.

First, a grab bag fundraiser is not an auction. You'll charge a flat fee per item. Supporters will also not be able to see what they're buying. Have volunteers donate inexpensive items. They can be anything from used books to gag items.

You can also spend a little money to buy fun things at a dollar store. Place each item in a paper bag and seal all the bags so the items inside are not visible. No feeling or shaking of bags is allowed! Decide what to charge per bag—a few dollars is appropriate. Supporters pay the fee and then choose a bag.

They won't know whether they're getting a real treasure like a great cookbook, or a silly item like a rubber ducky.

That's part of the fun! Most people will buy more than one bag to try to get to the good stuff. Place some scratch-off lottery tickets.

Hot Dog Stand:

Hot dogs are easy to prepare, easy to eat, and easy to sell! Get permission from a local retailer to set up a hot dog stand outside their entrance.

Be sure to have everything ready to go before lunchtime to catch hungry

shoppers as they exit the store. You can purchase everything you need at the grocery store, or better yet, in large quantities at a club store.

Remember in addition to hot dogs and buns, be sure to buy ketchup, mustard, relish, and anything else you want to serve as a topping. Don't forget the napkins! You can also sell chips and sodas, if you like, and if you have the means to keep them cold for long periods of time. You can also sell hot dogs at the local park, or at events like 10K runs.

The best part is, hot dogs and the fixings are pretty inexpensive, so you won't need a large markup to make a profit. Supporters can enjoy a quick, fun meal at a low cost while you make money for your group.

Hugs and Kisses:

This is a great fundraiser to run around the romantic holidays (Valentine's Day, Sweetest Day, etc) or at the end of the school year for farewells.

Package Hershey's hugs and kisses candies (the little foil wrapped chocolates) in pretty cellophane bags with a blank note card. On the note card have a location for the students' full name and their homeroom location.

This will make delivering the hugs and kisses easier. Maybe offer a seal to keep the message private. Either have the made up bags available for purchase or offer to hand deliver them to homerooms on a specific day.

Send a letter to parents offering them the opportunity to purchase one for their student. Students will love receiving the candy and little love note. Have a secret admirer donation box that students, teachers, and others can contribute to.

Keep a list of all students that are deserving (honor roll students, students that have done well, etc) and send them a package from the secret admirer fund.

Ice Cream Social:

You Scream, I Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream! Vanilla, Chocolate, Mint Chocolate Chip...There are so many different flavors to choose from!

Everyone loves ice cream, so why not host an ice cream social for your group's next fundraiser? This fundraiser is appropriate for all groups and

all ages. Create a theme for your Ice Cream social to make it different. Here are some ideas. Ice Cream Sundaes:

Have the basic flavors of vanilla and chocolate and all kinds of sundae toppings such as hot fudge, caramel, sprinkles (or jimmies), whipped cream, and cherries. Make the sundaes to order. Smooshed Ice Cream: Have items that can be mixed into slightly softened ice cream using two ice cream scoops such as chocolate candies, brownies, and bananas. Homemade Ice Cream: Find a group member with an ice cream maker and their favorite recipe.

Ice cream made from scratch is a real treat for everyone. Longest Ice Cream Sundae: Get a piece of clean, plastic gutter and use it to create a large sundae.

Fill it with ice cream, hot fudge, whipped cream, and cherries on top. Let everyone dig right in and enjoy.

Pizza Night:

The best things about pizza are it's easy to make, and it's easy to tailor to anyone's taste.

All you have to do is get creative with the toppings! A pizza night fundraiser is also easy to organize. You can go about it a couple of ways. Arrange with a local pizzeria or restaurant to provide a large number of pizzas for your event, and sell them by the pie or by the slice.

Show a movie, and make it a social event. Or, if you have the facility, or the means to rent or borrow one that has a kitchen and a large oven, host a make-your-own-pizza night. Frozen crusts make it easy. Buy pre-cut, packaged, or canned toppings from the grocery store or a club store—at a volume discount—and let your guests put together their own unique creations.

You can charge by the pie, or a flat entry fee. Don't forget the beverages, plates and napkins!

Spaghetti Dinner:

This could be one of the most popular fundraisers for all groups due to its simplicity, ease to run, and familiarity with the general public.

It is the Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser and it is appropriate for all groups. It can be run on a large or small scale. You will need to have a banquet hall, cafeteria, or gymnasium space to run this. If your group does not have access to one, contact local halls to see if they would be willing to donate their facility for your event.

Ask local grocery stores, bakeries, and food suppliers for donations of food. You will need spaghetti, prepared tomato sauce (or make your own from tomatoes, onions, etc.), meatballs, bread, drinks, dessert, plates, cups, and silverware.

Have tickets for pre-sale and at the door. Consider discounting pre-sale tickets to get more sales. Figure out what you can prepare in advance.

For instance spaghetti can be boiled, bagged, refrigerated, and then quickly put into boiling water for a minute or two just before serving.

This works well as an all you can eat buffet style dinner. Alternatively you can have a Fish Fry dinner during the Lenten season.

Trivia Night:

Cater to everyone's competitive spirit and raise money at the same time by organizing a trivia night! Find a local bar or restaurant with a private room that your group can rent for the evening.

The establishment may even offer a rental discount since it's for a good cause, and because they'll be making money on the food and beverages people order while they're playing trivia games. Or, if you want to get in on some of that income, find a venue like a church meeting room or a school auditorium, and sell finger foods, sweet treats, and beverages for players to enjoy.

Find out if your city has a trivia game provider. If so, ask if they're willing to donate their service for one night. Or, you can just as easily put together your own trivia challenges with trivia board game cards, a microphone, and a volunteer to act as emcee.

Charge a flat fee for people to participate in the trivia contests. Create both individual and team challenges, and if you make it a family event, a special round for kids.

Don't forget to offer prizes for the winners, which can be gift certificates to

local stores or restaurants, or even small trophies.

Variety Gold Heart Pin Sale:

Purchase Variety Gold heart pins and sell them for \$3 each to help raise money and raise awareness of your fundraising goal.

Email info@varietyofillinois.org to purchase your pins.

Sell them in advance to neighbors and friends or ask your local stores in your community to help sell the pins for you.

Walk or Bike-a-Thon:

Host a Walk- or Bicycle-a-Thon around your school. Choose a day and invite friends to collect donations for the walk or for each lap they do. Help raise funds to buy adaptive Bikes for other children. Invite your special needs classrooms and students to be the Celebrities of the event!