

# FUND-RAISING IDEAS

1. *If you don't have a Booster Organization, form one!* This lets you concentrate on what's important, the directing! If numbers and circumstance allow, designate sub-committees to address different needs. For example, have a chair person head group fund-raising, one to solicit corporate or community support, one assigned as the trip chairman, etc. Specialization often best utilizes a committee.

2. *Annually ASSESS THE UNIQUE RESOURCES of your group*, with regard to both students, performers, and their families. Encourage Boosters to know who does what... Capitalize on 'in-house' talent and connections when it comes to goods & services as it relates to fund-raising. This can be invaluable! We continually ask directors what fund-raisers work best for them and invariably, they respond with ideas where parents and a supportive community are primary factors. For example, one group contracted with an area golf course (owned by a friend of a band-parent) to co-sponsor a tournament, which received a tremendous response. Another was able to sell gift certificates for a video store (owned by a choir parent) and keep \$5.00 of every \$20.00 certificate sold. One booster parent was an amateur photographer and helped set up a very successful fund-raiser for photos w/Santa and 'Glamour Shots,' while another parent who worked for a local discount store helped students set up a gift-wrap booth during Christmas. If you're aware of your group's resources, you can come up w/all kinds of great ideas.

3. *COMBINE FUND RAISERS!* Organize a nice, dress-up dinner-show with an after-dinner raffle (Raffle off a weekend get-a-way or a luxury item, again using community & booster resources!) or have a slave auction (with a professional auctioneer), after a fun ice-cream social!

4. *Get as many GOODS AND SERVICES DONATED as possible.* Again, don't be afraid to ask for help... These things tend to be mutually beneficial as businesses are often rewarded for their good-will and generosity with increased sales! You might offer to advertise for them in a newsletter or acknowledge them publicly at a concert or large function.

5. *Remember that SEASONAL PROJECTS* usually work well. People often respond positively to goods or services related to some special occasion like Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas or Valentine's Day.

6. *Establish some FUND-RAISING TRADITIONS.* Over the years, we've had directors tell us repeatedly that traditional annual fund-raisers are very successful because people have come to know and expect them. For example, one school choir has been hosting an annual Renaissance Festival for about eight years, and has gradually collected sets, costumes, etc. and generated tremendous community participation. Another school hosts an annual carnival while another sponsors a golf tournament. 'Traditions' can take some time to develop but often yield tremendous rewards.

7. *Remember how important GROUP VISIBILITY* can be, as you compete for time, energy, money and general commitment from the school and the community. Use every opportunity to promote your program to the public. Keep everyone informed. Announce your performances well in advance in as many places as possible.

# Sales

**Cash Lottery:** 50/50... Sell tickets for \$ .50 or 1.00 each

(6/\$5.00...12/\$10.00) Keep half & draw for cash prizes w/remainder..May be a one-time event or ongoing.

**Auction:** Goods & services donated by students, faculty, family & community members- Fun to use professional auctioneer or public figure... Possibilities are endless!

Suggestions we've heard include antique candlesticks (& other garage & attic items!) sailboat cruises, tomato plants, home-baked goods, weekend accommodations at nearby resort, gift certificates at local stores...As well as any number of services: lessons or classes, one-on-one opportunities w/ reputable teachers, instructors or experts, tax service, computer classes (Slave auctions go over well!) yard-work/house-cleaning services- Again, assess the availability of goods & services of your group.

**Raffle:** Try to buy items at cost, or have them donated... We've heard of groups raffling off cars, boats, pianos, stereos, computers, trips, homemade quilts... other valuable or luxury items. One band raffled off a boat on a trailer which they pulled to every game & event, to sustain interest & excitement.

**Garage Sale/Yard Sale, Rummage Sale, Flea Market, Bazaars**

## **Item Ideas:**

Baked Goods, home-made candy (home made peanut brittle from a 'secret recipe' has become a fall tradition at one school, netting them a sizable portion of needed funds), books, plants, opportunities (One group sold coupons allowing opportunities to direct the choir!),

donated or original art, craft items, group tapes & CD's (Live performance or studio recorded...There are many good companies which do this... Has been a very successful fund-raiser for many.. One jazz choir's CD was so good, a record company paid for rights & distributed it.... Another group traded vocal-backups on jingles for studio time), logo products (sweatshirts, t-shirts, mugs, pencils, etc.), glamor shots & Santa photos, frozen food, fireworks, cheeses/sausage, gift certificates, discount booklets with coupons from local stores, restaurants & vendors, seasonal products: pies at Thanksgiving, Christmas trees, gift-wrap and cards, Halloween flash lights, shirts, costume-related items, Valentines hearts, flowers, messages, apple cider (an orchard gave one band permission to gather apples on ground, from which they made cider & sold at considerable profit.)



## **Service Ideas**

Work concessions at local sporting or special events

Do annual inventory for dept. stores (Often they're happy to pay into a group fund)

Hire the Choir: (Yard work, i.e. mowing, raking, shoveling... washing cars, windows, singing for weddings, parties, special occasions, baby-sitting, garage cleaning, painting, other household chores.)

Slave Auction (As already discussed)

# EVENTS

## *Possible Suggestions:*

1. Find a local, national or international artist or personality w/a connection or interest in your group to donate a short performance or presentation as part of the event.
2. Find a beautiful/interesting/unique setting for the event (might ask business, community figure, parent or patron of your program to volunteer home, restaurant, park or special place).
3. Try to get all food & beverage items donated...
4. Ask for generous donation for admission... Try to get attendance of at least 100 people.
5. Promote event in season brochures, newsletter, concert flyers, concert programs throughout the season... Send invitations to core list of donors.
6. If possible, combine fundraisers.
7. Get plenty of volunteers.
8. Think of catchy name or title for event... (One director called his Valentine's Dinner/Show, "Suites & Sweets for the Sweet," after having a gourmet shop donate chocolates.) Have fun w/themes....Some clever ideas we've heard include: "Stardust Serenade," "Pages of the Past," "Murder" Dinner Party (Like the game, w/guest & hosts dressed like characters..w/the rendering of dark, bluesy tunes), and "It's Showtime!" (Salute to Broadway, musically & w/costumes & simple sets).
9. Combine with other groups (can be a drama or dance troupe, a children's choir, a local museum committee (We heard that one creative symphony teamed up w/a history club to organize an 'Afternoon Tea,' of period music, fashions, displays and food. Combining serves to broaden your interest base & increases fund-raising ability!



## *Ideas:*

**Musical Entertainment:** Dinner/Show, Comedy Club, Formal Dance/Ball, Disco Party (The Travolta era is BACK..viva la polyester 3-piece suits and dance fever!), Chocolate Party, Crawfish Boil, Taco Bust, Gourmet Dinner, Progressive Dinner, Soiree Musical, Sunday Concert /Brunch Series, Artist Showcase, Open Mike Night, Celebrity Concert, Exchange Concerts, Musical Revues, Gala Black Tie Affair, Pre-concert Lectures..

**Hosted Events & Activities:** Costume Party, Duck Race (We've also heard of alligator & cockroach races!), Pizza Sale, Ice-cream Social, Family Picnic, Carwash, Tournaments (golf, bridge, backgammon, racquetball), Roller Derby.

**Seasonal Events:** Christmas Tour of Homes, Halloween Haunted House, Thanksgiving Turkey Raffle, Easter Egg Hunt, Mother's Day Breakfast

**Music Festivals** (Could be for specialized group, like madrigals, jazz band, strolling strings, a cappella singers, concert bands/choirs, show choirs etc.). One school hosted a choir festival, an adjudicated event which was attended by about 20 schools... They charged a registration fee, admission for performances... Had clinics & exchange performances over a long weekend... Made about 4000.00.

**Walk-A-Thon/Jail-a-thon...**Use area park or school facility (Obtain necessary permits well in advance), Walk the track for 90 min... Get pledges on simple pledge form... Might supply special shirts, provide entertainment...jazz band, choir, etc.for participants.

**Host or Organize a sing-along, play-along** for the community... Might have a special theme, like Madrigal sing-along, or seasonal like Valentine's Love Songs sing-play-along, or "Messiah" for the Christmas Season... Ask for donations... As with other events, try to combine fund-raising activities... Have an auction on the same evening... or sell baked goods, etc. ...Combine with other groups... Consider guest conductors, sight-reading concerts,

## DONOR CLUBS/FUND DRIVES

Consider publishing monthly or seasonal newsletter... could sell advertising... advertise concerts, create special name & logo, Might organize a donor's club...Approach & cultivate individual donors for major gifts. dedicate page to members of donor club (one group had different levels of donors, maestro, director, producer, conductor, etc.) Send club members newsletter announcing current events, musical features, etc., acknowledge donations in concert program, local papers, Organize a 'fund drive' day, direct Mail Campaign.. One group sent out an "un-benefit" letter which said, "Don't come to a party...Just stay home & send us a check!"

## Some MCI Observations About FUND RAISING

- (1) The Musical Director cannot be responsible for fund raising. This is the responsibility of a well-organized committee with a chairman involving as many people in the organization as possible.
- (2) Fund raising is limited only by imagination.
- (3) Success depends more on the involvement of many than on any single project. Don't put all your eggs in one fund-raising basket. Often the "big one" or the seemingly most spectacular project, is not as successful as a number of "tried and true" projects.
- (4) Publicity in the community, city, and state is very important to the success of any fund raising project.
- (5) Individual accounting and individual incentives often produce more than the "one-for-all and all-for-one" approach.
- (6) Fund-raising committee should be sub-divided into other committees such as publicity, corporate/business sponsorship, accounting, and leadership for each different fund raising project. The most successful committees consist of both members of the performing ensemble and parents or boosters.
- (7) Enthusiasm of fund raising chairman/committee and Musical Director is contagious. Encouragement gets a lot of mileage.
- (8) Projects that have a high profile in the community earn you both money and very good publicity and enhance the reputation of your program.