National Federation of the Blind

Fundraising Committee Notes

April 18, 2017

Meeting Speaker: Joseph Ruffalo, President: NFB of New Jersey.

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We thank Mr. Ruffalo for his time and for sharing his fundraising ideas with the Ohio Affiliate. Here is a list of items to consider for our fundraising projects:

1. Keep it simple so that you invest minimally in the cost. You need to have fun when you fundraise.

Try to have a yearly theme at state convention. Ex. Promoting the BELL program.

At nationals, sell all you can and take the rest back to resell at the state convention.

Yard sale: Sell items in good or excellent condition. set up tables with items: $2 table, $3 table, etc and have items worth that much for each table. Advertise to the general public and emphasize that all proceeds go to the affiliate for educational and Braille literacy programs such as BELL, STEM, and student scholarships.. Sell hot dogs on the side.

3. Team up with the Knights of Columbus, the Lions Clubs or other civic-minded organizations. Hold events at their facilities such as pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, etc. and Sell tickets, ex. $12 for breakfast or .50 for dinner. Do the same for lunch or dinner.

4. Set up table outside a retail store with literature and a canister for voluntary contributions. Make conversation and find potential members. Bring a Braille Writer and write the customer’s name in Braille, Kernel Books. Cane users can give brief mobility lessons to interested people. Guide Dog users can do the same, except, instead of the sighted person handling the dog, he/she would be fitted with sleepshades and the owner would handle the dog. Just interact with the public. Play the Rhythm of the Movement CD from the National Center. It costs nothing and the contributions will add up.

5. Contact the Fire Department. In New Jersey, the fire department looks for an organization that wants to participate in a car wash or dog wash. The NFB of Ohio can explore whether such a program exists here on a local or state level.

6. Statewide Drawing: In New Jersey, they go through the Game Commission. Before they hold it at the state convention, they go through the Mayor’s Department, then they go to Trenton, and the town for final approval.

7. Guess the time on the clock. Get 12 sheets of paper. On each sheet, you put 5-minute increments, equaling 12 slots. Sell $5 per slot or 3 for $10. Ex. 12-05, 12-10, etc. At the banquet, we Guess the Time On the Clock. A talking key chain clock will say the time. Whoever is closest to guessing the time, gets a free banquet dinner. The affiliate pays that person’s banquet ticket. You can raise $400 or $500.

8. Horse Race: There are two dice. One die represents the horse’s name and the other, the number of steps each horse must move from the back of the banquet room. The first horse to reach the front of the banquet hall is the winner. Naturally, the horses are the people. You need six people for the horses with such names as Opportunity, Equality, Security, Freedom, Great expectations, and Independence. You can bet as much as you like. If the odds are 4 to 1, the bidder gets $5 and the affiliate gets $20. It’s fun, gets people involved and motivated.

9. Bring 1 or more nonperishable food items, donate to the local food bank. It doesn’t involve fundraising but it’s great for publicity, especially if you can get a local TV station to report on the state convention.

10. Auctions at convention: Ask retailers for items to donate at the state convention banquet.

11. Selling Items On E-Bay: An individual in California who donates his proceeds to the NFB of NJ, has an e-bay store. He gets products from warehouses before they’re thrown out and sells them on E-bay. We need members to run the E-bay store and it doesn’t have to be an NFB member. Ex. New Jersey got a hold of slightly out-of-date Book Ports from BookShare International.

12. A web-donation page that we can copy and change to our liking:

http://www.nfbnj.org/contributions

United Way, among others, has contributed to the New Jersey affiliate on the NJ website.

12. Raising money for BELL. Bring some of the kids from the program to a Lions Club meeting. Kids sell. One child did a 5-minute presentation about the program and someone in the audience made a motion to give $25 to the BELL Program.

Build a sponsorship page on our website to request donations for the BELL Program.

13. When working with other organizations, you must be able to friend raise, not just fundraise. Do a bowlathon, walkathon. Work with the Boy or Girl scouts.

14. Start a scholarship for the Bel Program with a spaghetti dinner or other events.

15. Holiday Star: Adopt a child for Christmas: A way to raise contributions for the child’s family and plan a dinner to raise money.

In January, have an after-the-holidays party. Rent out a hall, cater food, kids under 6 is free, 6 to 12, $12, adults $23. Havesandwiches, desserts, drinks, etc. You can charge what you want.

16. Dancing lessons: Find out how much it costs for lessons and charge a competitive price for prospective students.

17. Chinese auction: Set up a table with a basket of items. Sell tickets and draw for a winner. The winner doesn’t need to be present for the drawing. Get contact information from all ticket buyers and contact the winner.

18. Go To Your Local Bank: Everyone on this call, including the chapter, has a bank account. Go to your local bank where they know you. Go with a donation letter, see what you can get. You might not get any money, but you might get items that are given out for anyone opening a new account such as toasters, toaster ovens, small TV, blenders, etc. We can sell them on E-bay or at the state convention.

19. You might want to honor someone that’s raised the most money, have that person come up with the president and gavel the convention to order. It costs nothing and it recognizes the person and his/her family for their efforts.

20. Bake sale: Conduct a bake sale outside a retail store. Additionally, distribute literature, write a “get-your-name-in-Braille” on an index card or an NFB alphabet card and leave it to the curious customer to figure out how his name in Braille looks like. I also write a brief message after the name. Ex. I am glad you could come to Walmoart. Thank you for your interest in learning Braille. Write it out in Grade 1 Braille for the customer’s convenience.

21. Kiss the Frog: Get a frog from Toys Are Us. Who wants to kiss the frog? You dare people to kiss the frog for whatever amount you want to contribute. Ex. Richard Payne, our president, or anyone in a leadership position.

22. NFB Jeopardy: Pick a category, extension numbers, relationships, speeches, etc. Trivia questions: For $200 what is Jacobus tenBroek’s nickname?

23. Ohio Package at National Convention: To help the affiliate, each chapter donates $25 or as much as they want. The package can also include gift cards from various retailers such as Walmart. Sell tickets $5 each or 3 for $10.

24. Lastly, always send Thank-You letters to your donors and supporters. Send plaques where needed.

In sum, fundraising success depends on member support. Keep it fun, keep it simple; low cost, high return. Get members involved to share in these activities.

Pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, are all good. Advertise on Facebook, Twitter, your website, etc. and have fun while fundraising.