

75+ Fundraising Tips

Tip #1-Know Why you are Participating

A personalized letter is the most basic tool of fundraising, and that's because it works. Whatever else you do, write a letter first! Use it to explain the facts - that you'll be participating as a Rider or Crew member in ACT 7, Wisconsin's AIDS Ride sponsored by Williamson Bikes & Fitness, riding 300 miles over four days, and that you'd like to offer them the opportunity to help you support people living with HIV and AIDS. Include some facts about AIDS and our beneficiary, AIDS Network and why this is important to you.

- Use the ideas you develop here for the body of your e-mail to your potential donors.
- If you are asking older donors they may not use e-mail. Send a letter to everyone you have an address for, and then look for more addresses and send even more letters. Don't forget to include a donation form and a pre-addressed return envelope.

Tip #2-Go Paperless

The Internet and e-mail have significantly affected the fundraising world. Use them to your advantage:

- Let people know that they can make donations on your behalf at kintera.org. Be sure to include your Rider or Crew online name!
- Spend some time designing your Kintera fundraising page so that it tells your story of why you are participating. Contact your mentor or participant support if you need help.
- Add a short message about donating to your e-mail signature.
- Send an e-mail to everyone in your address book.

Tip #3-Work the Neighborhood

There are countless opportunities to raise money within a few miles of your home. Think about it: the coffee shop, the gym, the laundromat, the car wash, the supermarket, the newsstand, the dry cleaner, the video store, the dentist's office, the bar, the deli, the parking lot, the bike shop, the pizza place. You patronize these businesses all the time - ask them to help you out with your fundraising effort. How?

- Just ask for money - businesses, too, can be donors.
- Put a poster in the window, explaining what you're doing and how to help.
- Display a donation box and/or letters & donation forms on the counter.
- Ask the business to donate a portion of their proceeds on a given day.
- Offer to wear their name on your t-shirt in exchange for a donation.

Tip #4-Get Social

Making contact with as many people as possible will be key to your fundraising. Chances are that your friends and family will be more than happy to be a part of your fundraising campaign, but you'll probably need to go beyond your inner circle.

- Throw a party!! Ask everyone who attends to write a check when they enter the front door.
- Or host an event - a film screening, a boat cruise, a band night in a local bar.
- Ask your friends to ask their friends for donations.
- Then ask their friends to ask their friends.

Tip #5-Bring It to the Office

Your place of work is another opportunity to reach more people, and they're often a captive audience. Let people at work know what you're doing, and enlist their help:

- Just ask for money. Your company might be happy to donate to your fundraising goal.
- Then, ask for more - see if your company has a matching gift program.
- Send an e-mail to the entire company with a donation form attached.
- Set up a small display - maybe hang your AIDS Network t-shirt or a poster, in a prominent place.
- Approach clients, vendors, anyone else your company does business with (make sure it's OK with the boss!).
- Host a lunchtime meeting and do a presentation to your colleagues about the Ride and your commitment.

Tip #6-Timing is Everything

Special circumstances can provide an ideal opportunity to grab a donation. For example:

- Use March & April to suggest a great way to use tax refunds.
- Birthday coming up? Ask for donations in lieu of presents.
- Throw a Final Four party, selling betting squares with 50% of the money going into the pot and 50% towards your fundraising goal. Who knows - maybe the person who wins the pot will graciously choose to donate those winnings towards the goal as well!

- Do the same with Oscar parties - put together a sheet of all the nominees for all categories and get everyone to select who they think will win. You can do this as a party, or even as an office pool.

Tip #7-Get Crafty

Use your creativity, whatever it may be. Everyone has the ability to do something well; sell your product or skill to benefit your fundraising campaign. A few ideas: cookies, lapel pins, knit caps, poems, chili, short stories, tax preparation abilities, photographs, babysitting time, car washing, drawings, language tutoring, personal training, t-shirts, designated driving, dog-walking, errand-running, gardening.

Tip #8-Big Corporate Sponsorship

Identify one or several large companies and contact them directly. They may be willing to sponsor you completely.

Tip #9-Garage Sale

Know all that stuff that's been hanging out in your garage...in your attic...in your basement? Gather it up and ask your friends to do the same. Put it in your front yard and sell, sell, sell! Put all the money raised toward your fundraising minimum!

Tip #10-Bake Sale

Become Julia Child (and ask your friends to do the same) and host a bake sale. You can even have it in conjunction with your garage sale. It's a fact that people will buy more stuff on an empty stomach!

Tip #11-Extra "Change In My Pocket" Box

Create these little boxes for your friends and family and have them place it on their dresser. At the end of the day they can drop that spare change in the box. Before the pledge deadline, you can gather the boxes and count the dough!

Tip #12-Office Fundraising Challenge

Speak with everyone in your office and get them to challenge each other to raise the highest amount. Give the "winner" a prize. Maybe some movie passes? Gift certificate to dinner?

Tip #13-Answering Machine Message

This will alert everyone who calls you at home that you're up to something special! Let them know that you need their support!

Tip #14-Return Address Labels

Print return address labels for your outgoing mail. Print something like, "I'm participating in ACT 7, Wisconsin's AIDS Ride. Will you sponsor me?" You may want to include a donation form and a self-addressed envelope to make it really easy for them.

Tip #15-Internet Chat Rooms

Post a message on an Internet chat room. You'd be amazed at how many people you don't even know who will be willing to help you.

Tip #16-Ask your local wait staff to donate a portion of one day's tips

Ask your local waiters and waitresses to donate a portion of their tips to your cause.

Tip #17-Ask your local bartender to donate a portion of one day's tips

Same as the waiters and waitresses. Ask them to donate tips from one night. You can create a sign for the bartender to place on the bar stating that "All tips collected tonight will go directly to 'Joe Cyclist' who's riding 300 miles to raise money for people living with HIV/AIDS." If the patrons see that sign they may be willing to dig a little deeper in their pocket!

Tip #18-Fundraising dinner at your local favorite restaurant

Ask your favorite local restaurant to host a Fundraising Dinner for you. They supply the food and you supply the pledge forms!

Tip #19-Happy Hour party

Invite all your friends (and their friends!) and get them to sign your AIDS Network t-shirt (the one you'll be wearing as you ride out from the Opening Ceremony). Charge \$10.00 (or more) per signature.

Tip #20-Theme Party/Dinner

Hold a theme party for 10 (or more) of your friends. Donation: \$50.00 per person. Spend no more than \$20.00 per person on the food and you'll have \$300.00 (or more) in donations by the end of the night.

Tip #21-Movie ticket donation

Ask your local movie house to donate several movie tickets. Sell them and put the money toward your pledges.

Tip #22-Local theater to donate tickets to a performance

Ask a local theater to donate a couple tickets to one of their plays or musicals and auction them off.

Tip #23-Delegate

Give 10 of your friends 10 donation forms each and ask them to help raise money for you.

Tip #24-Creative Friends

Find a local artist or ask a creative friend if they would donate a piece of art or some jewelry that you could auction off.

Tip #25-House Warming Party

Are you moving anytime soon? If so, ask your friends to make a donation instead of purchasing a gift for your new place.

Tip #26-Color Donation Forms

These can be very eye-catching. Send them in colored envelopes, too. These will stand out among your friends' bills and stuff.

Tip #27-Business Cards

Print up some inexpensive business cards (you can even do it on your own computer). Have all the pertinent information on the card including your name, name of the event and your address (or PO Box #). Hand these out to everyone you meet!

Tip #28-Travel Agency

Do you always make your travel plans through the same agency? Ask them to donate a travel voucher. You can auction it off at one of your parties.

Tip #29-Doctor / Therapist / Veterinarian / Insurance Agent

Ask him/her to make a check out for you instead of the other way around!

Tip #30-Dentist

Hopefully you won't have to pull teeth to get him/her to help you out a little!

Tip #31-Chiropractor

They've cracked your back. Now ask them to crack open their checkbook and make a pledge.

Tip #32-Yoga Instructor

You've bent over backwards for them...now it's their turn to do the same for you!

Tip #33-Gym

Ask your gym to place a Pledge Jar at the front desk! Leave a stack of pledge forms at the counter, too.

Tip #34-Spinning Class

Have a stack of pledge forms with you and ask your spinning instructor to make an announcement in class.

Tip #35-Hair Salon

Ask your barber or hairdresser to donate \$2.00 of every haircut they complete over one weekend.

Tip #36-Picnics

National Holiday Picnics are a great place to raise some money!

Tip #37-Mow-a-thon

Get your kids involved in this weekend activity. Check ahead of time with all your neighbors and ask them if you can mow their lawn for \$50.00.

Tip #38-Neighbors

Write to all your neighbors on your block (or in your building). Attach a letter stating what you're training for and ask them to make a donation.

Tip #39-Free Rent!

Ask your landlord to donate one-month's rent to the cause! (You never know).

Tip #40-Garden Tour

Check with a local historical society to see if they would sponsor a garden tour of one or several homes in your area. Promote the event in local newspapers.

Tip #41-Meet the Press

Does your company distribute a newsletter? Does your company have interoffice e-mail? Take advantage of these! It's a perfect way to get the word out.

Tip #42-House Sit

Friends going out of town for awhile? Maybe they need a warm body to stay in their place in their absence!

Tip #43-Neighborhood Chores

Are you a Mr. or Ms. Fix-it? A lot of your neighbors would probably rather pay you than someone else. Place signs around your neighborhood advertising your services (i.e. watering gardens, cleaning roof gutters, sweeping the driveway, fixing an easy plumbing problem, painting a room, etc.)

Tip #44-Karaoke Night

Who cares if you can't carry a tune. Spend a Friday night at a Karaoke Bar and sing your guts out! Have the announcer tell the crowd that you're singing for pledges!

Tip #45-Talented Friends

Do you have a little piano bar in your neighborhood and a talented piano playing friend? Ask the owner to let you bring some friends in one night for a cocktail and piano night. Charge anyone who attends and let them know that it's a fundraising event for ACT 7.

Tip#46-ebay.com

Remember the garage sale idea? How 'bout rounding up the goods from your friends and putting it all in Ebay.com to be auctioned off?

Tip #47-Company Vacation Days

Ask your boss or human resources director if they can swap one of your vacation days for a day's pay.

Tip #48-Sell Spokes

Sell each spoke of your wheels for \$20.00 each.

Tip #49-In memory of...

If you're riding in memory of a loved one, include a picture of you with your loved one in your pledge letter, on posters, etc.

Tip #50-Donations for each day on the Ride

Ask people to pledge an amount for each day.

Tip #51-Pet Television show finale Party

Remember when Chandler married Monica? Remember when Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer ended up in jail? How about when Niles and Daphne sped off in an RV on the "Frasier" finale? It'd be fun to gather a big group and friends to tune in to watch a big season or series finale. Of course, charge 'em at the door and put the \$\$ toward your fundraising.

Tip #52-Game night

Get out those board games and start playing! Break into teams and let the fun begin.

Tip #53-Bowling Nights

Plan a fun night of bowling at your local lanes. Ask the owner to waive the cost of bowling and you can collect that money and turn it into pledges.

Tip #54-Used Book Sale

Everyone has books that have been sitting on shelves or in the attic in boxes or in the basement collecting dust. Ask your friends, family and neighbors to donate whatever they've got and set up a little weekend book sale in your front yard. Wear

your AIDS Networkt-shirt and put up some signs so people will know where the money is going. Once they know that they may even give you more money! And in the words of Martha Stewart, "That's a good thing."

Tip #55-Local Stores

Ask a local store manager what the hot selling item is these days and THEN ask them if they'd be willing to donate a % of the sales from that particular item to you.

Tip #56-Curse Jar

C'mon, everyone does it. Now they'll have to pay for it. Place a Curse Jar in your office and whenever someone says a bad word they have to open up their wallet, grab a dollar and put it in the jar.

Tip #57-Dress Down Day

Ask your company to allow an official AIDS NetworkDress Down Day. For the privilege of dressing down, employees pledge \$20.00 toward the ride.

Tip #58-Church Bulletin

Place an advertisement in your church bulletin letting the congregation know what you're up to!

Tip #59-Red Ribbon Distribution

Create small red ribbons to bring awareness to our fight against HIV/AIDS. Sell them to your friends, family members, etc.

Tip #60-Is there a teacher in the house?

Get your students to help you fundraise. Kids are incredibly creative and cute, too! Have them put together those red ribbons for you!

Tip #61-Other Parents

If your kids play on soccer leagues or any other sports teams distribute your pledge forms to the other parents at the event.

Tip #62-Ride Along

Ask a potential donor to ride along on one of your training rides. They may be more willing to donate once they fully understand what you've committed to doing!

Tip #63-Remind Them

In case you didn't receive an answer the first time you asked ... ask again! Your potential donor may need a little coaxing.

Tip #64-Inspirational Book Marks

Create them and sell them to your friends and family.

Tip #65-Universities and Colleges

Contact your local schools and ask if you can put an advertisement in their school newsletter asking for donations. Some of the organizations may even invite you to make a short presentation.

Tip #66-Bicycle Companies

Contact a couple of the big bike companies. Tell them what you're training for and ask them if they would like to sponsor you for the entire amount! You may even get some cool riding gear, too.

Tip #67-Computer Screen Savers

Create an AIDS NetworkScreen Saver and send it to everyone in your company! A gentle reminder is a good reminder!

Tip #68-Mechanic

You've given 'em lots of money to work on your car. Now it's time for them to give a little back to you!

Tip #69-Rock on!

If you know any musicians, ask them to perform a benefit concert. Tell people that their admission ticket is a check made out to the AIDS Network.

Tip #70-Share the Experience

Tell your story. The more you talk about your upcoming adventure, the more people will share in that excitement and want to pledge to you.

Tip #71-Children's Party

Throw on that Barney outfit and get out there! The kids will be having fun as their parents are writing you pledge checks!

Tip #72-Wine and Cheese Party

Host a party at a local restaurant and ask the owner to donate the wine and cheese.

Tip #73-Temporary Tattoos

Swap a temporary tattoo for a pledge.

Tip #74-Fraternities and Sororities

Contact the National Chapter of your college Fraternity or Sorority and ask them to make a donation.

Tip #75-Alumni Organizations

Call your own college or university and ask them to place an ad in the alumni newsletter asking for donations.