

# 101 Fundraising Ideas

(Adapted -- with all respect -- from Susan G. Komen for the Cure)



## ASK! ASK! ASK!

**1. Never miss an opportunity:** Now is not the time to be shy. Let everyone know that you are training to complete a triathlon. When they ask why, the conversation door has been opened. Take this opportunity to tell them why you have chosen to take this challenge. Let them know your hope and cause. Let them know what your fundraising goal is and then ask for a donation. This is a great opportunity to educate your community and fundraise at the same time.

**2. Forget-me-knots:** Tie a ribbon on your potential donors' fingers and ask them not to remove it until they've made a donation. This is a great way to turn those, "yeah, I promise I'll donate" into action.

**3. Corporate Matching:** Take advantage of corporate matching gifts programs. Many of your donors may work for companies that have a program like this — their donation could double simply by filling out a form from their Human Resources department and following the steps to submit a matching gift. As soon as All Tri has received the matching gift form, you can count it as an offline donation.

**4. Advertise while you tri:** Ask local companies to sponsor your efforts and in return you will give them logo or name representation on the tri-top you'll wear on the event.

**5. Corporate Sponsor Shirt:** Identify one corporate sponsor that you can ask for a large donation. Offer to wear their shirt for advertising while training.

**6. Waiters:** Ask the waiter/waitress or bartender at your favorite hangout to donate a day's tips. If you have a friend who waits or bartends, ask them, too.

**7. Spare Change:** Ask your favorite restaurant or local pub to put out a jar for donations of spare change. Decorate it with quotes, pictures, ribbons. Anything to get someone's attention. We've even seen port-a-potty piggy banks. Put these out somewhere obvious -- you're sure to get some attention.

**8. Donation for Miles:** Ask people to donate an amount per each mile of your triathlon distance. So, for sprint-distance triathletes, encourage them to donate two dollars for every mile you'll complete, approx. \$32. For Olympic-distance athletes, approx. \$64. Remember they can pay over the course of your training schedule. Reminding your donors of the option to donate over time is a great way to increase the size of donations (keep in mind that donations can only be paid over the course of 4 months maximum).

**9. Delegate:** Give 10 friends 10 donation slips and ask them to get donations for you.

**10. Birthday:** In lieu of a gift for your birthday, ask your friends and family to make a donation.

**11. House-Warming:** In lieu of a house-warming gift, ask your friends and family to make a donation.

**12. Wedding Gift:** In lieu of a gift for your wedding, ask your friends and family to make a donation.

**13. Retirement Gift:** In lieu of a retirement party gift, ask your office to support you. What an incredible way to kick off your new life!

**14. Ask your doctor(s), dentist and veterinarian** for a donation.

**15. Ask your chiropractor and therapist** for a donation.

**16. Ask your yoga instructor or personal trainer** for a donation.

**17. Ask your lawyer and insurance agent** for a donation.

**18. Ask your auto mechanic or dry cleaner** for a donation, or for coupons that you can use at a fundraising party or raffle.

**19. Ask your neighbors:** Write a note to all of the neighbors on your block or in your apartment building to ask for donations. Include an update on your training and fundraising progress.

**20. Ask your hair stylist:** If not a donation in the form of a check, then perhaps in the form of haircuts! See if he/she will host a hair-cut-a-thon, in the salon (or in your garage!) You can probably raise more donations in two hours of haircutting than you can imagine -- be sure to get the word out!

**21. Tribute Donations:** Encourage your donors to make their donations in "honor of", "support of", or "memory of" someone they know who has been affected by your cause, if applicable. This is a great way to let them feel very much a part of your experience. Suggest a donation amount for them to sign your tri-top or a ribbon that you will wear for the event.

**22. "Sit" for Donations:** Baby-sit, pet-sit, house-sit. Offer services to the neighbors to get them involved.

**23. Holidays and Dates:** Don't forget about St. Patrick's Day, First Day of Daylight Savings Time, First Day of Spring, Easter, Earth Day, Cinco de Mayo, Mothers Day, and for our SFO triathletes Memorial Day, Flag Day, Fathers Day, Forts Day of Summer, Fourth of July. Bring your a donation jar to a related event — ask everyone in attendance.

**24. Spinning Class:** Hit up your spinning class instructor and classmates. Set a goal at the beginning of the class, and if it's met, everyone donates 1 dollar per mile — or 1 dollar per minute.

## IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**25. Community Finger Print-a-Thon:** Some volunteers used a company called Kid Safe Child ID Network, Inc. They found them on the web at [www.thekidsafenetwork.com](http://www.thekidsafenetwork.com). They were able to custom create 2,200 Bio-Docs for the local kids: The event was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, so the event was free to the community. Kid Safe did all the work and the volunteers just promoted the event. It was very easy to do. After the event, they received a check for \$15,324 dollars. Pretty nice for a one day event!"

**26. Coins:** Go to your local mall or shopping center and ask what they do with the coins in the fountain.

**27. "Thons":** Cut-a-thon (hair salon), Mow-a-thon, Shovel-a-thon, Rake-a-thon. You name it. You can do it for donations. You can even use local Girl Scout or Boy Scout troops to help be your man power for this fun activity.

**28. Check-Out Donation:** Make up your own donation cards and ask a local store to sell them at the register. People can make a donation as they make their purchases, sign their name or purchase the card in someone else's honor. The store then hangs the donation cards around the registers.

**29. "Sell" parts of your body:** Offer certain levels of donors that on race day you will inscribe their (or their honoree's name) on a leg, arm, or other portion of your body with a Sharpie so they can complete the triathlon with you.

**30. Donation location at work or other highly visible location:** Set up a table in front of your local grocery store. Get permission first, and then ask everyone who enters to support you. While this doesn't sound very glamorous, it's very effective. Remember that in addition to raising much needed funds, you are also playing an important role in raising awareness. Give a token ribbon or button as a thank you to strangers who donate at an event such as this.

**31. Dog walking for donations:** Send out a flyer to your neighborhood offering your services to dog walk or dog sit while the owners are out of town.

**32. Walk in Public:** Set up a treadmill outside of a store and walk for donations. Set out a donation can for people to drop donations in.

**33. Lemonade, anyone?:** Have a yard sale with a lemonade stand, or just a lemonade stand. This is a great way to get your kids or neighbors involved and have them feel like they are joining you in making a difference.

**34. Benefit night at a local restaurant:** Check in with your favorite local hangouts. Many restaurants already have programs in place to help you fundraise at their establishment. Be a guest bartender? A guest griller? Or hand out coupons to their establishment for a percentage of profits for that evening.

**35. Re-cycle:** Have friends, co-workers and neighbors go green for you and agree to save aluminum cans that you can turn in for cash. See <http://www.cancentral.com/gacr/getstart.htm>

**36. Rent a port-a-potty for a parade:** Decorate it, and ask for donations for use.

**37. Garage Sale:** Ask all of your friends and neighbors to participate by donating items for sale. Make signs that indicate all proceeds are going to your cause. Ask your local paper to run an ad as their contribution. Add a bake sale and/or lemonade stand, and have a straight donation jar visibly displayed.

**38. Super Change Jar:** Ask all of your friends and family to put aside their spare change to be added to the super change jar. Every month or so, empty it out and let everyone know how much "a little at a time" adds up! This is a great idea to put into action at work, too. Decorate the jar with inspirational quotes and photos from your training program.

**39. Car Wash:** Hold a car wash — either in your neighborhood, at your place of worship, or at your place of business. Ask local businesses to donate the supplies you will need and ask your friends to help wash. Add a bake sale; sell chilled bottles of water (that have been donated). If you have enough help, consider adding a dog wash!

**40. Used Book Sale:** A more focused and versatile version of a garage sale. Ask everyone you know (co-workers, neighbors, family and friends) to donate any books they have read and are finished with. Choose a time and place to have a used book sale — maybe your local farmer's market, school carnival or community fair.

**41. Banner:** Have a group of friends, your child's classmates, a local business, help to design a banner that you hang at the race. Suggest a donation minimum.

## PARTY TIME!

**42. House Party:** Host a fundraising party at your home for friends, family, co-workers, neighbors. Share your training experience and your reasons for tri-ing, then ask them to support you.

**43. Benefit Night:** Throw a fundraising party at a local establishment. Ask for a suggested donation at the door. But also make sure to ask that local restaurant, ice cream parlor or teacher's supply store, to support you with a donation of 10% (or more!) of the night's sales -- don't be too shy to ask. Also, check with your local restaurant if they are willing to support you with a donation of 10% (or more!) on an evening even without a fundraising party -- again, don't be too shy to ask. Many local restaurants support charities all the time by donating a portion of

an evening's profits. You can offer to generate a flyer to promote patrons coming to their establishment to help increase their business, and thus your percentage.

**44. Spaghetti Dinner:** Encourage your place of worship, work, school or other organization to host a spaghetti dinner to benefit breast cancer. Have all of your friends help with the cooking to make an event where families are welcome and are asked for a specific suggested donation amount to join in the fun. Or organize a potluck party along the same lines where everyone brings a dish to pass and gets to socialize with friends and neighbors.

**45. Movie Party:** Host a movie party at your house. Every time the words "run," "bike" or "swim" are said in the movie, everyone antes up one dollar in a donation bowl. Have pizza donated and ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**46. Theme Dinner:** Hold a theme dinner party for at least 10 of your friends; donation \$50 a person. Spend just \$20 per person on food and you've raised \$300 in donations. Better yet, have all of the food donated!

**47. Wine-Tasting Party:** Have a wine and cheese-tasting party. If you know anyone (who knows anyone!) who owns, manages, or works in a winery -- ask if they will host it! Ask for a suggested donation at the door. Blind tastings are fun -- or dress up the event with some very special vintages.

**48. Gala Night:** Host an elegant or formal party. Have food and beverages donated.

**49. Garden Tour:** Hold a garden tour at your home or at a local historical home. Have the tour promoted through your local newspaper.

**50. Host a coffee get-together** at your home or at a local coffee shop. Ask your favorite coffee shop to donate the coffee (and maybe even some goodies!). Invite your neighbors and friends. Let them know they will have a chance to pay tribute to someone affected by your cause by signing your shirt. Suggest a donation of \$20 dollars (or more!) Get creative and have them sign ribbons to be attached to your shirt, or buttons, etc.

**51. New Job Party:** Celebrate landing a new job with a party! Invite everyone you know and ask them to come prepared to support you on your triathlon venture as well.

**52. Pet Birthday Party:** Have a fun birthday party for your pet — or a friend's pet. Serve dog biscuits and ask everyone to wear ears! Ask for a suggested donation at the door. Take photos of your guests with the guest of honor.

**53. TV Show Party:** Host a party in celebration of the premiere or finale of a favorite TV show. Serve donated hors d'oeuvres and drinks. Ask for a suggested donation at the door. This idea is great for inviting friends over to watch your favorite awards shows like the Oscars on March 7. Or, ask a local bar that has a big-screen television to allow you to have the party there and donate a portion of the food and beverage sales.

**54. Movie/TV Marathon:** Host a movie or TV series marathon. Choose a theme (Hitchcock, I Love Lucy, Gilligan's Island, Seinfeld) and start the popcorn! Ask for a suggested donation at the door. Enhance the theme with a suggested \$1 donation every time a specific word or phrase is spoken, every time Hitchcock himself appears, every time Jerry has an "aside" with Elaine.

**55. Themed Music/Dance Party:** Host a music/dance night -- 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's style. Play all of the old favorites. Ask people to come dressed in costume and dance the night away. Serve donated drinks and food. Ask for a suggested donation at the door. You can even ask a DJ if they'd donate an evening for you, so you can have a complete selection of tunes!

**56. Scrapbooking Party:** Host a scrapbooking party at your house, or at the local store. Ask a pro to lead an inspirational idea exchange and have some great samples on display, some special supplies and/or discounts for attendees. Serve donated food and drinks and ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**57. Game Night:** Host a game night; Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Scrabble, Poker, Bridge, Bingo. Serve donated food and drinks. Ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**58. Sweets Party:** Have a dessert auction at work! Ask local restaurants, bakeries and groceries to donate yummy desserts. Post signs at work well in advance, and then bring all of the desserts in to work on Friday. Hold a silent or live auction -- who doesn't need dessert for the weekend? Add on to this by making pink ribbon cookies or some other such treat that you can sell for \$1 each while you have everyone in the mood for sweets! Add on even more by getting coffee donated -- and sell the coffee to go with that cookie!

**59. Tea Party:** Host a traditional High Tea, or ask a local hotel to do so on your behalf. Ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**60. Kids' Game Day:** Invite your kid's friends, nieces and nephews, the neighborhood kids, the soccer team, to a game day at a local park or donated indoor location. Like a drop-off party, you coordinate a couple of hours of fun activities and ask the parents for a donation in exchange. Tetherball, Four Square, Jump Rope, Potato Sack races, Yo-Yo contests, you name it! Have donated snack food and juice boxes available to round out the fun.

**61. Swim Party:** Ask a local public pool to donate (or rent at a reduced rate) a couple of hours for a private party. This is a great way to get teenagers involved in the fundraising effort. Have donated snacks on hand, and be sure to include a lifeguard. Turn on some music and ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**62. Children's Birthday Party:** Post signs at local schools and child care centers offering your party planning services for a sizeable donation. Plan a theme party and get supplies, favors, food and beverages donated. If you are crafty you could even make costumes. Some ideas are a Disney Princess Party or Harry Potter Party.

**63. Silent Auction:** Ask some local businesses to donate items or gift certificates and hold a silent auction at your fundraising event, or on a payday at work. Things like a book of car wash certificates, \$10 off dry-cleaning, movie passes, play tickets, restaurant gift certificates,

petgrooming, a week of free coffee; the list is endless! Set minimum donation limits and allow people to bid them up. Some fundraisers have even gotten their place of business to agree to set up a silent auction for one item every Friday at work. They get something donated and the office has fun bidding on something new each week.

**64. Live Auction:** Same as above, but with an energetic auctioneer. Good for a large crowd and some big-ticket items; a trip for two, a special bottle of wine, landscape, pool or housecleaning service, auctioning off husbands for handiwork.

**65. Golf Outing/Tournament:** Work with a local golf course to plan a charity golf outing. Ask for a specific suggested donation amount to participate and see if you can get prizes donated for the winner of each hole, or the whole course.

**66. Web-Based Auction:** Get friends and family to donate things for you to sell on an Internet auction site. Make sure to let bidders know that the items selling price is going towards your fundraising for your cause.

**67. Special Screening:** Ask your local movie theatre to donate a special screening of a new release. Invite everyone you know and make flyers to get the word out. Ask for a suggested donation at the door. Ask if the theater will also donate a percentage of the concession sales for your event!

**68. Friday Off:** One fundraiser we know talked his boss into letting employees "buy" a Friday off in exchange for a \$100 donation. He raised his complete goal in one week.

**69. Poker Tournament Party:** Set up some tables and snacks and let the bluffing begin. Ask for a specific suggested donation amount to join the tournament and winner takes the rest or donates a portion to the "house".

**70. Pancake Breakfast:** Host a pancake breakfast at a school, park or place of worship. Ask for a specific suggested donation amount at the door. Get the pancake mix and other food items donated by local stores.

**71. Bowling Party:** Ask your local bowling alley to donate some lanes for a fundraising party. Invite your office-mates as a team-building experience, your neighbors, your family or a group of old friends. Ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**72. 50/50 Raffle:** Sell tickets to a 50/50 raffle at a large event or gathering. The prize is half the "pot". The winner splits the "pot" with you -- you get 50% of the proceeds and they get the other 50%. See if your boss will let you conduct a 50/50 raffle once a week at work.

**73. Baseball Game:** Or other local sporting event. Buy a section of tickets at a group rate and ask your family and friends for a donation of twice the price. Get food donated and host a tailgate party.

## FUNDRAISE AT WORK OR SCHOOL

**74. "Loose Change Day":** Ask your child's school to have a "Loose Change Day." Make a flyer encouraging each child to bring in loose change from their house to be donated. Encourage the math classes to assist with counting, predicting and rolling the change. This is a great way to involve the entire school. You can hold this event multiple times; every week or every month.

**75. Personal vending machine at work:** Have you ever wondered how much money the vending machine at work clears in a single week? Find out! Purchase some of the office favorites in bulk (or better yet have them donated!), mark them up, and sell them from your desk for \$1 or \$2. If you have a way to keep them cold, do the same with bottled water and sodas.

**76. Lunch Room:** Put up a display in the lunch room at work (a sign with your picture and a note about what you are doing); be sure to include a jar for donations and a stack of donation slips.

**77. Dress Down Friday:** Ask your boss if you can host a "Dress Down Friday." Employees buy a button and get to dress down on an assigned day.

## SPREAD THE WORD

**78. Your Active.com page:** Send emails from or about your Active.com fundraising page. Customize your page with a picture and your personal story. Email a fundraising letter to friends, family, co-workers, and ask them to support you. Your email will have a direct link right back to your Web page and when they donate online, they will automatically receive a receipt for tax purposes. Ask everyone to forward on your email to 10 more people!

**79. Say It With Color:** Color your hair a wild color or shave your head for donations. Become a human conversation starter and see how much attention you can draw to your dedication to the cause.

**80. Signing Your Correspondence:** Get in the habit of signing your correspondence with your name followed by "I am training for a triathlon for the cause of my choice, go to ..." and add the link to your active.com page. You'll be surprised at how many people will ask you what it means. You can use this method for letters and emails.

**81. Voicemail:** Change your voicemail and answering machine messages to announce the fact that you are training for a triathlon for the cause of your choice. This will be news to some and a reminder for all!

**82. Labels/Business Cards:** Create (or order) return address labels and/or business cards that state, "I am training for a triathlon for the cause of my choice. Will you sponsor me?"

**83. Blog it:** Keep a running blog outlining your training and always have a link back to your Active.com fundraising page.

**84. Meet the Press:** Contact the editor of your local paper, or your company newsletter -- or both! Ask them to interview you about what you've undertaken and why, and include a request for support. Be sure they include instructions in the story for how readers can make donations to you.

**85. Speak at a place of worship:** Ask your local place of worship if you can speak to their congregation about your training, your cause, and your commitment after a service and set up a table to collect donations afterwards.

**86. Facebook it:** Use Facebook as a way to provide short updates on how you're doing and always have a link back to your Active.com fundraising page.

## TAP LOCAL TALENT/BUSINESSES

**87. Actors:** Ask your thespian-oriented friends to improvise for a "play party" like a murder mystery dinner. Invite all of your friends; serve hors d'oeuvres and ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**88. Ask your yoga instructor or personal trainer for a donated class:** Invite your friends to attend a special yoga/aerobics/step class donated by a trainer. You ask for a specific suggested donation amount at the door, and the trainer gets the chance to build their client base. It's a win/win for all.

**89. Car Wash -- Take Two:** Go to your local car wash and talk with the owner/manager about doing a fundraising event there. Many people go to the same car wash every week. Post flyers a week in advance, then spend a few hours talking with people about what you are doing at the cashier stand. Hand people a flyer, accept donations!

**90. Karaoke Bar:** Ask your local karaoke bar to host a benefit night. Invite all of your friends; ask for a suggested donation at the door.

**91. Rock On!** If you know musicians, ask them to perform a benefit concert at a backyard BBQ, block party or local club. The admission ticket is a check made payable to All Tri for you and your cause.

**92. Play Tickets:** Ask your local playhouse to donate tickets and then auction them off. Better yet, ask them to donate season passes!

**93. Creative Friends:** Ask a local artist or creative friend to donate a piece of art or jewelry that you can auction off. If you aren't creative yourself, ask a friend to design a thank you card or blank note card that you can package, tie up with a ribbon and sell.

**94. Ask your travel agency** for a plane ticket to raffle off, a night in a hotel, or a weekend getaway.

**95. Hair Salon:** Ask your hair salon if they will donate \$2 from each haircut over the course of a weekend.

**96. Gym:** Ask your gym if you, or they, can teach an aerobics, yoga or spinning class as a benefit for you.

**97. Free Rent:** Get your apartment complex to donate one month's rent to sponsor you.

## WORK IT!

**98. Bartender:** Ask your favorite bar if you can guest bartend for a night and keep all of your tips. Make sure you invite all of your friends to come in that night.

**99. We do do windows!:** Offer to clean your neighbors' windows. It's a job no one wants to do, and they might be delighted to have it done for them, especially if it's a donation to your cause.

**100. Use Your Talent:** Offer any talent or skill that you have for a minimum donation; graphic design, massage, hair stylist, make-up stylist, photography, computer skills, sewing, music, baking, cake decorating, etc. Ask talented friends to donate their skills to your fundraising effort. Tie-in ideas with holidays, celebrations and party themes (wedding makeovers, baking party, holiday portraits).

**101. Sell Space on your tri-top:** Sell small blocks of space on the tri-top or swim cap that you will wear for your race for a suggested \$20 donation. Encourage donors to write a tribute to you, a friend or a loved one. The more you can make your donors feel a part of your experience, the more they are likely to give on your behalf. Having them sign something you will "tri" with is a great way to accomplish this.

## FUNDRAISING PROTOCOL

Many fundraisers host local events and activities to help them reach their fundraising goal. If you plan to fundraise through these methods, please remember the following:

Often, local communities have laws governing fundraising activities like raffles, garage sales, leafleting, and other promotional activities.

Please check with your local government before fundraising in these ways. If you plan to post flyers in a public space (grocery stores, malls, parking lots, etc.) please check with the Property Manager first, before posting your materials.

If you're charging admission to a fundraising event, you must indicate it is a "suggested donation" and not a required fee, in order for the amount to be considered a tax-deductible donation. If donors need a receipt, you can download a blank form from [http://www.alltri.org/tribe\\_resources.html](http://www.alltri.org/tribe_resources.html) If you need a copy of our IRS letter notifying us of our non-profit status, that can also be found under tribe resources.