

by NLLIC Staff (Reviewed 2008)

Have you heard of the 80/20 rule? “Eighty percent of the work will be accomplished by 20% of the people.” In other words, the support of volunteers needed to make any fundraising program successful has to come from the involved members of a support group - those people who are dedicated, willing to participate and able to sacrifice time and energy toward making the group’s programs thrive.

### **Asking for Help**

How do you get members to help with a fundraiser? The first step is to discuss the project at group meetings. Then don’t hesitate to pick up a phone and ask them to take hold. Just because the group is starting a new program doesn’t mean everyone is going to jump up on his or her remaining body parts and rush to help. It is necessary to stress that everyone’s participation is crucial to the success of a fundraising effort. People must know that they are needed and that their contribution is of value.

Another method to spur participation is to offer incentives. Everyone needs to be recognized for his or her efforts. Gift certificates, plaques of appreciation, and special prizes are just some of the many ways to express the group’s gratitude and encourage group members to work a little harder. A few dollars spent on incentives and inexpensive thank you gifts can lead to a tremendous profit in dollars, while it adds a sense of fun to the project.

A point to remember is that new members may have thoughts and ideas that are “outside the box.” These people may have new, creative and/or innovative ideas to spawn new marketing, advertising, or operational activities for fundraising. First-time participants are the ones who aren’t stuck in the rut and don’t have the same concepts as those who have done this many times. A fresh idea is worth its weight in gold.

### **Motivation**

One of the more important things to remember is to select a fundraising project that your group has faith in. The project needs to be something the members would willingly invest their money in. If the members aren’t interested, it’s highly doubtful that the general public will be. It is difficult to sell to family, friends and the community at large when the promoters lack enthusiasm and drive. Confidence in a project is contagious and it sells. Another necessary ingredient is letting others know about the services your support group provides. Fundraising projects and events are a great time to advertise the group’s contribution to your community.

To get members involved in fundraising, ask them to volunteer and accept responsibilities for segments of the project. One-man armies are fine, but no one can or should try to do it all. People often don't see the need to help because they think everything is under control. Delegating tasks and responsibilities makes everyone's life a lot easier. Sharing the project makes it fun. Stress the importance of each person's participation, promote fellowship, and foster a sense of accountability for the welfare of the group. It is every member's duty to accept responsibility for the continuation of the group's services, to devote time and effort whenever possible, and to offer that most precious asset - their thoughts and ideas. Cooperation is a must. Working as a team binds us together and adds to the enjoyment realized when members take an active part in their organization.

## ***Here are some of the ways support groups around the country are raising funds:***

- Sponsor a golf tournament or sports event
- Hold a summer barbecue. Ask supermarkets to donate meat and members to bring side dishes
- Charge admission
- Have pot luck dinners, pizza nights, Italian foods and charge admission
- Sell raffle tickets (if legal in your area) on homemade items, i.e., quilts, paintings, art work
- Sell advertising space in your newsletters
- Ask members, family, and friends to clean out basements, attics, and closets and hold yard or garage sales
- Include charitable giving donor cards in your newsletters and mailings
- Hold an auction with donated items from local businesses
- Have bake sales several times a year
- Hold an educational prosthetic fair (with speakers, prizes). Request sponsors and donations
- Holidays, i.e., Christmas, Easter, Valentines Day - sell greeting cards, cook books, hand-made ornaments, artwork, or craft items
- Hold a craft fair with donated crafts
- Collaborate with other organizations on fundraisers, diabetic and cancer groups, independent living centers, disability sports groups
- Provide entertainment - comedy shows, dancing exhibitions, little theater groups
- Do a candy dance - or a chocolate fantasy, offering special chocolate desserts
- Groups with 503(c)3 status can apply for a Community Development Block Grant through their city or county.

Listings of local foundations are usually found in newspapers or are available through libraries.