

DI Fundraising: To the states and beyond!

Congratulations to all of you who strutted your stuff at Regionals. However, for those moving on to states (and maybe even Globals!?), that bothersome duo of finance and fund raising are here.

Good for you if you're a well-oiled fundraising machine. If not, here are some simple things from 10 years of DI fundraising and 20 years of professional marketing that might be useful. Take what makes sense and ignore the rest...

Good luck!

Drew Coburn, DI Parent

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Meet as a team, and include 1 parent from each household. Decide on a short list of fundraising tactics you will focus on – choose 3 or 4 at most.
- Too many ideas will have the group lose focus and sputter.
- Make these group fundraising activities rather than divide and conquer operations.
- Nominate one person to be the keeper of funds and account for the source and amounts collected.

2. WRITE A SIMPLE, SHORT, CRYSTAL-CLEAR COMMUNICATION

- Include what DI is, what your team has achieved, and why you are asking for their support (an example is attached).
- Adapt it slightly for any and every fundraising purpose. But keep the basic story the same for all fundraising activities.

3. GET TO 4 LOCAL INSTITUTIONS... IMMEDIATELY

- Do it by phone or in person. E-mails and letters waste time.
 - In most towns, 4 institutions can create general community awareness in a hurry.
1. The town or local area paper
 - Not a big regional or city paper – they don't care enough about the local story, and they'll go through their "process," which will waste your time. Moreover, most of their readers are not prospective donors.
 2. The town or village board
 - "Can we appear at the next public meeting to celebrate our town's children and ask publicly for donations?" Hopefully, the meeting will be shown on local cable-access television.

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3. The school board

- See the Superintendent, head of the school board, and/or school principal sponsoring the team to ask for exposure and funds at the monthly school board meeting.

4. The local cable access channel

- If your town's like ours, there's a school channel and a town channel—both are program hungry. If a parent shot video at Regionals, the cable station may well run it with a voiceover appeal for funding.

3. GARAGE SALE! (I really did mean 'simple')

- If all households on a team contribute, you can net \$1,000 in a day, and a lot more if it's a multiple team sale.
- Poster the town telephone poles (and cable access channels) with notices.

4. DOOR-TO-DOOR LIKE THE GIRL SCOUTS

- Split each advancing team into 2 groups and map out the town in advance.
- Have 2 parents accompany each group under high school age.
- Get the kids comfortable with a really short appeal – this could leverage the prospective donor and make him or her feel pressured.
- Encourage the kids to wear DI t-shirts, crazy hats/costumes and create a flyer with a team picture on it to give out to all houses in town.
- Like the garage sale, this will net a lot of donations in a day or less.

5. THE TOP-TEN BUSINESS LIST

- At the first fundraising meeting (see “KEEP IT SIMPLE” above), make a list of 10 area businesses to call on for sponsor donations. (If they accept, their names should be included in any subsequent press, cable or public functions about local DI.)
- The kids (and 2-3 parents) should set aside a separate day to make these door-to-door visits.
- Local businesses will be able to respond quickly. Local branches of regional and national chains (e.g., Sam's Club or Home Depot) can be great prospects, but they'll definitely need more lead-time.