



No More Homeless Pets Forum
June 27 – July 1, 2005

Focus on Fundraising

Can raising money to help the animals really be fun and easy? How can you decide which ideas will provide maximum returns from a minimum investment of time and money? Danielle Hamilton and Elizabeth Tolson of HumaneFundraising help you raise funds for your work.

Introduction from Danielle Hamilton and Elizabeth Tolson:

We have been involved with animal rescue and fundraising for 16+ years collectively. We each bring a source of creativity and inspiration to fundraising that makes it successful and playful, always with animals at the heart and soul of the idea.

There is no fundraiser that is impossible for any rescue to accomplish, especially if you can tweak a few ideas to make it work. We encourage hundreds of rescue groups across the country and in several foreign countries to “think outside the kennel or litter box” when it comes to creating a fundraiser that will fit their rescue group perfectly. The fine art of piggybacking fundraisers and building an event to be bigger and better are foremost in our discussions.

We remind groups that nothing is impossible and that even a small success is still something to celebrate. In the past, we've shared their ideas with several online forums, and are now co-moderators for HumaneFundraising on Yahoo. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/> We each believe that sharing fundraising expertise and creativity with other groups will make the rescue world stronger and help many more animals in the long run.

Danielle Hamilton Bio:

Danielle Hamilton grew up in a home with several pets and loving parents who knew the importance of rescuing from shelters. After graduating from college and getting married, she and her husband rescued two dogs from a local shelter to start their lives off right. When they came across an animal rescue with adorable pets for adoption, they wanted to know more. A wise adoption counselor encouraged them to foster rather than adopt so that they could help many more animals find their forever homes. That started Danielle's interest in learning the fine art of attracting media attention and getting adoptions known in the community.

With two toddler boys who demand much of her time and frequent moves (thanks to the military), Danielle quickly realized that getting involved with rescues directly was going to be difficult. So, she turned to the Internet to share her ideas and creativity with several online forums.

Danielle uses her spare time to research fundraising ideas online, read books about fundraising, design new fundraisers and tweak old ones to make them work for individual groups. She is the co-moderator of HumaneFundraising, to which she regularly contributes ideas and suggestions for adjusting a fundraiser to better fit a group's resources.

Danielle shares her nomadic life with her military husband, two boys, and two rescued dogs. Danielle and her family are currently stationed in Texas, but will be moving again shortly. Rest assured that she'll never be far from her computer and her online friends!

Elizabeth Tolson Bio:

Elizabeth Tolson was born in New Bern, North Carolina, where she still resides. >From day one, Elizabeth's parents shared with her their love of animals and she found herself surrounded by cats, dogs and horses as a child. Her love of animals grew and, after graduating from college and settling down in the working world, she decided to volunteer for her local humane society.

It did not take her long to realize how many ways she could volunteer. She tried her hand at rescue, but the heartache was a little too much for her. So, she found her niche in fundraising. Elizabeth put her heart and soul into fundraising, and soon became the chair of a successful fundraising committee. She will tell you that no fundraising idea is impossible - they can all be tweaked to fit a certain group's needs.

Elizabeth is the author of Fundraising and Volunteering for Humane Societies, Animal Shelters and Animal Rescues, which is available on CD at www.elizabethtolson.com.

<<http://www.elizabethtolson.com>> This CD is a comprehensive guide for volunteers in every humane-related organization. Elizabeth has researched and compiled over 100 fundraising ideas and resources.

It is Elizabeth's belief that all aspects of volunteering for a humane society are important - they all rely on each other to exist. Elizabeth hopes that you will become as excited about fundraising and volunteering as she is.

Fundraisers held by only 2-4 people

Question from Mary:

Do you have any suggestions and/or ideas for small groups? When I say small, I mean 2-4 people. We have lots of “names” on our volunteer list, but (as many know) it always comes down to the same 2-4 people who do everything. I would like a fundraiser they can do without killing themselves. Something that is fairly easy with maximum results; fun would be nice, too. Because they are the ones who participate in everything, I don't want to burn them out depending on them to do the fundraisers.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

There are SO many things even smaller groups can do! For some things, it may take a bit more planning over a longer period of time so those few volunteers aren't overwhelmed. But, that's easily managed!

Here are just a few ideas:

- Pancake breakfast sponsored by restaurant. Coordinate with a restaurant to cook pancakes for your group on a specific Saturday or Sunday from 8am to 10am, which is before most restaurants normally open. Applebee's has been wonderful in my area for this! They do all the work, and you just sell the tickets! I sold tickets 2 weeks in advance in front of a local store. We made \$600 just selling tickets that day for \$5 each. A few others sold tickets locally, but most just came that day thanks to the signs out front. We made over \$1,000 from that event with VERY little work done by our group.
- Other restaurant fundraisers. Many restaurants will offer a percentage of the profits from a night to go to your group. Some allow you to hand out flyers that advertise the event. Others will give you a blue plate special that you can advertise with the proceeds from that plate going to your group. You can also host a trivia night at a pub/ bar where people pay into the game about \$40 per team. The winner gets free appetizers from the bar along with some other free giveaway items from beer vendors that many bars already have on hand (t-shirts, posters, keychains, glasses). The beauty of these is that the restaurant/ bar is already doing business, you're just bringing in some extra people on a night they might be slow. This helps them, and they only have to give you a little bit here or there. Usually, you can make \$500 from an event like this. But, for your group, you only need volunteers strumming up support in the community! Talk with managers from major chain restaurants as well as local Mom N Pop places. If you don't hear NO once in a while, you're not asking enough!
- Raffles. First, check your state laws about raffles. Some are very strict while others don't care at all. Basically, you can write letters to businesses asking for donated items. Then, sell the tickets in front of grocery stores, Walmart, at the mall at a kiosk or other vendor, at schools, at church, etc. Then, you can raffle off specific items or create baskets with the donated items and draw the winners at an event or somewhere else in public. 50-50 raffles also work well at events, but then you only get 50% of the money taken in. Auctions are also great but require a few more volunteers, as there are many more auction items than a raffle would require.

- Sell discount cards! Team up with several local businesses to offer buy 1 get 1 free deals on a discount card. This can work for restaurants (TGI Friday's, Bennigan's, chinese buffets,), pizza places (Dominos, Pizza Hut, Mom n Pop) or for discounts on services such as lawncare, hair care, house cleaning, etc. Sell the discount cards for \$10 each. My local school system ONLY does the fundraiser cards! They come around once a year in January to sell to everyone, and that's it. You can sell the cards to your co-workers, friends, family, church members, have them available for sale at local stores, etc. Take a look at these links: <http://www.thediscountcard.com/> and <http://www.fundraising.com/html/dominos/dominos.asp> and <http://www.thepizzacard.com/> Aim to receive at least 75% of the profits on these sort of deals.
- Dress Down Days. In the Army, we have Civilian Clothes Days where people pay to wear normal clothes to work instead of their uniform.
- Sell refreshments at work. My husband's company has a fridge and snack bar available now. We've made about \$3,000 in the past 4 months selling food items and drinks. We stock up on the weekend, then people come in and buy drinks and snacks. We also have a microwave and toaster over there now (bought with proceeds from sales) so they can cook a quick lunch, such as frozen pizzas, Hot Pockets, quesadillas, corn dogs and other frozen and individually packed food items bought at Sam's Club. If you can't manage to have items available every day, you can have just Friday or just Monday, to help ease into the work week.
- Links of Life or other cutouts. Elizabeth has a great idea for putting together links of paper to symbolize collars of animals. You can represent collars of animals euthanized, animals spayed, rescued, licensed, etc. You can also do other cutouts at grocery stores where people pay \$1 to write their name on a cutout of a doghouse, food bowl, cat, dog silhouette, etc. Many organizations already do this at Walmarts and grocery stores. This just requires a few people to sell the links in front of the store, and for the cutouts, the checkout personnel will be the ones selling FOR you! You might want to provide a donated gift certificate from a local restaurant to entice the checkout people to sell more. :)
- Penny wars at schools. This just requires a few people to set up with the school and then organize a pizza party with donated pizzas from local shop for the winning class. Classes will compete to raise the most # of pennies, hoping to reach a goal (such as # of animals impounded, # euth, # rescued, or just \$ amt). Pennies are worth a point, but people can put silver coins in OTHER jars to subtract points from a competing class! To really show their accomplishment, you can put up a cutout picture of a bag of dog food/ litter for every \$10 raised. Laminate the cutouts for future use. A collection drive can be done later on, too, with the students who already know and support your group! For these events, you just need one or two volunteers to coordinate with the school, talk with some classes and generate enthusiasm!
- PARTIES! There are dozens of home party sales companies that will allow you to host fundraisers. Tupperware, Mary Kay, PartyLite candles, SouthernLiving, Home Interiors, Discovery

Toys for kids, Shurepets, and Lillian Vernon Celebrations are just a few! One of the best things about this is that you can make up to 50% of what is sold through your parties, and people can order from anywhere in the US! People already know the brand and many of the items, so it's trusted. And, they'd love to buy some products for Christmas presents or other times in the year! You can also set up your own Consultant Extravaganza! Instead of making people attend 5 or 6 sales parties around Christmas to buy presents for everyone, get them all in ONE place at a convention center, church fellowship hall, school gym or other locale to host mini-booths sometime in early November! Charge a fee for the vendors (\$25 or so), charge a small fee for attendees (like \$1), and then sell refreshments to your captive audience. Be sure your fee for vendors will cover any rental fees for the venue or tables/ chairs. You can receive a % of the earnings from the day (maybe only 10%) as part of your fundraising. You don't want to cut into their sales too much! Encourage door prizes to be donated from the vendors as well as asking them to bring LOTS of take-home sale items. Ordering from the catalog is fine, but it would help if the customers can take many of the items home that day. Or, at least have a sample item on hand to look over! The details of the event will be coordinated in advance so you might need a few extra people the day of the event to help settle people in. As always, your first year might be average, but each year will get bigger and better! The same idea can be used for a crafts bazaar. You only need one or two people in advance to set up advertising, coordinate with vendors and then just 10 or so on the day of the event to set everything up. Actually, 10 might be more than enough, if you count in 5 volunteers plus willing spouses! :)

These are just a handful of events and ideas that can go over really well for a small group. There are dozens of ideas that you can use, and never be afraid to tweak an idea to fit your group. Start small and then grow the idea into something big! Don't forget that many volunteers who rarely attend might just be waiting for the chance to ONLY sign up for a 1 hour time slot at an event! Sometimes they don't want to be 'suckered into' a full day event, or chairing a whole committee... but 1 hour they can do! :) Call them DIRECTLY to ask for a specific time that will work for them. Don't just send out a blanket e-mail asking for volunteers, because then someone will think that someone else already did it, and then no one will do it. Call people directly, and then call the day before to confirm participation. You can also call them directly to ask for ONE task to be done, such as dropping off donation request letters at restaurants and other businesses. Just ONE task seems more manageable than asking them to do everything they possibly can. :)

Please feel free to join our list and chat about some of these ideas. The enthusiasm and creative ideas are contagious!

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

Thank you for your question and hope you find this to be "Fun"draising!

I, too, have worked with small groups and with some careful planning and strategy, you can conduct successful fundraisers. The first types of fundraisers to look at would be ones that I call Effortless Giving.

A great example of an Effortless Giving Fundraiser would be a Sponsor Our Spay. Here, a business would agree to donate some money to help with the spaying of a dog or cat. In exchange, a flier with the picture of the sponsored animal would be printed up notating how this particular business is doing their part to help pet overpopulation by spaying and/or neutering. The flier would be framed and placed in plain site, similar to those "Employee of the Month" pictures --- this would just be the Spay of the Month! I realize that a business may not want to sponsor the complete cost of a spay, but even \$30, \$40, or \$50 would be a tremendous help. Especially if you have several businesses that will sponsor a spay.

Some grocery stores have what is called a Shop and Share Program. Food Lion, in particular, in my area has a Shop and Share. Here your MVP Cards (or whatever discount card your grocer may have) is registered under your group's name. Whenever that card is used (and it does not have to be on a sale product), your group will get a portion of the proceeds of the grocery sale. Checks are sent out quarterly and the group must have \$50.00 in an account and it caps at \$350.00 per quarter. Again, all you have to do is sign up your group and get people to sign up their cards. If this is something you would like to do, I would have a notebook with me at all times. Every time you see your friend, hairdresser, cousin, etc. ask them if you can sign up their MVP card. They won't receive spam mail and their name and address won't be sold. There is even a disclaimer that you can print out from Food Lion explaining Shop and Share. The following States have a Food Lion and I think that every group in these States should sign their name up. North Carolina, Virginia, California, Washington DC, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Maine, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

Don't forget your past adopters. Do you keep a database or list of all your past adopters? A small Letter Writing Campaign For National Cat Adoption Month (June) or National Dog Adoption Month (October) would be a great time to donate to your group in honor of their adopted pet.

If you have a member-based group, think about making pets members of your organization. People might have to pay a \$25.00 membership fee, but for \$5.00, their pet can now be a Card-Carrying Member of the Humane Society. In exchange, on the pet's birthday or "gotcha" day, he will receive a treat as well as his/her name in your newsletter or webpage.

I like how you say that you have 2-4 volunteers and you don't want to burn them out. That is one reason that there is a lot of turn-over in humane societies. Even when you are disappointed with an event, don't let your volunteers know it. And if they are disappointed, make sure that YOU are the cheerleader. You never want them to think that you are disappointed in them. Set aside one day per quarter for a Pizza Party with just your fundraising volunteers -- no discussion of events, etc. Just getting together and relaxing. They will appreciate it.

You did not mention whether you wanted to recruit more volunteers. I always tell people to invest in a guest book or simply a spiral notebook to take with them to all events. At the top of the page, write the specific event and then divide it into columns of Name, Address, Email Address, Volunteer? Have people sign your guestbook. After a short period of time, you can write them a personalized (so important) letter -- something to the effect of, "Dear Ms. Jones. Thank you so much for coming to our Yard Sale on May 15th. This yard sale benefited the abused and abandoned animals of _____." Send her some information about your group, where you will be next, and how 1 hour of time per week could make a world of difference in an animal's life.

***Please note, everyone!! I realize that I have spoken of dogs and cats in the above-named suggestions. I am sure that we have Rabbit, Horse, Pig, Wildlife, etc. rescuers who are also interested in fundraising. Danielle and I can "tweak" fundraisers to make them fit a particular group's needs. We have a variety of different rescues on HumaneFundraising's Yahoo Group and enjoy changing fundraisers to fit those particular needs.

If anyone wants complete instructions on the Links of Life, Sponsor our Spay, Food Lion Shop and Share, or Making Pets Members of the Humane Society, I can send them to you. Just email me at etolson@gibraltar.net. These instructions will include how to approach the business for a sponsor and sample letters for the others.

Happy "Fun"draising!

Name-that-Money-Maker!

Question from Jean:

I was wondering if anybody has had a fundraising contest on naming a rescue pet or a name for a rescue group? The contest could be \$1.00 a suggestion and the winner would get a prize for winning. What do you think?

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

What a fun idea! This is a great way to put a name to a face of a rescued pet. I have seen many rescued pets advertised as numbers and I would much rather see a name.

\$1.00 per suggestion will soon add up for you. Do you have a web page? If so, you can put the Featured Pet on the web page along with a PayPal button. Remember, Paypal buttons are a "must-have" on all webpages as it is so easy to just hit that button as opposed to writing a check, addressing an envelope and mailing it.

Don't forget our youth. Getting them involved at an early age will help them realize the importance of treating animals kindly. I would approach a few of the elementary schools and ask if you can have this contest pitting class against class in a friendly Pet Naming War. The class who has submitted the most suggestions (and \$1.00 bills) will have the pet's name taken from their suggestions. The whole class can have an ice cream party and the child who submitted the winning name can receive a little ribbon or certificate. Bring the pet (if possible and if the pet can tolerate it) to the class for the big announcement.

On the other side of the coin, I like to remember our Elderly Folks. Many of the assisted living homes have people there who would love to participate in an event like this. I realize that they are on a fixed income, but \$1.00 would be an appropriate donation for them to make to name this Featured Pet. Bring the pet (with permission of course) to the Assisted Living Home before and after the contest. Get together with the director of the Assisted Living Home to see what kind of snack you can serve when the winner is announced (remember some may have diabetes, etc). These little visits to the Assisted Living Home can make a world of difference in the pet's life (socialization), the resident's life (sometimes they get no visitors) and your group.

As far as a Name a Group Contest, I would think about combining that into a Name, a Logo, and a Saying of some sort. An acronym would be wonderful. Perhaps my favorite one is HART (Homeless Animal Rescue Team) --- Where Cold Noses Meet Warm Hearts. They have a logo of a heart with a dog and cat inside. This is something that would make your group stand out in the public's eye.

For this one, approach your graphic arts students at your local high school and community college or university (if you have one in your town). The winning student could be awarded a gift certificate to a restaurant, movie with snacks, etc. Think in terms of "starving students!!" You might charge \$5.00 per entry for this one if you wish. The winner could be announced in the paper and, to his/her credit, you could even get the logo copyrighted!

Remember when announcing the contest, ALWAYS advise that the money will go to help abandoned and abused animals. It always helps if 100% of the proceeds will benefit the animals --- people tend to give

more freely. If you can get the prizes donated, then advise the participants "100% of the proceeds will benefit our group thanks to the generosity of Applebee's or Maola Ice Cream, etc."

Good Luck and if you have any questions or want some more help, join our Yahoo Group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising>) and ask away!

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

Absolutely! Both of those ideas are fantastic and certainly do-able for any group in any size community! :)

We've discussed naming contests for litters of animals on our list. This could work for any type of litter, from kittens and puppies to rescued piglets and raccoons! It could also just be a single animal or group of animals, such as a single orphaned foal, or a group of rescued puppy mill dogs. This is a great opportunity for the community to take 'ownership' of the litter and identify with them.

Make the litter media darlings and representative of the hundreds of other newborn animals who don't have homes. Contact some media members (radio DJs, news anchors on TV) who will help you promote this idea. You can have cute and creative bios and photos for the pups/ kits on your website and ask for name suggestions from the community. Your media friends can direct people to your site to e-mail you suggested names. Make sure the names are particular for a pup, such as Mae West for a girl pup, and not a boy pup. And, you might need a disclaimer that names must be approved by board, to throw out any 'icky' names or 'naughty' ones.

Then, the following week, people can VOTE on the names between the top 2 or 3 names per pup. Voting can be done prominently at the mall over a week, or at a larger event such as a community festival or carnival. You can either have people put in any amount of money into the jars, or buy tickets for \$1 and put the tickets in the jar of the name they like. You can even have the jars travel around town from one restaurant to another. Leave the main jars in one location that is always known (such as mall, library, banks!), but have traveling jars make the rounds of money-making places in town to raise awareness and more money. You can also have the media frequently announce the current earnings to generate more support. In fact, one way to win over some media personalities is to name a litter of animals after them! The media attention will help bring in more adoption applications for the media darlings. Be ready to suggest other litters of animals that are available from your group.

The person who suggested the winning names can later be photographed with their namesake pup/ kit. They can also receive a personalized paw painting done by the pup/kit just for the winner! The naming ceremony can be held at a Puppy/ Kitten Shower hosted by your group. This is a great way to bring people TO your shelter/ adoption event and to meet other animals you have available for adoption. You

can have some shower games and donated punch and cake for attendees. The 'shower' will bring in some donated items, such as kitten meal replacement(KMR), kitten/puppy chow, small collars, new toys, etc. You can even do a gift registry for a shower at Wal-Mart or Target! Have a few boxes at the exits where people can drop items off after purchasing.

Naming a rescue might be trickier, since it involves registering a name with the state and then later with the IRS in your 501c3 paperwork. You can use the same method mentioned before with having people vote on just a few suggested or pre-approved names.

A logo contest is a great way to get your new group a logo! The whole 'community participation' angle is wonderful to make the community become involved with helping animals and with the group. Again, it's the 'taking ownership' of an issue and making it known to the public that will really help you.

For the logo contest, print out flyers for the contest and distribute them to local high school and middle school art class teachers, community colleges, colleges/ universities and maybe just a small ad in the paper. Talk with an art supply store to see if they will sponsor the contest for you! They already have advertising dollars going to the media, so a mention of the contest in their ad would be easy enough, along with signs in the store!

Set guidelines for the contest, such as full color graphic, approx size needed, any key elements you want in there such as paw prints, dog house, cat and dog snuggling or list some suggestions to get their wheels turning. Do you want your website, group name, phone number or any other info as part of the graphic, or will they be added later?

All entries must be submitted by a set date, then a committee can review them and narrow down to 3 to be voted on. Or, the committee can just pick one and call it the winner. Set that guideline in advance! State that the winning artist will sign a release form and the graphic will become the property of the group. You can give a professional credential to the upcoming artist. What a thrill for a budding artist to have a professional credential under their belt thanks to that logo! Make sure you emphasize that the logo will become your property, it's important enough to say it twice. The winner can also receive a \$50 or \$100 gift card or a collection of donated items from an art supply store, especially if they help sponsor the contest!

How do we energize others to help us fundraise?

Question from Peyton:

We cannot seem to get our volunteers to come out for our fundraisers. We have tried car washes, bake sales, garage sales, gift wrapping, etc. Apparently, we need to entice these people better or something. Thank you.

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

Great question, Peyton, and one that I think one with which every Humane-Related organization can identify.

Have you established a Fundraising Committee? If not, that may be something you should consider. An ideal Fundraising Committee would be one large enough where the volunteers could be rotated. In other words, half would do the Fundraiser in May and the other half would do the Fundraiser in July. This eliminates possible burnout amongst your volunteers. When establishing a Fundraising Committee, make sure that you have written a detailed description of the Committee and what the members can expect. Emphasize that you promise to make this a "FUN"draising Committee. And yes, it is possible to have fun with Fundraising.

It sounds like your volunteers need to be energized. I think that having a meeting of volunteers is a good place to start. Make sure that all volunteers attend --- the active and inactive ones. Mention that you want to discuss something of importance and if they could take a few hours out of their time one night. Use this time to learn about your members. Be honest with them (without fussing or criticizing their volunteering) and ask them to be brutally honest with you. Find out why they don't volunteer. Is it lack of time? Is it the fact that they don't want to get up at 4:00 a.m. for a yard sale. There is a reason why they don't volunteer and you should ask them to speak up as it would benefit the group and, in essence, the animals. Write the answers down, take them home and work with the problems.

Sometimes volunteers feel that they are needed just to do the work. Turn the tables a little bit. Tell them that you would like to get some new ideas and could they help you with that. If a volunteer presents an idea, NEVER dismiss it – no matter how bad it may sound. Take the idea and see if you can work with it. Nothing would make a volunteer more proud than to see that an idea they presented was used successfully.

Are you making sure that your volunteers know what is expected of them at the fundraiser? Too many times, I have seen a fundraiser where some of the volunteers are just standing around because the Chairman has not given them a specific job to do. Giving a volunteer a title gives them that little extra incentive. For instance, Mary is known as the Cashier, Debbie is known as the Yard Sale Haggler, Margaret is known as the server at the bake sale. Make sure to ask them what they would be comfortable

in doing. The one thing you NEVER want to hear from a volunteer is "What do you want me to do" when they arrive at the event. They should be apprised of what they will be doing and ready to go.

I found this to be very important also. Basically, one hand washes the other within Humane Related Organizations. In other words, without the Rescuers, the Fundraisers would not need to raise money. And without the Fundraisers, the Rescuers and Fosterers would not have the money to help the animals. Therefore, it is my opinion that the Rescuers and the Fosters should show up and help with the Fundraiser. The Fundraisers get to see the Happy Endings of all the hard work that the Rescuers do. The Rescuers should see (and experience) the hard work that the Fundraisers do. In other words, just because you are having a fundraiser, that does not mean that the other volunteers should not help.

Sometimes the word FUNDRAISER scares people. They envision Blood, Sweat and Tears. We all need to change that common conception. After a fundraiser, talk of the fun and the bonding you had. Reward the volunteer participants with a Certificate of Appreciation --- a little pat on the back goes a long way. Have a Volunteer Appreciation Party Semi-Annually. People will begin to realize that Fundraising is not painful!

The MOST important thing I can think of is to NEVER let your volunteers hear you complain. Wait until you get home and complain to your husband, kids, or even your pets. But NEVER let the volunteers hear you complain. If you have a bad fundraiser and are disappointed in the outcome, do not let your volunteers know you are disappointed. They will sometimes think that either you are disappointed in them or that if they volunteer in the future, you might be disappointed.

Hopes this helps. If you have any questions on any of the following suggestions, email me at etolson@gibraltar.net Also, join our HumaneFundraising group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/>), as we are always discussing ways to energize volunteers.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

The problem that you are facing is one that most groups face at one time or another. I know it can feel overwhelming when you don't have enough volunteers and every event is run by the same few. I've been there and done that, too. Here are a few ways that I've used to turn things around and encourage more participation.

- Thank them and support them. Every single time a volunteer gives you their time, thank them genuinely and generously. A hearty handshake, pat on the back, hug, or a thank-you card can really make a big difference in someone's day. Their hard work must be appreciated. There are

lots of ways to inexpensively thank volunteers and you can find many of them through Google. You might also consider setting up a volunteer recognition program where people are honored at an annual event with a special certificate, a funny certificate (best brownies at a bake sale), or small token of appreciation (Kudos snack bar to say Kudos to you!). Host a potluck to make friends out of volunteers. People need to feel valued! Volunteers are not paid -- not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

- Supporters vs. Volunteers... Identify whether people signed up to actually volunteer their time/ talents or whether they wanted to just 'support' you somehow, but not sure how. Many volunteers sign up because they want to be a part of a group for various reasons: they want the camaraderie, they own animals and really like them, it looks good on a resume, or you just caught their eye at a booth. They may not be willing or able to give blocks of time for an event. If they would like to support you, then make them members of your organization (non voting members can be had by any group). Many times, people like your group and the work you do, but they don't have time to volunteer. If this is the case, find SOMETHING ELSE for them to do, such as:
- Volunteers who can do OTHER things (seniors, etc). As mentioned above, there are many groups of people who may love your group, but they just can't get out and volunteer the way others can. Very busy professionals won't be able to give oodles of time, and neither will stay at home parents of newborn or toddler children. They won't be able to easily carve out 8 hours on a Saturday for an adoption event, but they might be able to find ONE hour to help. Or, find something else they can do to be useful while not interfering with their regular lives. Stay at home parents can return e-mails for the group, or write press releases after the kids are napping, and drop of flyers at businesses while they run their normal errands. Busy professionals can help you make contacts with their friends and personal contacts. One 10 minute phone call every week doesn't sound like too much to ask, but it is amazing how much a professional person can accomplish for you when they reach out to talk to a friend about your group. An elderly person who can't leave the home much can still knit or crochet blankets for the animals to snuggle. Or, you can use their professional experience to help you... you might be sitting next to a marketing director from a fortune 500 company the next time you are at a community center! Volunteers don't have time to spare, they have heart to spare!
- Call them directly to ask for assistance, make it personal that you need Mary's help for one hour on Saturday. "Can you do it, Mary?" If it helps, make up a script of what you need to say to convince her. "Mary, this is Martina from Super Rescue. I'm calling to ask what time block would be good for you to volunteer at next Saturday. We're hosting our annual fundraiser and I need several people who can give us just one hour, instead of leaving our planning committee to do all the work themselves. As you know, this is our biggest fundraiser and we really need it to be a success! Are you able to help sell magnets from 3pm to 4pm? I also have 5pm to 6pm available." Those in direct marketing will tell you that scripts are lifesavers and you need to present concrete

objectives (specific time blocks) for them to accept. Don't be wishy washy, asking for any time you can give. Set a time slot for them to work. Then, when they are working, pair them up with a mentor in the group to encourage them to come back again!

Two other quotes to remember:

- Those who WANT to do something will make time for it, and those who DON'T want to do something will not be able to find time for it. "If you try to find time for something that matters, you never will. You must make the time." Unknown
- "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

Take a look at Energize, Inc. (<http://www.energizeinc.com/>) for more info on energizing volunteers!

Drowning in debt and need some quick cash!

Question from Debbie:

Hi! I'm part of a very small but active shelter and rescue group. We don't have our own facility, but occupy the Adoption Center at a PETSMART store. The rest of our many animals are in foster care. Foster moms and dads pay for food, litter, etc. We, of course, pay vet bills. Our adoption fee of \$100 just barely covers the costs of rescue, vetting, shots, deworming and generally just getting our animals ready for a permanent home. If there's just one thing out of the ordinary, i.e. upper respiratory infection (URI), injuries, etc., the bills mount and we're in debt.

We're also young (about 5 years old) and are just learning about fundraising. We participate in all PETSMART activities (photos with Santa, Adoptathon weekends, etc.) and do off-site weekends at the PetCo stores to generate funds for their seasonal fund drives.

We have 2 major fundraisers a year: one at a restaurant where tickets are sold (\$35, of which we get half and the rest covers lunch) and a second one at a local bar where no admission is charged. We get part of the bar proceeds. For both events we sell raffle tickets and have a silent auction for which we solicit donations. Our volunteers also donate gift baskets and other items of interest. Our luncheon this year generated about \$3000 and last year's bar event generated about the same. Unfortunately, we're still in debt and have run out of ideas.

We work with two vets who have often asked us to take injured animals who are brought to them. We still get our "shelter discount" but are expected to pay the vet bills, which usually involve surgery and which can be enormous!

HELP!! We're drowning in debt and looking for new and innovative ways to raise money.

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

Small but ACTIVE – that is great to hear. Sounds like you all have a positive attitude and that is a great place to start.

Organization is where you will need to start and this is the perfect time of year to begin. There is a site which everyone should bookmark AND print out. The reason I advise people to print out important sites is because any given time or any given day, the online site may be taken down (I know this from experience when I went to visit a bookmarked site).

Anyway, <http://www.petroglyphsnm.org/dates05.html> is a website that is vital to all humane-related organizations (no matter whether cats, dogs, horses, pigs, tigers, rodents). They take each month and notate the important humane-related dates, along with a link. These links give suggested news releases and other valuable information. Keep in mind that they will update it for the year of 2006, but you will have an idea of when the new dates will be.

I would look at these months and start planning immediately for 2006. You certainly want to celebrate something in February as it has quite a few important dates. The Scoop and Poop (or G'Litter Box) fundraiser is one that is fun for all while at the same time, successful for your group. May also has a lot of important dates. Making a fun-filled day for May Day for Mutts would be very successful also. During that day, you could have Doggie Olympics, a Mutt-minster Show, and a Retrieving Retriever Raffle (<http://www.bestfriends.com/archives/forums/052404fundraising.html#thirteen>). All of these are proven to be successful fundraisers. October is very busy for dogs and cats alike. National Feral Cat Day is in October, as is Adopt a Dog month. Consider having a Sterile Feral Cat Walk. No, you won't walk your cat! But, you can have a Walk to Benefit the Cats. Walkers can paint whiskers on their face and nose and wear a little tail. Pictures of adoptable cats can be pinned to their t-shirts. Then we find ourselves in December.... Great time for a Cookie Walk and the Christmas Tree Fundraiser.

Again, I would take this site (after printing it out) and sit down with the members of your group and start planning for 2006. This will prevent you from rushing around trying to figure out what kind of fundraiser you will conduct in February or April, etc. Planning the activities mentioned above will alleviate a lot of pressure on you to have to always come up with new ideas.

Of course, it is not too late to think about 2005. August 20 is National Homeless Animals Day and if you start in July with the Links of Life Fundraiser, you could easily raise a few thousand dollars by August. And, in August, you certainly should start planning for the Christmas Tree Fundraiser. This is a fundraiser where a Christmas tree is set up with red and white lights. People will purchase a red light in honor of a pet or a white light in memory of a pet. A picture of the pet is placed beside the light and their name is written on an Honorary or Memorial Board which stands beside the tree. This is one of the most successful fundraisers I have ever done and it is so very meaningful to the people who donate.

Use your Media!!!! You mentioned the fact that you occasionally deal with injured animals. Have you considered printing a story of an injured pet? Maybe you can get your vet to even speak to the newspaper or television. A plea for financial assistance would greatly help you to help this pet. Keep the public apprised of how the pet is doing. Let them know how much money was raised. If you raise more money than is needed for vet bills, establish a fund in honor of the pet. People can continue to donate to that fund to help other animals who are injured.

Make sure that you have a Wish List available at PETSMART and with you at all times. You mention that your foster parents provide the food and litter. We certainly don't want to burn them out, so if you can get some donations of food, litter, flea medication, etc., that would be great.

Always take a donation jar with you to each event. Do you have an artist within the group or the family? Have them draw a picture of a dog and cat standing under an umbrella and underneath it "Shower Us With Your Change". Donations in donation jars add up.

Remember one thing. You don't have to have a fundraiser each month. Like I said earlier, use your media. Sometimes, believe it or not, a simple Public Service Announcement (PSA) on something like making sure pets are not left in hot cars, keeping cats inside at Halloween, dangers of antifreeze, etc are appealing to the public, plus your name is associated with some very important tips.

If you want information on the Sterile Feral Cat Walk, Links of Life, Christmas Tree Fundraiser, or other mentioned fundraiser, I can email instructions. Contact me at etolson@gibraltar.net or join our HumaneFundraising Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/>.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

Sounds like you are doing well with your fundraisers, but might need one or two more to help out you back in the black. There are several ideas that you could try that won't put extra strain on your group's

fundraising capabilities. I know you don't want to accept fewer animals, so we need to focus on bringing in MORE money! :)

- Try teaming up with another organization to host an event. Or, be part of another event where you can tag along and do a fundraiser. Basically, you need to bring in some extra funds without having to do ALL the work. You can co-host a car show or festival, a yard sale or a collection drive. Each of these events can be co-hosted making it easier for your group to handle while bringing in other workers to help out! Some yard sales generate over \$5,000! One friend hosts a bike ride through town that generates over \$10,000 the last 2 years in a row!
- Sell things that people want. Pizza cards, discount cards, entertainment books, and other items can help you bring in more money without putting out too much effort planning an event. I've sold magnets and jewelry and teddy bears in front of a grocery store, bringing in over \$500 in profit in about 5 hours. Not bad. We found some products that our community would like (military, support troops items). Your community may like something a bit different. Discover that item and sell them for profit.
- Host a food booth at a festival or carnival. This one day activity can bring in several thousand without too much effort. It will help you bring in more money as well as make you a prominent figure in your community on various occasions. Hot dogs, drinks, pretzels, and chips are usual hits. You can find vegetarian carnival food items listed at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/> in our Files section in the folder for Food Related Fundraisers.
- Since your current fundraisers are doing well, I'd also recommend you take them to the next step, make them Bigger and Better! For the pub one, find out if a local band would be willing to play for free that night. Charge a small admission, ask for a % of proceeds from all drinks that night or up the price by \$.25 that night as a fundraiser. Host a trivia contest about drinks, musicians/ bands, food items, etc where people pay to enter their team and try to win some 'celebrity' items or free appetizers and drinks. You can also host a pub crawl event or a passport event where people are encouraged to stop off at several pubs along a strip. A game of lawn darts or poker can be done at each place while people spend time at the pub eating and drinking.
- Another option could be a progressive dinner hosted at restaurants along a strip. You already have a good contact with one that allows you to do the special lunch. This is similar to the poker run or pub crawl ideas listed above, but with different courses of a meal available on special at each event. You can also ask your restaurant friends if they will allow you to host a Tabby Tuesday once a month where \$2 from a main entree will be donated to your group. This would be free money with little effort on your part.
- Another idea might be to start what I call a HEAL fund for medical costs. This can be separate from other funds and you can fundraise for it independently. HEAL stands for Helping Every Animal Live. Target past adopters to donate to this fund as well as raising awareness from local

residents. Talk with your vets to see if you can have an, "Add a Dollar" campaign at their offices where people can add on \$1 to \$20 on their medical bill to donate directly to your medical fund at that vet. Just a sign in the office and a casual mention at checkout can bring in \$5 a day from vet clients who already love animals and won't notice an extra \$1 or \$5 on their bill. Print out several brochures on your group and on the medical fund and keep them available at the vet's office! Your vets will WANT to participate because it shows they care, it brings in money for you to pay them, and it's good advertisement for their vet office if you are advertising about the fund!

- You may want to negotiate with the vet that if you are going to take in animals which they bring to you, then you need to have a larger discount on those animals, such as paying for the surgery at cost. Let them know that you are satisfied with the discount on the other animals you bring in, but feel that it is a lot to take on for your struggling budget if you are frequently being handed seriously ill/ injured animals and expected to incur all costs. Ask if they will give you a trial run of 6 months to see how you both feel about the situation and for them to notice how much \$ they aren't really losing when they give the surgeries and meds to you at cost for those special few animals.

Getting food items donated

Question from Cathie:

I am having trouble with area stores to donate food items for fundraisers: such as grillables for a cook-out. We do not have the funds to purchase and are a small, grassroots organization. Any suggestions? Thank you.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

Most Sam's Club stores will donate picnic type items for a fundraiser. I've heard good things about BJ's, too, but things like this usually depend on the managers.

First point-- Make it a partnership. Call the store and ask to set up a meeting (or another time to talk on the phone at more length) to discuss a partnership between your group and the store. Make it sound like a business arrangement. For their kind donation, you will be able to help them with their advertising budget by announcing to the world your partnership. You will ADVERTISE for them at your event, on any t-shirts and flyers and other promotional materials, you'll thank them publicly in the paper and on air for their generosity, and you'll provide them with a certificate of appreciation to hang in their store. A thank-you card will be sent as well directly to the managers and staff. And, if they have a banner, you can hang it up for them at your event as an advertiser/ major sponsor. They will also be given a booth space or table to talk about their store, sign people up for memberships if it's a warehouse club, or just pass out menus and such.

When you call the manager, set up the meeting time for a few days in advance. Bring with you a copy of your 501c3 (if you are), a brochure for your group, any advertising materials you have, and your proposal for the partnership. Tell them flat out what you can provide and be honest. If you only think you can provide on air coverage of the event, mention that you are working closely to make that a reality, but it is not yet confirmed. They may have some advertising partners that they work closely with which could help you! Bring all your materials in a folder and look and act like a professional. You are the face person for your group... and there are little animals counting on your success! :) This is certainly no time to be shy-- be confident and ready to talk about the most important thing you are working on...rescuing animals!

Another option is to stagger the asking and spread out the donations among several restaurants, caterers, butcher shops, warehouse stores and grocery stores. By asking for ONE donation from each store, they may be more likely to assist you. In asking for this, start with securing the donation for the main course, and then ask another group of restaurants for the sides and desserts needed. Be sure to mention that you desperately need their help, but you don't want to overburden them, so you are asking for just one course of the meal and are hoping to secure other sides and desserts from another restaurant or store.

They may appreciate that you aren't asking for EVERYTHING from them which makes it easier to say yes. Or, they will offer an additional side along with the entree. If they decline the partnership, then don't fret, because you can still ask for a discount on providing the entree at a drastically reduced cost. Hold that card until the very end! Personally, I wouldn't even mention it at the end of the same meeting unless you are faced with a tough manager and you want to leave the door open for future possibilities to work together. Usually, a manager will be nice enough to say that they can't help you this time, but try again later. If they do, then you can come back in a few days and ask for the discount, but only after you had no luck with getting a main course from ANYONE else in town. This is also a great time to find out from your volunteers and supporters if anyone has a connection with ANY restaurant/store in town! They may want to call ahead to put in a good word for your group, or even go on the meeting with you!

Remember, keep your chin up if you are declined. If you don't hear NO every once in a while, you're not asking enough!!! Always leave on a positive note and thank them for their time. Move on to another restaurant/store and you'll be sure to have more confidence and better luck! It's just like interviewing for a job...the more you talk about the prospects and the project you're working on, the better you start to sound!

If you get a wacky mix of foods, don't worry! It'll be a showcase of a variety of tastes and flavors, just like a mutt is a collection of a variety of breeds! It'll be like you meant for that to happen! :) Be sure to remind

them that this is good advertising for the food that these restaurants/stores provide! This is a great tip if you're dealing with a caterer! You can also offer to have biz cards, brochures or take-out menus available from the restaurants/businesses.

Hope this helps give you some inspiration to make a few phone calls and talk with some managers!

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

Getting donations does seem to be a problem sometimes. What I have tried to do is plan ahead. By that, I mean that I make myself known at certain grocery stores and restaurants.

There are two particular grocery stores which I frequent weekly. I am such a familiar face that I even forgot my wallet and the manager let me take my groceries home and come back and pay later. Additionally, I take my father to Golden Corral every Sunday morning. Because of the fact that the managers of both places know me, I have been able to get donations of drinks and bread and chips from the grocery store as well as whole pies from the Golden Corral.

After establishing some sort of bond with a store or restaurant, you will be able to ask them for a donation. Start off small and think of things that they may not realize would help your fundraiser (i.e. a box of brownie mix and some eggs would help your bake sale). Think outside of the kennel on what items you want donated!

Don't forget your volunteers, members of your organizations, etc. So many times, members of an organization want to help, but physically cannot help with a large-scaled fundraiser, and emotionally cannot foster or rescue. Remember that volunteering does not limit itself to foster care, rescue, and fundraising. Ask the inactive members if they would consider donating a few two liter drinks, some buns or bread, or even make some brownies.

Consider approaching your bread outlets also. They have a great selection of not only breads, but snacks as well.

Like Danielle said, prepare before meeting with the manager of the store. Even design a sample poster that would be place on the corner of your table. Something to the effect of "100% of the proceeds of this bake sale will go to our Spay/Neuter Fund thanks to the generosity of Sam's Wholesale."

Don't forget your Mom and Pop Grocery Stores. They are more than willing to help out in many cases and, again, certainly deserve recognition for helping you out.

I would suggest sitting down with a phone book and going from A to Z and think about where you frequently go and who you know there. Make a list. Prepare yourself with a copy of the fundraiser and how they will be able to help. Make an appointment and think positive!! You will do fine!

Fundraising for a vehicle

Question from Nancy:

I am the volunteer Humane Educator for our not-for-profit animal welfare organization. Over the past 4 years we have created a wonderful education program that is very respected by the school systems in our County. I conduct [free of charge] approximately 300, one-hour programs each school year. We have no paid staff. I have been using my personal vehicle to conduct these programs but am putting over 4,000 miles a year on it and can't continue to do that. We would like to raise enough money from local businesses to purchase a new mini-van to use primarily for the education programs. The van would also be used on weekends to transport animals from our local City/County animal control shelter to off-site adoption events [our group does the adoption outreach for the shelter] and to transport the pets of elderly/handicapped County residents who have no other way to get their pets to the vet or groomer [about 15-20 trips a year]. We need to raise between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

A major employer in our area has graciously donated \$4,000 in seed money for this purpose. So what do I do now to get other large companies in the community to donate to this cause? I've put together a packet of information about our organization and our education programs [including letters of recommendation and program evaluations from teachers]. Do I mail this information to the companies and tell them someone will be calling them to set up an appointment? Do I simply make an appointment and give them the info then? What should the cover letter say? How much do I tell them when I call to make the appointment?

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

Sounds like you have a great program going with many different aspects from education to transportation. Congratulations!

I would first start off with a catchy name for your van. We have all heard of the SNIP It Mobiles for Spay Neuter, etc. I would create a catchy name for your van. The reason is because you want your donors' names associated with this particular van. When approaching donors and sponsors, I would have a sample poster which would be indicative of one of those magnetic signs that are placed on the side of the van. The magnetic sign would have the name of your van and "SPONSORED BY: (list of sponsors)". That would be free advertisement for any business who wants to sponsor your van.

Corporate sponsors would be a great place to start here. You did not mention what type of sponsor the first donor was, but to begin with, I am thinking that you should really approach some of the car dealerships. Talk to them about sponsoring this particular van. Additionally, if you purchase the van from them at a discount possibly as well as the fact that they will be donating money, that would be a great tax break (and we will soon be approaching the end of the year).

Remember when approaching businesses for corporate sponsorship, you don't want to start off with sort of a gloom and doom approach saying we need between \$15,000.00 and \$20,000.00. That may overwhelm them. If you got 50 sponsors to donate \$300.00, then you would have the \$15,000.00. I know we want to ask for more, but I have found that if you ask for a smaller amount of money, many times, you will get more! Regarding appointments, I would call and make an appointment advising that you wish to discuss a matter with them. Sometimes if we go into too much detail on the phone, their mind starts to wander, people come into their office, etc. And be prepared: some will say NO. But Danielle's favorite saying is "If you don't hear no once in a while, you are not asking enough." And that is certainly true.

Some corporations may have a Matching Gift Program where they will match the donations that employees designate. Look into that in your area. Or, possibly, a group of employees could get together and donate \$10.00 each. If you have 20 employees who are willing to donate, that is \$200.00! I know it is a far cry from the \$15,000 that you wish, but we all know that any amount of money adds up.

Do you have a newsletter which you send out to members? You could create a special fund for your van. Again, even a \$10.00 donation from a member would be \$10.00 less that you have to raise.

Your media can be your best friend in this situation. Ask them to do a three part series on your group and what you do. The first part could be on humane education and how it so important for our Youth. The second could be on the transportation of the animals for the elderly and how important animals are to Seniors. Finally, the "How you can help series". Talk about purchasing a van, the fact that any donations would be tax deductible, and how it would be used solely for Humane Education and Transportation.

Hope this helps you. Don't forget to join our HumaneFundraising Group as the ideas flow freely on getting sponsors and other fundraising ideas. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/>.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

What a fantastic program you have going! Congrats on getting some seed money! That must be an inspiration for your group... someone else sees how important a program it is and how needed it is in your

community! Now, make it a media campaign for MORE help! How about hosting a mini-car show to earn some more of the money for your new wheels? Or, you can start a media campaign asking people to "Pimp Out Our Ride", which translates to "spiff up our van". Show that right now you only have a Matchbox van or an old Barbie/Bratz van, and you obviously can't fit any dogs into that! That would be such a fun media campaign!

First, I would contact several local car dealers and car rental places in town to find out how much a van you need would cost. Think of the type of van you want. Do you want one with rows of seats, where seats can be removed if necessary? Or, do you want a utility van with just the front two seats and lots of shelves/ grooming cages welded into the sides? Price those out and see what you need to get.

While you are talking with several managers, ask them if they would be able to give you a discount on the van, particularly a used one. Rental companies and new/ used car dealerships frequently have older model vans that are being used for courtesy vans for customers. And, ask whether they would be willing to donate a van to you! Can't hurt to ask! In my town, we have a van for a boys and girls club that has a local car dealer's name painted on the side of it.... something like, "Boys & Girls Club thanks PATRIOT Cars for their support!" It's not just on a magnet, it's painted right on, and boldly! That's some GREAT advertisement for Patriot and is noticed every time that van drives around town! A driving billboard! What could be better for Patriot?

So, call the manager, chat with him briefly about the type of van you need and ask to meet with him further. By speaking with him directly, you can usually ascertain whether they are in a position to donate a van outright, or whether you need to suggest a discount. This will also give him time to look into the matter and meet with you in a few days. Then, bring with you ALL your paperwork, including a copy of your 501c3, biz cards, brochures about your group, fact sheet, etc. Include a cover letter/ proposal for the van, including how much you already have donated (the \$4,000), how much you hope to raise through fundraising (possibly another \$5,000) and what you are looking for from them. Be sure to lay out in writing any advertising you can do for them, such as having their logo painted onto the van.

Talk with some local senior citizen groups and organizations that help seniors. Ask you local Meals on Wheels program what they did to get a van. Those groups along with some churches may be willing to help you plan and host an event, or donate, since you'll be helping seniors in the community to care for their pets! Chat with a geriatric doctor or two to see if they would be willing to donate towards the purchase of a van to help their senior patients. Doctors KNOW that animals reduce your blood pressure and help people live longer.

Don't forget to look for grants online that may be able to help you! Do a Google search for +grant +foundation +animal +van and see what you get.

<http://fdncenter.org/> is a good place to browse for some grant-writing tools. Browse around several sites to see where other groups got their vans! Also, since you are doing SO many programs at various schools, you can always ask the kids to assist you by hosting a fundraiser, such as a penny war or collection drive. This will help your rescue as well as free up some funds to support the van. And, of course the van will need some maintenance, so talk with a local mechanic to see if they'll help you out for free.

Take a look at this grant: <http://www.banfieldcharitabletrust.net/guidelines.html> and here http://www.americanhumane.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_shelter_services_grants_available

Hope this gets your creative juices flowing! Feel free to join us on HumaneFundraising to chat and work on these ideas! I'm sure we have several members who have researched the van idea as well!

Turning a fundraiser into a HUGE event!

Question from Cassandra:

I've written in before about our small humane society which always seems to be in financial crisis. This year is more serious than ever before and the board is actually thinking hard about setting a closing date. We are constantly fundraising, there is usually at least one (or sometimes 2-3!) events going on a month but we never seem to make any money. We had a Pet Expo last weekend, with about 35 vendors and still we only raised just barely \$2000.

We have a "Ride For Lives" coming up this August. It is a motorcycle poker run around town. Do you have any suggestions for making this a HUGE event to bring in a LOT of money. This shelter is in desperate need of funds (as we always seem to be) and I just don't want to see it close down. Thank you!!

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

I hope that your Board will be positive about some of these suggestions. It takes work to make a shelter run in the black, but we can't let our four legged friends down!

Sit down with your Board and go over your budget. Where can costs be cut? A well-publicized Wish List may help cut the costs of things that add up -- things like paper, stamps, pencils, pens, etc. If you don't have a Wish List, create one and place it in plain view in your shelter, newsletter, vet offices, etc. Also,

don't let small increments of money get you or your Board down. You never want to be heard saying "Only \$10.00," or, "Only \$1000.00!!" That may turn people off and they will either stop donating or stop volunteering. When you get any amount of money, no matter if it is a quarter in a donation jar, it will add up slowly but surely.

Create a goal (a reasonable goal) with your Board. Maybe you want to raise \$30,000.00 for the year. That may scare people (including your Board). However, if you put it in a visual, it is not so bad. We have all seen the Red Cross Thermometer that is divided into Dollar increments and how it is colored in when money is raised. A simple large, sturdy poster board (or something larger if you wish) where you can draw a Dog Bone on it and mark it off in increments of \$100.00 would be a perfect visual. This would give the public an idea of how much money you want to raise, how close you are to the goal, and that you are genuinely striving to meet the goal. And, you are at the perfect time to start planning this. Before you know it, January will be here and that will be the Kick Off to your Bone Donation Drive!

Plan a Calendar of Events with your Board. Set a goal of how much you would like to raise at each fundraiser. A yard sale, when carefully planned, can bring in easily \$4000.00. Yes, it is a lot of work, but the rewards far outweigh the work. Things like large scale yard sales should be planned months in advance. I was volunteering with a Humane Society where we started collecting on March 1 for a yard sale that was held in the middle of May. To start working on a Calendar of Events, visit <http://www.petroglyphsnm.org/dates05.html> and look at the humane related dates. You should have your calendar for '06 drafted by November.

Along with fundraisers, donors and sponsors will be the backbone of your shelter. Do you keep a record of people that have adopted from you? If so, September has National Pet Memorial Day. This would be a great time to try a small letter writing campaign. Writing a personal letter to people who have previously adopted might bring in some donations. Remember to make it personal. Form letters are frequently a turn-off. But if you write a letter to the effect of "Dear Ms. Jones: On March 7, 2005 you made a huge difference in Fluffy's life by adopting her. Fluffy was with us for three months and I think she was beginning to wonder if she was ever going to be adopted. We are so glad that you came into her life and we know she is too. We feel that Fluffy would want you to make a difference for the other dogs and cats. A small donation to our shelter in honor of Fluffy would enable us to keep our doors open so more dogs and cats can find their way into excellent homes such as yours." That is a personal letter where you remember the adopter and the animal. Not a Form Letter!!!

Next, think of sponsors. Start a Friends of Our Shelter Club. These are people and/or businesses that will sponsor a kennel for a dog or cage or room for a cat. Each group is given an animal-related name. For instance, the donor of \$2000 to \$5000 would be in the Great Dane Club. The donor of \$1000 to

\$1999 would be in the Golden Retriever Club. The donor of \$500 to \$999 would be in the Queen of Sheba Cat Club. All the way down to the minimum donation of \$25.00 per month which could be the Tabby Cat Club. Of course, these sponsorships are tax-deductible and can be deducted from a credit card, or automatically withdrawn from a checking account on a monthly or quarterly basis. Don't stop at businesses. I have known bridge clubs, golfing foursomes, etc. to sponsor animals and cages. Remember, think outside of the kennel or the litterbox!

I am guessing that you have owner turn-ins. Many shelters are now asking for a donation along with the pet. Even if the donor gives you \$10 or \$20, that is money that will be added to your goal. Of course, some will not donate, but the shelter will certainly still take the animal. Most owner turn-ins are donating a little money from what I understand.

On our HumaneFundraising Yahoo forum, we have been discussing the possibility of having colleges, sororities, fraternities, etc. sponsor pets or shelters. Many of these students are far away from home and would be thrilled to donate either time or \$25.00 a month. In exchange, to allow them to come out and socialize and play with the pets would be an asset.

You mention that you have frequent fundraisers. You might want to consider having small ones during the month with one blow-out fundraiser each quarter. These blow-out fundraisers would be planned well in advance and consist of PiggyBack Fundraising. Danielle and I love to talk about PiggyBack Fundraising. It is a wonderful way to have three or more fundraisers at one time, in one venue, and the visitors don't realize that they are donating three times over. For instance, have a yard sale at your shelter. At the same time, have an open house where people can walk through your shelter. Have a little coin container in front of each cage with a special note from each animal asking, "Help Change my Life...Drop a Little Change in this Box". Of course, you should have some baked goods and beverages available for sale, too. There you have it! Three fundraisers without people realizing it: Yard Sale, Bake Sale, and Donation Containers. Other examples of PiggyBack Fundraisers would be to have a Walk-a-Thon and at the end, have a bake sale, cook-out, and raffle. You could celebrate May Day for Mutts where you would also have the Retrieving Retriever Raffle, MuttMinster Show (charging entry fees) and Doggie Olympics (charging entry fees). Again, you will sell food and drinks. Christmas will allow you to do the Christmas Tree Fundraiser and a Cookie Walk. These are multiple fundraisers done at one time.

Your Board will need your help to realize not to look at the negative side of money issues. I realize that it is hard to do, but remind them that everyone must think positive in order for the volunteers to keep working, etc. Make sure that your Board does not look at the down-side of things. "Only \$2,000," is nothing to sneeze at. That is \$2,000.00 more than you had before the event.

Please join our HumaneFundraising Group as we have members who run shelters and have wonderful ideas too. Join by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/>.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

I'm glad you're jumping in to try to save this struggling shelter! There are so many things that can help out, and sometimes, it's hard to see them when you're already deep in the hole. Please feel free to pass our info on to your board, and encourage them to join our list to help find new ideas to revive the shelter! I lived in a small town for a few years and after moving away, got a frantic e-mail from a volunteer at a shelter there who said that they didn't have enough money to even finish out the month. She started trying some of our fundraisers a bit at a time, and then brought back their golf outing. It made a big difference for them!

You might need to check on the shelter's spending...where is the money going? Medical expenses? Are adoption costs not covering enough? Are your fundraisers too expensive to start off with? Do your events cost almost as much as you bring in? You need to examine the finances to see if there are any other issues that need to be addressed. After that, change up your fundraising. If it's a matter of some serious medical problems or desperately needing new facilities or repairs on the building, then you need to advertise that!

If your fundraising events are not bringing in lots of money, they may not be the best ones for you. If you're tabling in front of a store for donations or just selling magnets at a booth, you probably won't bring in hundreds of \$ a day. But, in those cases, any \$ brought in is a bonus. When tabling and working an info booth, you're doing publicity and working with the public. So, not necessarily a fundraiser. Still, to get the most out of your tabling time, please check out <http://www.bestfriends.com/archives/forums/grassroots.html#two>.

Task: You need to bring in more people and bigger dollars at events. Instead of hosting a free picnic, host a special BBQ dinner where \$5 buys you a great meal (from donated food items!) and a door prize ticket for a new grill, gift basket, restaurant gift cards, or other donated items. Notice the difference? Sell tickets in advance so you have some start up money to purchase any other items needed. And, with tickets, you don't mind if not everyone shows up, because you already got the \$ for the event.

Draw in the people by making it appealing to those who don't even own animals! The same rule goes for selling food at a carnival or selling items in front of a store. People don't care if the high school band is selling snow cones or if it's the Lions Club or the humane society. If they want a snow cone, they're going to buy it! Making a donation or supporting a charity is just a happy bonus.

For the Pet Expo, I hope you were able to sell some booth spaces for a small fee as well as charge a very small fee to enter. Booth fees for vendors can range from \$15 to \$75 or more depending on the crowd anticipated. Charging from \$.50 to \$3 for entering can help bring in more money, and remind people that these sorts of events do cost money to put on, particularly when you have to pay for a venue and tables and chairs.

One of the biggest fundraisers at an expo can be selling refreshments! Movie theatres will tell you that they barely scrape by with the ticket sales for movies, but it's the refreshments that bring in the big bucks! Hosting a bake sale would do well for you, but so will just selling cheap, salty food and/ or buying some snack items from Sam's Club.

Drinks are always a good seller, and they don't go bad, so you can hang on to them and use them again in a month or two, if you have leftovers. Most food booths at an average venue can bring in \$750 to \$1,000+ for your group. A friend of mine recently held a bake sale at a convenience store and brought in \$400. Did you incorporate any raffles or basket auctions into your expo? Depending on the expo crowd, you might need to allow a few general-themed baskets for people to bid on/buy tickets for. Having a New Puppy basket might be a hard sell for anyone who doesn't have a new puppy, but having a bath product basket or movie night basket would still be good for just about anyone, and therefore create more appeal for the baskets and more money for you.

As for your bike ride... Our list member Susan M. in Terre Haute recently informed us that her humane society's motorcycle ride through town brought in over \$11,000 this year! I don't even think they held it as a poker run, just a ride through town with a big open stretch at the airport flying down some runways! It's an annual event for them, and had the backing of their mayor who was a motorcycle enthusiast. They sold refreshments, and kept the menu simpler this year, which brought them more money.

Your Poker Run can be a great chance for some PiggyBack Fundraising. Aside from the entrance fee, you may want to also host a reverse raffle, award a few door prizes, and bring in some other people for a regular party later on. As you stop at local pubs/ locations along the way, negotiate with the owners to give you an extra \$1 from anything those riders purchase, or a blue plate special where if they purchase something off a specific menu, you get extra money! Open the after-party up to ALL residents for a great party with a cool band at a local bar/pavillion. Charge a cover fee, up the price of the happy hour drinks by \$.25 and pocket the rest. Make up some specials with the bar owner so that everytime people order cheese fries or a Mike's Hard Lemonade (it has a dog on the label), your group will get 1/2 the cost. Advertise this! Don't forget to host a trivia contest where people pay to enter as a group, answer questions on various trivia from animals and movies to celebrities and TV commercials.

I believe you may also need to sell some items that don't require any output from your group, or very little output, with big returns. Something like selling discount or pizza cards can bring in some big bucks for you without making you host an event. You can even sell them online from your group's website! Have people pay \$11.00 for the card online through paypal and then mail it directly to them. TOO easy!

Think about getting some businesses to sponsor a crate/cage at your shelter. If you don't have memberships with your shelter, start them! Send the members a quarterly newsletter with good info on pet care, your shelter, pet recipes, animal info, etc. The cost of \$10 to \$20 annual memberships (and don't forget your higher levels for big spenders!) will offset any costs for newsletters. Per member, figure on 4, first class stamps (you can also do bulk mailing), 4 envelopes (start off with plain ones for a penny each), some mailing labels and probably 16 to 32 pieces of paper a year (for 4 to 8 pages per issue)... probably less than \$3 total for 4 quarterly newsletters to one address,. And, then you can also have SPONSORS for the newsletter and sell some ad spaces to vets, groomers, fence builders, carpet cleaners...

I hope some of these ideas will spark something for you and you'll give them a try! Drop in to HumaneFundraising if you need more ideas or some help with tweaking an idea to make it work for you!

Do I want to fundraise for this group?

Question from Char:

My question on fund raising is a bit different...to make a long story short, while our local animal shelter is always asking for money, most in the community feels like they "mismanage" money and few people donate cash or goods. They do not have a fund raising committee and put on very few fund raisers themselves. They are also not consistent with any fund raisers, but especially with proven fundraisers- for ex. a golf tournament that raised over \$10,000 (I believe it was) last year will not be held again this year, with no explanation as to why.

My goal is to open our own sanctuary in the future, but that is years away. This current shelter is seeking volunteers and specifically people to fund raise for them. I am seriously considering heading their committee and raising money for them. However, I have several concerns, the 2 biggest are 1) any future "mismanagement" on their part, of funds that I helped raise, and 2) having the possibility of a negative image on any future animal related activities that I carry out because of being connected to this group.

How would you handle this? I know that I can make a positive impact on our local animals "right now", but I'm really concerned about becoming associated with this group. Is there any way that I could raise funds

for them independently and be able to have some kind of control over how they are spent? Any advise that you could give would be greatly appreciated.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

I can understand your predicament as you don't want any negative things associated with the shelter to rub off on to you. But, there are so many things you can start to do now to help the animals in your community! Perhaps if you take the lead, more committed citizens will follow and help turn things around for your shelter!

If you DO take this on, then I'd suggest signing a volunteer agreement that you will work with them for 1 year (or whatever time you can give) and at the end you will re-evaluate your position. Then you can decide whether you want to continue to work in that capacity or allow someone else to take over (so you can wash your hands of it, if you feel the need). A contract period gives both sides the ability not to be stuck forever in a situation that may not be comfortable for everyone.

Find out WHY the golf tourney isn't going to be held this year. Be upfront that you'd like to do it again, but need to know why it was originally shelved. Too difficult? No support from golf course? Bad experience? If you'd be willing to take it on, would they let you? The members of HumaneFundraising can certainly help you overcome all of the problems your board feels there might be!

I'd tell the shelter director point blank (yet politely and upbeat) that there is a lot of concern in the community that all money isn't being handled properly. Of course, this may be a misconception since many citizens feel that shelters take in gazillions from national groups and from the city, when they probably are just breaking even, like the average animal rescue. For that reason, you can suggest that a separate fund be set up for your first **fundraising effort to help purchase a specific item they need**. This will help alleviate fears in the community that any money is being mismanaged, and the shelter still gets the products that they need.

If it IS a misunderstanding by the public, then you need to help them take on a publicity campaign to inform the people how much money they take in, versus how much goes into care for the animals. Having a bad reputation in the community is NOT helping the animals!

Other ways where you can raise money FOR the shelter without just GIVING the money to them:

Friends of the Shelter-- This can be a separate non-profit group where the volunteers raise money for a specific goal, such as buying a medical examination table, buying floor cleaners and new cages for cats/bunnies, building hutches, a transport van, and other needed items for the shelter.

Secure donations of raffle items, in-kind donations, etc. These items will come in to you or to a central collection person. All items will be cataloged into a receipt book (with copies, like a phone message book) so that all items are recorded. A receipt is sent to the donor, and a note is put on the copy that a thank-you letter was sent on such-n-such date. You can also note on the copy of the receipt later on where the donation ended up-- such as used in raffle, used as door prize at Pooch Picnic, given to volunteer of the year on such-n-such date. For in-kind donations, you can help secure landscaping, mural painting for the shelter, new fences or fence repairs from local contractors.

Start a medical fund at a vet's office for emergency cases where the vet and a board member both have to sign off or verbally agree to pay for the specific case. You may want to have a quarterly audit at first to double check where the money is going and at what expense. This takes the money out of the hands of the shelter exclusively since the money will be kept by the vet and it will be audited regularly.

Collection drive-- hard to mismanage things like bleach and dog food, but I guess it could be done. Perhaps make a 12 Days of Christmas where the shelter asks for different things on each day; bleach, towels, treats, kitten meal replacement (KMR) and kitten/puppy chow, toys, new beds, collars, etc. You might need a storage container to hold some larger amounts of things. Christmas Wish Lists and collection drives at stores, schools and offices can bring in lots of great donations! Again, use the receipt method. One shelter I frequently donated to would never give out receipts until I asked about it, and they said "oh, yeah, we have this log book where you can sign that you donated something..." as she rummaged through some boxes to find it.. .and there were no donations recorded for 5 months. Be sure the shelter staff is ON TOP of these things! I've also handed out my phone number to SO many organization who never called me back when I offered to volunteer.

Years from now, after you've started your own group, remember to stay professional about your past association with the shelter. It's so sad when you come across people who are beyond bitter about another rescue. If you ever have any hard feelings towards them, maintain your professionalism and say that you had different visions, goals or personalities.

Hope this inspires you to join in and help save more animals. They need your help! Remember that you are NOT alone in this fundraising world, and there are so many people willing to help you!

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

First and foremost, your treasurer's report should be up-to-date and presented to the members on a monthly basis. If you have a monthly meeting, then the treasurer's report should be presented to the group, a copy should be distributed to each member present, it should be recorded in the minutes, and

kept in the treasurer's report notebook. Make absolutely sure that if someone wants to see the treasurer's report, they are allowed to do so. I think you have a certain time period to provide it if requested. I know of a group that refused to divulge their treasurer's report. Word got out and the donations dropped of almost completely.

Committees are essential within humane related organizations or any organization that raises money. Basically, the fundraising committee should not be managing the money. That should be the duty of the Treasurer and Board Members or Officers. I would create a Fundraising Committee with a very detailed description of what is expected of you and the other members. Make sure to put a clause in there stating that the Fundraising Committee will turn over all funds raised to the Treasurer upon completion of the Fundraiser. Make sure to notate that the Fundraising Committee will not have access to the spending of the money raised. This will cover you if any questions are raised about mismanaging funds. Additionally, when you turn the money over to the Treasurer, get a receipt, and keep it in your records.

Absolutely find out why the Golf Tournament was not held again. \$10,000 is an awful lot of money to bypass. Additionally, you will get more people to come to annual events. They begin to look forward to it. The Fourth Annual Putting for Paws shows the public that this is a fundraiser that has been successful in the past and they will be inclined to participate. But, regarding the fact that they did not do it again -- well, it must be something in the water dish. My local shelter stopped doing a fundraiser that consistently brought in over \$4,000.00.

You need to be honest with this shelter. Sit down with them out of sight of visitors, etc. and tell them that you are concerned of the reputation of mismanagement of money and goods. I will tell you that honesty is the best policy. Tell them that you would love to volunteer, but you would like to set up a fundraising committee where neither yourself nor the members would be touching the money. A Board Member or the Treasurer would need to be at the fundraiser closing to take the money.

I know of one humane society that had such a terrible reputation but they completely revamped themselves. They took a really brave route by placing a newspaper advertisement. In it, they admitted that they knew of the concerns of the public and knew that they had to change to regain the public's trust. They described their changes, invited questions and comments and to date, are running smoothly with ample donations and volunteers.

Raising a large sum in a capital campaign

Question from Diane:

I am the president of an SPCA that went no kill about two years ago. Along with a myriad of other problems that we are facing as a result of this commitment, our building is inadequate. Without going into too much detail, the layout of our building and the topography of our location make it impossible to create any meaningful improvements. We have decided that we have to move.

For the past year we have been struggling with how to go about doing this. Recently we met with the fundraiser from a local children's facility that has been raising funds for new buildings. He advised us to begin by hiring a consulting firm to do an initial feasibility evaluation. This will cost about \$25,000. We understand that we need professional help because we will need to raise a lot of money (at least \$500,000). I'm wondering what advice you have to offer and if there are any services available through animal groups that might be able to help us at a more realistic price.

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

One group that I am aware of was in the same predicament. They met with their local Habitat for Humanity Organization and received some excellent input from them. They were able to construct a shelter without paying flat fees for consultants, etc. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit and I am not sure that the children's group of which you spoke was. Sometimes, in speaking with groups that are not non-profit, they don't understand the burden we have in raising money.

Building this shelter is not going to happen over night (as much as we would like for it to happen). But there are things you can do to raise money as well as enable people to leave their personal mark at the shelter. Selling engraved bricks that will be on a walkway to the shelter is a profitable fundraiser. A building fund should be established separate from your spay/neuter, emergency vet, etc. funds. This will allow people to donate to your No-Kill Shelter and know where their money is going. Make sure that you have a webpage with a PayPal Button on it so that donors can donate directly to the building fund. You say that you want to raise \$500,000.00. You have set your goal and now it is time for the public to see it. Like I mentioned earlier, draw the dog bone and mark it off in increments of \$1000.00. Color it in as the money is raised or donated.

Remind people about becoming benefactors. Some of the largest donations that organizations receive are from donations left in a will. Sometimes that is just something about which your members do not think.

If you don't have a newsletter, start one. Talk about your plans on building this shelter. The Wake County SPCA built a state of the art shelter and each cage, kennel, room, examination room, socialization room, etc was sponsored by a corporation or someone else. I would strongly advise you to sit down and do a google search to find some people who have built new shelters. Contact them. We are all in this for

the same reason and they should be willing to help you. I know that the Wake County SPCA held fundraisers, but the sponsors they had prior to the shelter being built enable them to finish the job.

For more information on this subject, visit

<http://www.bestfriends.com/archives/forums/070504build.html> and
<http://www.bestfriends.com/archives/forums/110804shelterspace.html> and
<http://www.bestfriends.com/archives/forums/newshelter.html>.

Keep your chin up!! And let us know how you are doing.

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

Barbara, there is definitely help and hope for you to raise the money needed to move to a new location! One of our HumaneFundraising list members just raised \$340,000 this year to help build a new shelter in Arlington, TX! We're SO proud of Suzanne and her committee's efforts to raise more than their goal of \$300K in just under one year. They have great support from the city. Her group isn't going to stop there, since they have bigger goals ahead of them. One of her biggest events was a luncheon (which she wished was a dinner!), that brought in around \$77,000. I believe about \$17,000 of it was from the live auction items, and there were several silent auction items, \$4,000 was raised just by passing the bowl around again at the end, and tickets were about \$50 per with about 250 attendees. They did wonderfully, but realize that they can still do more with a dinner since they'd have more participation, a chance for a band and alcohol and certainly a different crowd ready to party for a good cause!

NETWORK!!! Find the people in your group who have connections with the crème de la crème in your community. You might know someone from your church, your rotary club, or another social group that is a bank VP or a city council person. Network with them for their help on this project. Many social groups (such as ladies' groups, social groups, garden clubs) have members that would be willing to assist your fundraising. They have contacts you need. You need to work closely with city commissioners, city council members, heads of other large charities (such as a hospital or school fundraising committee) so ask a few who share your goals to serve on your committee. Join forces with them. Network with the big wigs in your area! Start a coalition of sorts to get this going. Create your A-list of committee members to get the fundraising going! Network with your media as well!

Since this is something that will benefit your community, you need to make sure your community feels connected with this project. Regular updates, personal appeals to people, get-to-know-you events at the shelter, etc. will be important. You need to host a large kick off for your campaign! Get the media involved to showcase all that you are planning on for the future.

Some general fundraising ideas: These ideas have all been known to provide wonderful capital to build a new shelter. Selling engraved paving bricks is popular for hospitals and alumni associations. There's also a company online that will sell etched picket fence posts with a family's name on it, which would be a nice backdrop for an outdoor social area for animals. Families, businesses and corporations can be asked to sponsor kennels/ runs in the new shelter.

Talk with a landscaper or nursery to have them plan the planting of a memorial garden along with an outdoor socializing area where people can meet pets. Ask them to donate their services and assist with the costs. Capital campaigns, appeal letters with pledges, phone telethons and large scale dinner fundraisers have also been used to raise big bucks for a shelter. Many of these are events or things that you do just once, since you can't tap that well too often. Others such as a large scale dinner can be an annual event, though, just like an annual phone telethon or appeals sent directly to people in the community.

Mal Warwick (www.malwarwick.com) has written several amazing books on direct appeals and contacting donors. Joan Flanagan has a great book called "Successful Fundraising" that might be able to help you understand your role as president in asking for funds and donations from large companies. I'm still reading a great fundraising book called "How to Produce Fabulous Fundraising Events" by Betty Stallings and Donna McMillion and they give some great info on putting together a celebrity dinner. I suggest requesting it through a library loan system or getting it off e-bay or half.com, Amazon, etc. at a good price. This is a great resource if you'd like to produce that sort of dinner.

Personally, I'd recommend you look at the amount you need to raise based on what the architect and builders have said. Then, start by scheduling your next year out with various fundraisers starting with your kick-off, your capital campaign and several interviews with donor prospects and corporations in your area. Designate committees to help with the planning of your various functions, and intersperse 'other' fundraisers in between the labor intensive ones. For instance, plan the large dinner (with a Pot O' Gold reverse auction) separately from your garage sale since they both require lots of work. Appeal letters can be mailed in between those along with a restaurant fundraiser where you earn a % of the proceeds from an evening, or a pancake breakfast where you can earn \$1,000 or more. Every little bit helps, but you want to vary the events to reach more people, and give them a break in between major fundraisers.

Some links for shelter plans:

http://www.hsus2.org/sheltering/magazine/currentissue/mar_apr03/frontlines_designing.html (article from HSUS)

<http://www.jacksonryan.com/> (Jackson Ryan architects)

<http://www.shelterplannersofamerica.com/> (including Development Counsel, which will help raise money)!!!

I hope this helps you feel that the task is manageable for your group to take on! You may want to use the services of a professional for the capital campaign or another project, and you'll learn so many techniques firsthand and be able to duplicate them with other fundraisers and hosting it again in the future. Check <http://www.afpnet.org/> to see if you can find a professional fundraiser in your area who will be willing to take you on at a reduced rate or part-time.

What is a reverse raffle?

Question from Barbara:

I wanted to plan some events for next year in the fall to raise money for our English Bulldog rescue. One event that someone suggested is to do a reverse raffle. I also heard you mention that in one of your responses yesterday. I wasn't really sure what that was, and when I asked, I was informed by another rescuer that I couldn't do things like this until I was established for two years. Is anyone aware of this stipulation or is this a fallacy?

Also, do you have any general fundraising 'insider tips' that haven't already been discussed this week? I'm open to learning!

Response from Danielle Hamilton:

Reverse raffles can be really exciting events since they take longer than just drawing for one name. Technically, there are two versions of a reverse raffle, at least that I know of. The first one is a bit silly, but still fun. Everyone at an event is 'given' a ticket and they must buy their way out of it for \$10. If they don't buy their way out, then they are in the raffle for the prize, which is for a goat to be delivered to their backyard or their office for an afternoon, kissing a friendly cow or pig, being gooped with whipped cream pies topped with canned cat food and pickles.... or whatever silly thing you want to do. Be sure all animals are safe and never harmed or uncomfortable. :) The 'reverse' on this is that you really don't want to win.

The main version that most people know and refer to is where people pay for a ticket into the drawing like a normal raffle. Then, you draw every single ticket that is disqualified until the LAST one which is the winner of the grand prize, which is something good like \$500 cash, a jet ski, plane tickets, 3 month lease on a BMW, etc. You can drag this out over an entire evening and put a few small winners along the way. For instance, if you were incorporated as a nonprofit in '87, then the 87th ticket drawn could win a \$50 gift certificate to a restaurant. This way, there is some excitement along the way instead of players just losing out on the big prize. As with any fundraiser like this, set your rules and guidelines in advance. If you will

allow 3-10 people to buy back into the raffle when it is down to the last 10 tickets, state so. Then, at the end, draw those last 3-10 people up on stage. Some of the people may be willing to sell their ticket, or they may want to bind together to split the prize somehow, since many prizes are large jackpots. The crowd gets ecstatic and eggs them on until you get your winner!

There's a great version of a reverse draw called Pot O' Gold where the prize is \$10,000. The group sells tickets for \$100 each and people can split their ticket with 3 other friends who only pay \$25 each. In order to break even you need to sell 100 tickets at \$100 each. The drawing is held during a dinner where people pay another \$25 each for a great meal and entertainment. If that sounds too rich for your area, then you can knock it down to \$1,000 grand prize and sell at least 100 tickets at \$10 each.

Legal issues: As for the idea of waiting 2 years after incorporating in order to hold raffles... Each state is different on this sort of thing. You can do fundraisers at any give time, but raffles/ gambling is different. You need to contact the office of the Attorney General or the Secretary of State for your state and talk directly with them. They are generally very nice people who want to help!

Here in TX, you have to be 501c3 and recognized as a nonprofit by the state for 3 years to hold a raffle. And, I believe you can only hold 2 a year. (http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/raffle.shtml) I believe California is 1 year (<http://caag.state.ca.us/charities/faq.htm#raffle3>) You can do a Google search and look up +raffle +law +Florida (or whatever state you are in). We've noticed on our list that the rules vary greatly from state to state. Some states consider it gambling and therefore it is forbidden outright, and some give special allowances for charities. Take a look at <http://www.gambling-law-us.com/> for some good guidelines.

There are usually some ways you can avoid holding an actual 'raffle' such as having an 'everybody wins' drawing. One example is an Easter Egg bake sale where you can donate \$5 for an Easter egg that hopefully has a restaurant gift certificate inside. If it doesn't, then you still win your choice of a brownie from the bake sale. This is approved by our military JAG officers on my post to comply with the laws of TX. But, I encourage everyone to call their own state's Attorney General to get the scoop on what is allowed where you live. Better to be safe!

Other tips I've learned:

Piggyback! Don't just stop at ONE event, always incorporate one or two other things in there! For example, if you're doing a Mutt Strutt, put in a costume contest where you have an entry fee, some competitions such as longest tail, longest kiss, shortest, fluffiest, etc. Sell refreshments, sell crafts, offer a raffle or door prize drawing for some nice donated items.

ALWAYS hold a recap after an event. Discuss with your volunteers what happened, what went well, what things to consider for next time, what you might change or incorporate differently when you do it again. Hold this meeting about a week after the event so everything is still FRESH in your minds. Keep notes on where you got your tents, the timeline you used, what prices you paid for things, copies of contracts with caterers or venues, etc. This will make it easier for the next time your group tackles this!

Any amount of success is still success. Tabling for \$50 is still \$50 you didn't have beforehand. And, interacting with the public, getting your name out to your community and changing the world for animals is worth more than just that \$50 your brought in.

Don't settle for your basic success story with a fundraiser. Always try to improve your fundraiser for next time. Bigger and Better are your goals!

No fundraiser is impossible for YOUR group to do! Think outside the kennel... and think outside the litterbox! There are zillions of ways to adapt an idea to make it work for your rescue, your resources, and your community.

If you don't hear NO every once in a while, you're not asking enough!

Media personnel NEED good stories! Be their go-to rescue for some great heartwarming stories, successes, and info on animals. You need their help in getting your messages to the public, and they need your help with bringing good stories to them. Form a partnership!

It's been a real pleasure sharing my passion for fundraising with everyone on the NMHP list! I've shared a few other fundraisers and tips on this list over the past year or so, but it's been such a thrill to answer so many great questions this week. I hope Elizabeth and I have inspired you to try some new ideas, not to be afraid of tweaking some old ones and to look at every fundraiser as a real possibility for you! You're certainly not alone in the rescue world and there are plenty of friends available to help you in your fundraising goals! Come meet a few and share your ideas while you learn a few more, at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/humanefundraising/>!

Purrs and woofs to all!

Response from Elizabeth Tolson:

Danielle wrote an excellent response about the reverse raffle, including the legal issues. She has provided excellent links which I highly recommend.

I don't know if you had an attorney assist you in any way with the development of your 501(c)3, but he/she might be able to answer any questions for you. Additionally your Secretary of State's office should be able to help you. Every Secretary of State has a webpage on their State's homepage.

I am going to concentrate on Fundraising Tips. I do believe that fundraising tips are just as important as the fundraisers themselves. I have gone into fundraisers unprepared; unprepared in presenting them to the Board as well as unprepared at the fundraiser. It only took one time before I developed a checklist to make sure that I had done EVERYTHING on the list. (I only wish I were that organized at home!) If you follow these tips and the checklist (which I will provide upon request) then you will do fine.

Fundraising Tips

1. **Planning Fundraisers** – Your best bet would be to have Calendar of Events created through November of 2006. This alleviates any scrambling around of trying to determine what kind of fundraiser you want to do for a certain month. I know I have mentioned it several times in previous forums, but it bears repeating. The best place to find the humane related months for all humane organizations, no matter what type of animal rescued, is <http://www.petroglyphsnm.org/dates05.html>
2. **Setting a Goal** -- Now that you have your calendar of events planned, it is time to set a goal. (Make it reasonable for the size of your shelter). Setting a goal allows the public to see several things. First of all, they will see the amount of money that it takes to run a rescue or shelter. Secondly, they will see the effort as well as the progress that you are making in raising this money. Motivation is such an important part of fundraising. You do not want your fundraising committee or group to feel like they are spinning wheels. You want everyone to see the progress they are making. A wonderful way to show the fundraising progress is to take a large piece of poster board. Draw a dog bone on it and mark off increments of \$500.00 (similar to the Red Cross Thermometer). Zero dollars will be at the bottom and your goal will be at the top (for instance \$50,000.00). After each fundraiser, color in the amount of money that you made (i.e. if you made \$1700.00 at your first fundraiser, you would color the bone up to that amount.). You might even want to write which fundraiser raised this money beside the shaded part. Take this bone poster to your fundraisers, meetings, and displays. It is a great way to show the public what you do and what your goals are.
3. **Donations** --- when, where and how. One of the frequent questions we hear on our HumaneFundraising list is that it is hard to find in-kind donations. Many of us immediately think of oil change and dinner for two in terms of donations. Think outside of the kennel/litter box!! Sit down with your Yellow Pages and start with A and go to Z. Look at each business

and see how they could help with a donation. Items such as fire extinguishers, one month to a gym, free eye care exam, free contacts, three visits to get teeth whitened from a dentist, routine vaccinations from your vet, etc. These are all items that are not normally thought of in terms of donations. Always take with you letterhead AND a receipt book to write a receipt for a donation given on the spot.

4. **Costs of Fundraisers** – Some groups hesitate to conduct a fundraiser because they are concerned with the cost. I know for our Holiday Tree Fundraiser, we approached members who are unable to help in ways of fostering or fundraising. One lady donated white lights, one donated bows, one donated red lights, and one even gave us several books of stamps for when we write the acknowledgment letters. So, try to get your members to donate. If you are having trouble getting a drink company to donate drinks, ask each member to donate, three two-liter drinks. That would be only \$5.00.
5. **Selling tickets.** This would encompass the common problem we hear on our group “Where do we sell them?” or “No one will buy them!” Danielle says to always remember FRANK (Friends, Relatives, Associates, Neighbors, Kids--as in the parents of kids.) Sit down and make a list of who you would like to buy your tickets. Make sure that you always include people who rely on your business --- restaurants, grocery stores, hair dressers, vets, groomers, etc.
6. **Presenting Fundraising Ideas to your Board, Officers, Group, Committee, etc.** This is so important as they may not approve your idea if they don't believe in it. Make sure that you have your ducks in a row. First, write up the fundraiser, complete with sample news release, sample flyers, etc. Distribute it to the Board, Committee, etc. Go over it – it should be written out in simple terms. BE PREPARED for negativity and questions and the forever heard “It won't work for this group.” Before ever presenting this idea, think of some possible reason why they don't want to do the fundraiser and have an answer ready.
7. **During the Fundraiser. Invest in a Guestbook.** This can even be as simple as spiral notebook. At the top, write the name of the fundraiser. Divide it into columns of name, email address, address, volunteer (yes/no). This will enable you to keep in touch with the people who have visited your event. You can send them a simple email to tell them where your next event will be. You can sign them up for your newsletter. And, quite possibly, that guestbook will bring in more volunteers and donations.

Make sure that people are made aware of where the money is going, whether to spay/neuter, emergency vet care, etc. This is a must.

Make sure that NO ONE leaves your event empty handed. We have some great items to hand out (which can be found in the HumaneFundraising File Section). Items such as

disaster preparation, Accident Forms to be kept in your car, and Group Fact Sheets are a must to have at every fundraiser. At the bottom, you want to make sure that it is typed clearly "Compliments of _____ Rescue with your web page and email address)

8. **With EVERY Fundraiser HAVE A DONATION JAR!!!** I found a cute graphic that had a cat and dog holding an umbrella and we typed "Shower us with your Change" and put it on the fish bowl. Even if you generate only \$10.00 in donations with nickels and dimes, that is \$10.00 you did not have. Especially during a yard sale, this is good. When someone purchases something for 75 cents and pays for it with \$1.00, ask them if they would be interested in donating their 25 cents in change to the Humane Society. Always put some change of your own in there to start off – so people can see that donations have already been made. This is called seeding the jar.
9. Make sure that you PUBLICLY thank anyone who has donated prizes or participated in the fundraiser. Also publicly thank anyone who donated materials such as copies, posters, advertisement. Besides writing the people personally, we always write a letter to the editor of the newspaper thanking EVERYONE (naming them) for what they did. Most of the time, people will read the letter and donate additional money they may not have known about the fundraiser, been out of town, etc. We found that during the Christmas Tree Fundraiser, some people had been out of town and did not know of the fundraiser. They sent in a donation after the fundraiser was over.
10. **Put the FUN in FUNdraising.** It is possible...Celebrate after a well-done fundraiser with dinner, cook-out, etc. You deserve it!! Your volunteers will appreciate it!

If you want a Fundraising Checklist, email me at etolson@gibraltar.net. It helped me to become organized for fundraisers and I think it will help you also.

This has been such a pleasure for Danielle and I and we would so much like to thank the No More Homeless Pets forum and moderator for inviting us to be guests. Fundraising is near and dear to both of our hearts and we truly hope that you all have learned some valuable information from our answers. We hope to see you on the HumaneFundraising Yahoo Group!

Happy FUNdraising!

Member Comments

Comment from Sarah:

Many bartenders will participate in competitions to showcase their "tricks" with juggling bottles, and pouring a glass while it's balanced on their nose, etc. It would be an interesting twist to ask you normal

pub if they would be willing to host a competition with another local pub. You could then charge an admission and collect the \$ from the drinks ordered. This is fun for everyone involved and amazing to watch!

Comment from a member:

There are more than 30 cargo vans available on the East Coast in the next 3 weeks at government auctions. The link below winds its way to the nonprofit sector:

<http://www.autoauctions.gsa.gov/vehiclesearch.cfm>

Comment from Jen:

One of our easiest and most successful fundraisers is a garage/yard sale. It has very little up front cost, takes up very little time to manage, and brings in a lot of money in a short period of time.

First of all, everyone in your group has stuff they need to get rid of. Instead of donating it to the Salvation Army or Goodwill, have them donate it to the group. Second, send out an e-mail to everyone you know, and have your other volunteers do the same, asking for any "gently used" items that people would like to donate. Most people are grateful to just get stuff out of their house. Ask your friends to send the e-mail on to their friends and so on, and you'll end up with a network of hundreds of people that get your message asking for donations. You'll be surprised how many people call you to donate items. The last thing you can do to get items is a news release saying that you are having a sale in a few weeks and that you are asking for donations. You'll get a ton of calls/e-mails. One important note is that you should have a "wish list" stating specific things that you want. We expressly state that we would love to get furniture, jewelry (set up a special jewelry table), brand-name clothing, tools and housewares.

The hardest part is that one person has to donate the use of their home for the sale. They should live near a busy road or town, and they should ideally have a garage or other space to store items pre-sale. Have everyone meet the night before to set up to make things easier the next morning. Put an ad in the classifieds under "Garage Sales" and be sure to state that you have "great stuff", "huge sale," "upscale goods" etc. to entice people to your sale. And don't forget to post BIG poster-board sized flyers up on telephone poles around the neighborhood and on major roads nearby, directing people to the sale. Make the print big and easy to read as people drive by. Hang up the posters early in the week prior to the sale so commuters will see your sign and you'll get "free advertising" all week prior to the sale day.

At our first sale, last fall, we made over \$1000 from 9am to 1pm. We were thrilled. However, in the spring when we did the sale again, we concentrated more on friend referrals and e-mails like I stated above. We didn't need to advertise in the paper because so many of our friends, neighbors, coworkers and family members stepped up. We got a lot of donated furniture, which really helped because they're bigger-ticket

items. We also were very specific with our wish list, and of course we did get other stuff too. We made more than \$2500 from 9am to 1pm. The beauty of it is that all the goods were donated to us, so we didn't have to put out money, and the home the sale was held in "donated" space at a volunteer's house for the morning. Our overhead was low, allowing the funds we raised to go directly to the animals.

What to do with the leftovers that don't sell? If you have the storage space, keep it until the next event. If you think that another organization might be able to use it, donate to Goodwill, Purple Heart, Salvation Army, etc. If it's just not sellable, toss it in the garbage and give your trash guys a good tip to take it away.

Note: this is something you can do even if you're not 501c3. However, if you are not 501c3, you need to be very clear with donors of goods, so they know that their donations are just that and are not a tax deduction. If you are 501c3, be sure to tell donors so they get a receipt for their taxes.

Comment from Louise:

We started doing a pet fashion show/luncheon and it has been wildly successful. We dress dogs and cats in fashions and they strut their stuff down the "catwalk". We did a little mini one the first year and expanded it the next year. All during the following year, everyone that had attended asked when we were going to have the next one. We even got Steve Dale to be our emcee! He is our local animal celebrity. He has an animal radio talk show on Saturday in Chicago and writes for several newspapers and magazines. I solicited people via the internet and our local PETsMART for fashions and donations and even did some of the sewing myself. Everyone laughed and cheered the animals. Of course we used animals we had rescued to promote how wonderful these "throw away" pets can be.

Comment from Jenn:

One idea for a pet walk-a-thon is to get sponsors to donate a dollar for every block, or something like that!

Comment from a member:

How wonderful that your guests are abdicating including youth in their fundraising ideas! I wholeheartedly agree that it's critical to get them involved at an early age. However, please consider calling it something other than a "war". As an educator, I am concerned about encouraging this concept with our young people. Even if you call it a friendly war, is there such a thing? I believe an organization would be much better received if they present a fundraising "challenge" or "competition" or better yet, find a way to get the students to encourage one another and root for each other to succeed. This will model the concept of kindness to all living creatures; including humans!

Closing comments from forum moderator:

Thank you to the many members who sent in questions and comments for this weeks forum! The HumaneFundraising moderators report that they have had almost 150 new members join their forum this week! If you'd like to continue to be part of the excitement, plus receive HumaneFundraising's article on Creating an A-List of Invitees, sign up at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HumaneFundraising/>!

Transcripts from this and all other forum weeks, including an entire section on Fundraising, are archived for easy reference, and are made available to all at

<http://www.bestfriends.com/nomorehomelesspets/weeklyforum/forumarchives.cfm>. Meanwhile, those of you who joined the forum midweek can view the complete transcripts right away at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NMHP/>.

Frequently, members contact us asking for permission to share the information posted through this forum.

The answer is always yes. We just ask that the source is acknowledged (No More Homeless Pets online forum, hosted by Best Friends Animal Society) and that the web page for the forum is provided (<http://www.bestfriends.com/nomorehomelesspets/weeklyforum/>). That way they know where to go to find out more!

As always, thank you for being part of the forum, and for everything you do for the animals!

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Kindness to animals builds a better world for all of us.