Ask & YOU will Receive

A Fundraising Guide for Suicide Prevention Advocates
Asking for money (or fundraising) may seem like a daunting task that is best suited to someone else. Someone who is well-connected. Wealthy. Extroverted. At ease talking about money.

However, the best person to ask for money is you: someone who is committed to sharing the message of suicide prevention and saving lives. People give money because they want to support that energy and dedication to a worthwhile cause.

Like most advocates, you probably yearn for more funds. Increased funding expands your capacity to offer support to suicide survivors, educate the public, improve public policy and encourage research. However, many are intimidated by the idea of fundraising, confused about how to start and fearful about actually doing it. Unfortunately, money won’t arrive at your doorstep simply because you’re doing good work. You must ask.

The Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) have produced this document to show you how (and whom) to ask. The guide presents new ways to think about fundraising, a review of fundraising strategies and guidance on selecting a fundraising approach and moving forward with a specific activity. Additional resources and fundraising examples appear in the Acknowledgements and Appendices.

Whether your suicide prevention efforts are aimed at those at-risk, survivors or the broader community, raising funds provides you with the resources to carry out critical work. View fundraising as another opportunity to share your passion and enlist support.

Jerry Reed
Executive Director
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA

Lloyd Potter
Center Director
Suicide Prevention Resource Center

“I have tried raising money by asking for it, and by not asking for it. I always got more by asking for it”

Millard Fuller, founder, Habitat for Humanity

As quoted in “The Ten Most Important Things You Can Know About Fundraising,” Grassroots Fundraising Journal
Realize You Need to Ask

Grassroots advocates busy with their education and advocacy efforts often hope someone else will tend to the fundraising. In fact, raising funds is a necessary activity for every person involved with suicide prevention, right along with raising awareness and changing policy.

Fundraising is an integral part of your efforts because, in addition to generating much-needed revenue, it helps enlist broader support for suicide prevention. People who donate feel a connection with the suicide prevention community; this connection can grow over time and produce even greater contributions, financial and otherwise.

So, view a prospective donor as a person with whom you can cultivate a relationship. Donors are citizens whose concern can be nurtured and tapped for future advocacy and education efforts. Advocates should find networking and soliciting resources more enjoyable if they adopt this broad perspective on fundraising.

However, in the end, fundraising still requires asking for money.

People who have not fundraised before fear they can't bring in money. They may be uncertain about approaching people and businesses they don't know and uncomfortable about soliciting from their own circle of friends. In both cases, the discomfort is usually rooted in a fear of being told “no” or concern that talking about the subject of money will be awkward or appear as begging.

Again, a new perspective is needed.

Seeking funds for a worthy cause such as suicide prevention is not begging. It's having a discussion with someone about suicide and its impact. It's making sure that at least one more person is aware of the risk factors for suicide and available resources to prevent suicide. And it's giving that person an opportunity to invest in and support his or her community’s health through a donation to local, state or national suicide prevention efforts.

Donors give for a variety of reasons. They respond to the passion of the person seeking funds, want to assist an at-risk population (e.g., adolescents or older adults), express support for a friend or colleague who lost a loved one to suicide or memorialize someone they know who died by suicide.

Similarly, there are multiples reasons why people choose not to donate. They just made a large donation to another group, are distracted by other matters or are having a temporary cash crunch. Whatever the reason behind the much-dreaded “no,” the donation request has not failed. The per-
son seeking funds has made at least one more person aware of suicide and its impact. Indeed, some define successful fundraising by the number of people asked rather than the amount of money raised.

To help overcome any lingering reluctance, try these strategies:

- Focus on your commitment to saving lives and helping others avoid the pain of suicide. Remembering this purpose will fuel your motivation to ask for money and resonate with prospective donors.

- Practice with friends before approaching businesses or major donors. A few rehearsals will help you feel more comfortable. Tell your story to your practice partner, then make your request and answer his or her questions. Having your practice partner reply “no” to your request can help you try out different ways to respond.

- Consider attending a training session on fundraising offered by local agencies to boost your skills and confidence.

- Recognize that “no” is part of the drill. The path to successful fundraising is filled with people who choose not to financially support your effort. Instead of hearing a “no” as defeat, remember that you’ve planted an important seed, helped raise awareness and perhaps greased the wheel for a successful future request.

Think Through Your Approach

Raising funds for suicide prevention requires thoughtful consideration. Suicide is a topic that stirs up many emotions, even for those who have no personal experience with it. Certain activities and corporate sponsors may not be the right fit for suicide prevention fundraising. Those who have donated in memory of a loved one may not be interested in future fundraising activities, perhaps because they are reluctant to reopen healing wounds. Be aware of these dynamics and consult with others, including survivors, when planning a fundraising activity.

However, being sensitive doesn’t mean limiting your fundraising ideas or willingness to approach others. AFSP sponsors the national Out of the Darkness Overnight walk, a 20-mile walk through the night to bring the issue of suicide out into the light. The 2005 Out of the Darkness Overnight walk raised over $1 million. Regional and state AFSP chapters hold shorter Out of the Darkness community walks. Participants raise money from sponsors, and the funds are used to support research, education and treatment programs.

There is no one best fundraising strategy for suicide prevention advocates; each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Select the fundraising strategy most appropriate for your circumstances. Important factors to weigh include:

- **Goals.** What programmatic goals require new or additional money? How much money is needed? Which strategy or strategies best enable you to reach that dollar amount?

- **Available human resources.** Is there a group of people (and leader) willing to plan the fundraising activity and commit to its success? How many volunteers do you need to implement the plan? Can you line them up? Can you draw from other volunteer sources (e.g., volunteer clearinghouses, like-minded nonprofits)?

- **Time.** How much lead time is needed to plan and implement your fundraising idea? Are there any time pressures behind the fundraising drive? Will the planned activity meet the timeline? Many fundraising activities take months of planning —
and even longer to actually receive the donations. Remember, direct and personal solicitations are often the quickest way to raise funds, as outlined in Klein and Roth’s article “8 ways to raise $2,500 (or more) in 10 days (or less, sometimes).”

- **Expenses.** What upfront expenses are involved? Is there available cash to cover those expenses? How can you obtain sponsors to underwrite expenses or make in-kind donations? Is there an escape plan if things do not proceed as expected and your group risks a financial loss (e.g., contract cancellation clause or plan for scaled-down version of the event)?

The bottom line question is: Will the money raised be worth the time and energy spent? If you have serious concerns about this cost-benefit ratio during the planning stages, it’s time to consider a new strategy.

Grassroots advocates also must remember three important points:

- In most states, nonprofits are required to register in order to solicit funds. Some states have a one-time registration, while others require annual renewal. Fortunately, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and the National Association of State Charities Officials (NAASCO) have developed a Unified Registration Statement (URS). The URS can be used in 34 states and the District of Columbia. More information about state requirements and the URS is available at www.multistatefiling.org.

- Donors prefer to give to nonprofit organizations versus individuals. If you’re not affiliated with a tax-exempt 501(c)3 nonprofit, you may wish to join forces with a local nonprofit or even form your own.

- Donors want to know what outcomes will result from their support. Quantifying outcomes for prevention efforts is not easy. You can address this challenge by providing specific statistics about your outreach efforts (number of newsletters sent, advocacy packets delivered, people in audience) and sharing anecdotal stories about lives affected.

### Select a Strategy

The fundraising possibilities are endless. Five common fundraising strategies are to (a) ask individuals, (b) reach out to organizations, (c) hold special events, (d) raise funds online and (e) secure in-kind donations.

Although these approaches are most typical, suicide prevention advocates use other creative methods, too. Illinois’s Suicide Prevention Services of the Fox Valley sells the popular awareness bracelets with the words “Suicide Prevention Services – Here for Life!” stamped on them. Ordering information is posted on the organization’s Web site (www.spsfv.org/#bracelet). The Web site for Hawaii Suicide Prevention Education Awareness Research Foundation (www.hawaiispear.org/fundraiser.htm) offers pikake earring and lei sets for sale and advises visitors that proceeds are used for public awareness presentations and professional training. SPAN Kentucky has a printer cartridge recycling program and receives up to $2 for each cartridge.

When implementing any fundraising strategy, advocates must remember three fundamental rules: build relationships, be strategic; and ask.

- **Build relationships.** Fundraising depends on building and maintaining relationships. One expert outlined different ways to foster these key relationships: regularly recognize and thank donors and volunteers with a personal note or call, provide information to donors and potential donors about your important work and the value of their support, share success stories, ask their advice and solicit their input on plans for the future. Through such actions, you encourage others to be a “friend” to suicide prevention. The expert referred to this approach as “friend raising” instead of fundraising (McGregor, 2003).

- **Be strategic.** The universe of fundraising options is so vast that you can quickly become overwhelmed by the choices. Think strategically. Look around for fundraising opportunities that are natural fits with your objectives, time, interests and network of contacts.
interests and network of contacts. Can you piggyback fundraising on to some activity you already enjoy? That’s what SPAN USA Chair Sean Gerow did when he began seeking sponsors for his adventure races (see Appendix A). Instead of trying to do it all, be selective and try to choose activities that you find pleasurable and meet your fundraising goals.

- **Ask.** The final critical step is to ask for financial or in-kind support. Not hope for it. Not hint at it. Respectfully and directly ask for a specific level or type of support. Your request should be concise and persuasive. Prospective donors want to hear about your mission, accomplishments, how the money will be spent and the resulting benefits. As you think about how to frame the request, consider the prospective donors’ interests and highlight how a contribution to the cause of suicide prevention will support those interests. To keep your momentum going, establish specific fundraising objectives for the next year (e.g., approach a certain number of individuals and organizations and ask for x amount of money). Developing a game plan in advance helps you stay on track and keep on asking even after you receive some “no’s.”

### Get the Ball Rolling

The following sections outline specific ideas on how to move forward with the five most common fundraising strategies. Regardless of the strategy, begin with the end in mind. Launch your effort with a clear image of the success you desire (such as a large monetary gift, a triumphant event or donation of office space), and let this vision guide your planning.

- **ASK INDIVIDUALS**

Many are surprised to learn individual donations make up almost 90 percent of charitable giving, thinking that foundations and businesses give the most. Individuals donate via telephone, direct mail, the Web, major gifts (one-time donation for a specific goal), planned giving (through trusts or bequests) and memorial giving. In addition, individuals contribute to causes through memberships, voluntary subscriptions to newsletters, collections at meetings and door-to-door canvassing. The most effective way to reach individual donors is a personal and direct solicitation. This strategy has the lowest related expenses, quickest response time and highest rate of return.

Whether seeking amounts large or small, the most effective way to raise funds is to ask in person.

For sizeable gifts, make a list of potential donors: people who are written up in the newspaper for their charitable giving or volunteer work, established community or business leaders and people who are familiar with the suicide survivor community. Once you have brainstormed a list, consult with others in your circle (and ask them to pose the same question to their network) if they have any personal connections to those on the list. Concentrate your efforts on those people with whom you have a direct or indirect link.

Set up a meeting or lunch with the prospective donor. Tell the person about your involvement with suicide prevention. Ask for a donation amount that will make a difference and be clear how that large amount will reap benefits. And then wait for the person to respond. Avoid rushing in with additional information or nervous chatter. Allow the person to ask questions and really consider your request. Regardless of the person’s response, this meeting can mark the beginning of an ongoing relationship.

When seeking smaller levels of support from individuals, there are many ways to engage the people around you through either casual conversation or creative methods. Some examples include:

- **Talk about your suicide prevention work as you interact with neighbors, doctors, local shopkeepers. Make a specific request for their support such as a pledge for a walk or an auction item (see Appendix B).**

- **Send a note to each person in your address book requesting support for a particular suicide prevention initiative. Consider asking people in your address book to spread the word to their contacts (particularly easy with e-mail). Although you should only use this approach occasionally (to not burn out or “spam” friends and acquaintances), it helps to connect your circle to an important cause you support: suicide prevention.**

- **Ask friends and loved ones to send a donation to a suicide prevention organization in lieu of buying a gift for you at gift-giving times such as birthdays and holidays.**
Host a gathering for family and friends to share your advocacy experience and ask for their financial support.

Approach volunteers who work with suicide prevention organizations or other at-risk groups. Donating can help them feel more invested in their cause.

If your group publishes a regular newsletter, include a return envelope with each issue to give individual readers a chance to donate.

Finally, ensure you send personalized thank you letters or notes for all contributions. Not only is acknowledging donations courteous and professional, it also helps foster ongoing relationships with donors. Additionally, if you produce a newsletter, send your donors a copy so that they can see how their contribution is being put to use.

Reach out to organizations

Advocates also raise funds from organizations, large and small, for-profit and nonprofit. Organizations include corporations, local businesses, community foundations, service clubs, religious groups and professional groups, all of whom support worthy endeavors in their communities. This type of funding is usually short-term (a few years at most) and designated for specific projects (versus ongoing funding). Success in obtaining organizational funding requires researching entities, identifying those most apt to support suicide prevention activities and networking to find contacts within those organizations.

Do your homework on potential donors

Given the large universe of potential donor organizations, do your research before approaching organizations. Investigate corporations, local businesses, community foundations, service clubs, religious groups and professional groups. Research their mission, client base, community interest and record of charitable giving. Then identify how they could or should support your suicide prevention efforts. Again, prioritize organizations with which you (or your circle) have some direct or indirect connection.

The Foundation Center (www.fdncenter.org) is an excellent resource for doing your homework on donors. The Foundation Center’s Cooperating Collections are useful resources for further research. The collections located in every state feature free publications and materials from the Foundation Center’s library.

Determine the best point of contact for the donor you approach

Make some phone calls, and find the person who’s the best point of initial contact for your request (marketing department for corporations, owner for local business, president of a professional group). Organizational requirements vary, but you probably will need to submit a short written request or proposal.

Prepare a summary of your organization and its activities

These funders need to understand clearly what you do and what type of support is needed. Provide them with your mission statement, success stories, joint activities with other organizations and a well-thought out plan for the money requested. Organizational funders are particularly interested in how their funds will benefit the community in concrete terms.

In addition to approaching organizations with specific funding requests, you can partner with organizations in other creative ways, including:

- Ask a local company to invite its employees to donate to your suicide prevention group instead of exchanging gifts at holiday times.

- Approach local establishments to host a special night to raise funds for suicide prevention (e.g., restaurant holds fundraising dinner, movie theater hosts movie night).

- Investigate whether local venues let volunteers run their concession stands and share in the proceeds. A Florida community organizer for SPAN USA reported that a team of volunteers ran a concession stand at the local hockey arena for one night and earned tips and a percentage of profits for suicide prevention (and had a lot of fun, too!).

Highlight organizational partnerships and sponsorships in a visible way. SPAN Florida thanks its organizational supporters on its Web site (and includes a direct link to the organizations).

Hold special events

Special events celebrate accomplishments, educate people, increase visibility and line up new supporters, usually with the accompaniment of food and entertainment. Common fundraising events include dinners, receptions, auctions, merchandise sales, concerts and athletic events (such as 10K runs). They generate funds through ticket sales, sponsorships, raffles, pledges and program books. Events are
labor-intensive, and large-scale events incur costs that eat away at the proceeds. One trend in fundraising is to host a “non-event.” You send a creative invitation to a non-existent event and invite the donor to remain at home and make a donation instead.

When considering the range of special events, think about what feels right for your community and your cause. Then follow these common steps:

- **Form a planning committee.** Draw from friends and contacts in different fields (e.g., banking, law, marketing). Ask one of them to serve as event chair. Aim to have three to five solid and separate address books available for networking on behalf of your event. If you are working within an organization with a board of directors, be sure to involve them.

- **Conceptualize the special event.** With your committee, brainstorm and then decide on: the amount of money to be raised, number of desired attendees/participants, type of event to meet your goals, possibilities for a well-known or well-connected person to serve as guest of honor (or honorary event chair) and strategies to underwrite the event and generate funds. Consult the SPRC calendar of national public health observances (visit Featured Resources/Training & Events at www.sprc.org). Consider timing your event to coincide with a relevant week or month. Think about the desired “feel” of the event and how to design a fundraiser that’s right for your community and suicide prevention.

- **Develop a concept paper.** Briefly describe the cause, history, organization’s achievements, details about the event and different ways people can contribute (e.g., levels of sponsorship). Share the concept paper with committee members to pass along to their networks with a specific request for support. For example, the Samaritans Suicide Prevention Center in New York sponsored a survival walk to honor a local physician and outlined corporate sponsorship opportunities (see Appendix C).

- **Plan the logistics.** When searching for a venue, request a discounted rate for non-profit organizations. Obtain an appropriate site that best suits your event and creates the “feel” you seek. Remember that large spaces are more difficult to fill, and smaller spaces often feel more intimate. Depending on the event, you also may need to arrange for caterers, florist, entertainment, programs, nametags and a data base to track RSVPs and donations. Also, develop a budget for your event and track expenses.

- **Reach out for sponsors and in-kind support.** Approach businesses or individuals by either writing a letter or contacting them personally. Share the reason why you are so passionate about suicide prevention with others so they understand the importance of their support. In-kind support is essential for special events as every dollar saved in expenses is a dollar earned for suicide prevention. Contact vendors to help with the numerous event-related costs (e.g. space rental, food, beverages, wait staff, invitations, fliers, postage fees, musicians, decorations, etc). List sponsors and contributors in a program to be distributed to all attendees at your event or on a suitable poster board to be displayed at the event. Also, if you have a Web site, post the names of all who helped with the event.

- **Spread the word.** If invitations are required, send them out (including an RSVP card with a return-addressed envelope) with sufficient lead time, and give people the chance to make a contribution even if they cannot attend. Give key contacts a stack of invitations, and ask them to invite their friends, family and colleagues. Publicize your event in the local media to let people know about the opportunity to contribute and/or attend. To find media contacts in your area, visit capwiz.com/spanusa/dbq/media/. On the day of the event, invite your local media to cover the event, if appropriate. (If you decide to invite the media, be sure to notify your honored guests.) If the media does not attend, send a photo and a brief summary of the event immediately afterward for publication in the local happenings section of the paper.

- **Preparing for event day.** Establish a schedule, and run the timing and sequence of activities by the planning committee and any honored guests in advance. Create a checklist of last-minute issues that can only be handled on event day so that you don’t overlook important details in the excitement. During the event, set aside time to publicly thank those who helped plan and support the event.

- **After the event.** Send thank you letters to sponsors and volunteers. Consider sending donors a follow-up note six months after the event to let them know how their contributions have made a difference. Also, meet with your planning committee to discuss and evaluate the event. Note what can be done next time to improve the event.
Depending on the event, there are myriad other details you’ll need to address. You’ll want to research event-specific information for activities such as auctions, 5K runs/walks and raffles.

### Raise Funds Online

Web-based or online fundraising allows individuals and nonprofits to reach out to a broader audience and solicit support. Some organizations have a “donate now” button on their Web sites. Online services allow individuals to create their own Web site to attract donors, often in memory of someone lost to suicide. Although online fundraising provides an easy mechanism for soliciting donations, people still have to be aware of the suicide prevention cause and be directed to the appropriate site.

With the tools and services currently available, using the Web to raise funds for suicide prevention is a straightforward process. The following methods (and tips for success) will get you started.

- **“Donate now” buttons.** Make sure visitors to your home page immediately see a button telling them how to contribute. Some organizations provide an address to mail in donations. Others direct visitors to a charity portal (see below) to make a donation. Some organizations have the capacity to accept online donations on their own site using a secure server or through a hosted server that offers online payment services, such as www.Paypal.com. The key to attracting donations via the Web is to make the process as simple as possible. One expert recommends that a donation should only require two clicks: one to get to the form and one to complete the transaction. Otherwise, people will abandon your site before making a donation. The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network allows people to donate directly and offers to send memorial cards when the donation is made in someone’s name (see www.tspn.org/contactus.htm).

- **Charity portals.** Charity portals are Web sites featuring information about nonprofits, encouraging visitors to make contributions and providing a secure site so donors can contribute immediately. List your organization with several charity portals, and keep that information up-to-date. Listing your organization is usually free, although the site typically charges you fees when a contribution is made. Charity portals include www.Helping.org, www.Charitableway.com, www.4charity.com, www.GreaterGood.com, www.AllCharities.com, www.GiveForChange.com and www.NetworkforGood.com. Pennsylvania’s Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council uses the charity portal NetworkforGood.com and asks that online donors also consider paying the three percent processing fee.

- **Charity malls.** This service combines online shopping with donating. When people purchase online from a designated network of online stores or an affiliated business, the nonprofit receives a commission, usually a percentage of the amount spent. Nonprofits then encourage members and supporters to use the online network to shop, often through a link on their home page. To promote these relationships, send supporters an e-mail or other notice asking them to do their shopping through the network and contribute to your case, particularly right before the holiday season. Examples of charity malls are www.iGive.com, www.GreaterGood.com, www.4charity.com, and www.ShopForChange.com. Amazon.com also has a well-established affiliate program with nonprofits, while Ebay.com has auctions dedicated to nonprofit causes.

- **Private fundraising pages.** Some nonprofits and individual advocates set up their own Web page at little cost through online companies that then charge a fee for online donations (similar to charity portals). A number of suicide survivors use www.Justgiving.com to share the story of their loved one and urge people to donate to suicide prevention. SPAN USA has been the beneficiary of some of these Justgiving.com pages, which it gratefully acknowledges in its newsletter.

### Secure In-Kind Donations

In-kind resources are non-monetary contributions donated by businesses and individuals that benefit your cause or organization. Donated equipment, supplies, space and professional services can greatly expand your capacity to do suicide prevention work. Local businesses are prime candidates for providing in-kind resources. By providing in-kind support, businesses gain higher visibility in the community, feel more invested in suicide prevention efforts and are able to become more familiar with your group before making a monetary contribution.

Securing useful in-kind donations requires preparation, purposefulness and creativity. The first step is to develop an in-kind “wish list.” Think about...
which goods and services you use currently and what you could use in the future. All of these items can be on your wish list. Ask others involved with your group (e.g., volunteers, board members) to brainstorm a similar wish list and include how the items and services would benefit your cause.

Once you have your wish list in hand, you can:

■ Talk to local business owners and branches of larger corporations in your community. Your initial request may match the company’s line of business, but feel free to share your entire wish list. Company representatives may have access to resources you never even imagined. Also ask companies to speak to their wholesalers (on your behalf or along with you) for in-kind donations.

■ Contact local civic groups or service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Lions Club). Community-minded groups may be willing to solicit in-kind donations from their members.

■ Ask for referrals and ideas from entities plugged into the charitable network in your area. Examples include local volunteer clearinghouses, United Way, local human service coalitions and governmental officials that work with the non-profit community.

■ Monitor your neighborhood newspaper for news about the local business community. Certain events may signal opportunities for soliciting in-kind donations. A company that is downsizing may want to donate its office equipment, while a business marking an anniversary may want to link up with a good cause in celebration.

■ Approach trade or professional associations (e.g., legal, accounting) to see if they refer members interested in volunteering their time for a good cause.

■ Investigate intermediary agencies that either gather information about available resources or collect and distribute such resources to charitable groups. One such resource is www.giftsinkind.org.

■ Check with human resource departments of large corporations to see whether they have programs that “loan” executives or give staff “time off” to work for nonprofits in the community.

Conclusion

This document is a roadmap for suicide prevention advocates new to fundraising and those looking to expand their fundraising repertoire. Grassroots advocates learn how to pursue funds from individuals, organizations, special events and the Web, as well as seek in-kind donations.

Initially, you may pursue one, maybe two, of these strategies. Over time, as funding needs grow and/or existing revenue sources dry up, you should pursue a range of fundraising strategies. By establishing a diversified funding base, you ensure your program isn’t dependent upon any one source, enhance your ability to attract new funding and continue to foster relationships within the broader community. Finding ways to build and encourage these relationships is the key to your fundraising success.

Fundraising gives you the opportunity to educate others and better connect them to the important cause of suicide prevention. Incorporate fundraising requests when you talk about your suicide prevention efforts with your circle of family, friends and colleagues, the business community and the public at-large. Regardless of the method, remember you always raise more money by asking.
Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to SPAN USA community organizers and other suicide prevention advocates who shared materials and strategies, including Teresa Tate, SPAN USA community organizer, Cape Coral, Fla. and Mary Jean Coleman, SPAN USA community organizer, Albany, NY.

Many of the good ideas contained in this guide were drawn from the abundance of fundraising resources found on the Web. Readers are encouraged to review the reference list below and consult these original sources.

Klein, K. (Jan/Feb 2004). The ten most important things you can know about fundraising. Grassroots Fundraising Journal. www.grassrootsfunding.org

Klein, K. and Roth, S. (Sept/Oct 2003). 8 ways to raise $2,500 (or more) in 10 days (or less, sometimes). Grassroots Fundraising Journal. www.grassrootsfunding.org


Stallings, B. Effective practice: Choosing the right fundraising event for your organization. National Service Resource Center. epicenter.nationalserviceresources.org/index.taf?_function=practice&show=summary&Layout_0_uid1=33583

‘Effortless’ Fundraising

The mention of fundraising often causes volunteers to groan. However, whether raising funds for SPAN USA or local suicide prevention efforts, following two simple rules will make the task seem effortless. First, start with the goal of raising awareness. And second, tap into what you enjoy.

Start with the goal of raising awareness. Suicide prevention advocates typically are passionate about raising awareness and will go to great lengths to educate others. In 2003, Jeff and Beth Alt hit the trail to raise awareness about suicide and depression after losing Beth’s brother Mike to suicide the previous year. The couple hiked the challenging 218-mile John Muir Trail through the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. The pair lined up gear sponsors to underwrite some of the trip’s costs and sold 850 “Hike for Mike” T-shirts to employees at the Chicago Board of Trade, where Mike used to work. Using a satellite phone, they sent journal entries with updates on the journey to be posted on the Web site HikeforMike.com. Jeff has since written a book detailing their journey, which will be released in September 2005; a percentage of the proceeds will benefit SPAN USA. Although the Alts’ adventure began as a therapeutic journey of healing and to raise awareness, the trip led to opportunities to bring the suicide prevention message to a broader audience and even raise funds for an important cause.

Tap into what you enjoy. Sean Gerow, SPAN USA chairman-elect, has been doing adventure races for several years. The rugged race courses are about 25 miles long and involve kayaking, mountain biking and trail running. After reading about a fellow athlete who raised money through a triathlon (see Network News, fall 2004), Gerow decided to combine his love of adventure racing with raising awareness and funds for suicide prevention. This year he set the challenge of completing at least five adventure races and asked companies and individuals to sponsor him; the proceeds go to SPAN USA. The Siegel Agency, his employer, gave $1,000, and others have pledged varying amounts. During the races, Gerow wears a T-shirt with the SPAN USA logo, sponsoring companies and the names of loved ones who have died by suicide. On several occasions, bystanders have asked him about the shirt, which gives him an opportunity to educate people about suicide prevention and SPAN USA. Gerow hopes other SPAN USA supporters follow his lead, consider their interests, check out events in their communities and come up with their own unique and effortless ways to raise money for suicide prevention.
Extremities Nail Salon 
1452 L Street, NW 
Washington DC, 20005

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing you today to ask for your support for a very important cause and one that is rarely discussed – suicide. A few years ago, I lost my only sister Ren to suicide at the young age of 29. This tragedy was a terrible shock to me and my family. It was only afterwards, in speaking with other persons who had been touched by suicide that we learned about the breadth of suicide and its risk factors. We know now that suicide takes more lives each year than homicide, that suicide has been a leading cause of death in our nation since 1975 and that it is the leading cause of violent deaths worldwide.

As a result of my tragic loss, I resolved to work to prevent others from having to experience a similar tragedy. This is why I am planning a fundraiser for the Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA). SPAN USA is a national grassroots organization that works to raise awareness and advocate for suicide prevention initiatives at the community, state and federal levels. It is made up mostly of survivors just like me and works to support and advance policy initiatives that will help reduce the rate of suicide and suicidal behavior in our nation.

One of the ways I hope to raise funds is to have a silent auction in which attendees will bid on items that are donated from local businesses like yours. I would be grateful for any contribution you could make (perhaps a free manicure and pedicure). I hope you will consider making an in-kind contribution to this worthy cause.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 449-3600.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lidia S. Bernik
Survival Walk – A Walk In Memory of Rita Leighton, M.D.

Corporate Sponsorship Opportunities

**$250**
Recognized verbally from the podium at the event
Logo on back of event T-shirt
Logo on walker registration/sponsor form
Mentioned in the Samaritans Quarterly Newsletter

**$500**
Recognized verbally from the podium at the event
Logo on back of event T-shirt
Logo on walker registration/sponsor form
Mentioned in the Samaritans Quarterly Newsletter

Banner displayed at walk start and finish point.

**Payment in Kind Donation worth at least $250**
Recognized verbally from the podium at the event
Logo on back of event T-shirt
Logo on walker registration/sponsor form
Mentioned in the Samaritans Quarterly Newsletter

We will contact you for your company logo and business information.

Please fill out the following information:

- Check to follow  - Unable to sponsor, but please accept this donation $__________

- Payment enclosed  - Call me, I’d like more information.

Name:__________________________________________________________

Corporation: _____________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________  

______________________________________________________________

Phone: _______________________________________________________

Email Address: _____________________________________________________

Please make checks payable to *The Samaritans – Walk for Rita.*
Send this completed form before 7/1/05 to:
*The Samaritans Suicide Prevention Center, Attn: Mary Jean Coleman, P.O. Box 5228, Albany NY 12205*
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA)
1025 Vermont Avenue, NW
Suite 1066
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 449-3600
Fax: (202) 449-3601
E-mail: info@spanusa.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458-1060

Phone: 877-GET-SPRC
Fax: (617) 969-9186
E-mail: info@sprc.org