



Fundraising Information

Dear Parents,

This packet has been prepared for students and parents participating in the Earth Explore Adventures program.

The intent is to provide valuable information and ideas to assist families who would like to undertake fundraising activities in their own community. All of the ideas presented have been used successfully by students to raise at least a portion of their program tuition.

It is certainly true that fundraising requires considerable time and effort. By the same token, many students have used the fall, winter and spring months to fundraise successfully, and in so doing, make a sizable contribution to their participation in an Earth Explore program.

The experience of hundreds of families has shown that determination, persistence, and the ability to spread the word to as many potential supporters as possible are the keys to successful fundraising.

Students who network through their parents, ask for assistance in the community, and provide information about themselves and their goal to everyone they can, are the most likely to be successful. In addition, students and parents often report that the fundraising effort was a rewarding and valuable part of the student's overall experience, paying dividends in increased self-confidence and goal setting skills.

Enclosed you will find these elements:

- 1) Ideas for fundraising
- 2) Sample information sheet
- 3) Sample cover letter
- 4) Frequently Asked Questions
- 5) Special Event Ideas
- 6) Sample Donor List

The **cover letter** is designed to be used as a guide for approaching organizations and individuals in the community who might possibly provide assistance. The **information sheet** is designed to be a guide for those students or parents who would like to share with others more information about the individual student and his/her goals. Each of these documents can be modified as needed. Finally, the **ideas for fundraising** are provided to help families develop a successful strategy for fundraising. Each has been used successfully in the past.

Best of luck in your own fundraising efforts. With determination and energy, we have found that students can often succeed beyond their own expectations!

Fundraising Ideas for Earth Explore Students And their families

Did you Know?

Each year Earth Explore students and their families use three basic techniques to raise funds:

1) Personal Appeals-Direct requests to individuals, clubs, businesses and corporations.

Account for on average 50% of all donations
Face to face most effective
Letter is a good follow-up
Phone and letter are effective choices when used together

2) Special Events and Activities-Things like car washes, pizza nights, dances, bake sales.

Account for on average 25% of all donations
Fee for service
Door to door, neighbor to neighbor outreach
Sell a product (bake sale, car wash, etc.)
Club donations (from the club treasury through a club-sponsored event)
Parties/get together (art theme, kitchen theme, etc.)

3) Organizational fundraising. Products like World's Best Chocolate, Hersheys, Cookie Dough and other items can be sold as part of a group fundraising effort.

Account for on average 25% of all donations
Profits can be 50% of sales depending upon the item
One parent or teacher is the organizer for a given group
Provides a desirable product in exchange for donation
Additional information at efundraising.com or call Earth Explore

Unbelievable things happen when you JUST ASK!

Earth Explore students and their adult advocates find that when they tell others about their undertaking, about the academic credit they will be earning, and the learning opportunities they will experience, the response is tremendous.

Remember the old saying, "people give to people." That means they give to a student because they trust them and believe in that student.

Ask everyone you know. And develop a network of helpers who can get out the word for you, using their network of friends, business contacts, and clubs.

Think big! Don't set a low goal, because that is usually where you will end up. Set out to raise the entire program tuition, and get out the word to as many people, clubs and other organizations as you can. When you think big, and plan big, big things often happen!

Be Very Organized. This means go about fundraising in a structured way. Make lists of people who could help. Come up with conventional and wild ideas, and write them down. That way you will have many possible sources of fundraising working at once. Put together a timeline for fundraising events and activities, and for reaching your goal. Track where you are and where you'd like to be.

Lets get going! Here's how.

Reach out Personally

Nothing compares with the direct personal appeal. That means face to face or phone contact with people to whom you can explain your goal, and your motivation for reaching it.

First

Identify your prospects.

During your life you and your helpers (adult advocates) have met thousands of people. In developing your prospect list, think in terms of groups of people, not individuals. Think about these groups of people which all of us know, and then identify individuals within each group. Here they are:

Family and Relatives:

Remember that people close to you will admire and support your goals. Be sure to explain why you are pursuing this goal, and how you hope to get there.

School Acquaintances:

Not just yours, but your parents (and your aunts and uncles). Come up with a letter that your friends can take come to their parents, and in the letter ask your friends' parents to share the letter with their work associates and those at any clubs to which they belong. The wider the word is spread, the greater the success.

Your parents (and other adults) clubs and organizations:

Your parents and their friends probably belong to a variety of clubs and service organizations. Lions, Kiwanis, Eagles, Rotary are a few of the possibilities. Individuals in these clubs or organizations are a great source of potential donations. Get a letter to them, so that they understand why you are fundraising. Better yet, ask to speak in front of the club (or ask an adult helper speak for you). Ask that the club consider organizing an event to help you raise funds. Offer to speak at the event. Remember, a personal appeal works best.

Work Associates:

There are lots of people at your parents (and your aunts and uncles) workplaces, past and present, who might contribute if they knew more about what you are doing.

Friends:

Not only yours, but your parent's circle of friends can be a source of potential donations. And don't forget that your grandparents may have lots of friends as well, some of whom might be interested in helping out, if they knew more.

Neighbors:

Get organized here! Print out a fundraising letter, and attach an envelope. Bring an adult along and knock on some doors and drop off the letter and envelope. Tell them who you are, and why you are fundraising. You will find that donations can come from some unexpected sources.

Companies/businesses:

Your parents company, or your aunt or uncles company, may have a gift giving or matching program that will help. Also, it can be very effective if a business sponsors a student. This can take the form of a direct donation, or a day during which a portion of proceeds is donated to the student being sponsored (such as pizza/bake sales).

Church/Synagogue:

Church or synagogue bake sales or social events can be a big help in fundraising. Ask to make a personal appeal, or have an adult helper do this for you. Get the work out with flyers or letters after a service, answering questions and talking with everyone who has a question.

Second

Come up with an approach that works best for you.

Nothing beats **face-to-face** contact. Try to speak before groups, or have a parent or adult helper do this.

If you prefer, try a **letter campaign**. This technique can be an effective way to reach a large number of potential donors. However, keep in mind that it is usually less effective than face-to-face contact.

If you use telephone contact, try to use it as a follow-up to your **letter campaign**. Again, on all of these ideas, ask for the support and assistance of an adult helper, whether it is a parent, friend, or relative. Having an adult follow-up your letter campaign with face-to-face or telephone contact is often effective.

Use our sample letters, or come up with one of your own.

The most important part is that any appeal should be from your heart, and be in your own words if possible. The sample letters that we have provided share the information, but should be supplemented with your own words, and your own thoughts. Remember, people give to you, not to an organization, so share your thoughts and motivation for getting involved in Earth Explore!

Be organized. Suggest a donation amount.

Don't be shy.

Think Big and Big Things will happen.

For example, in your letter, don't be afraid to suggest a donation of \$25 or \$50 dollars. Or ask for \$5 per day of the program. Include in the envelope a self addressed return envelope which makes it convenient for your friends, relatives and acquaintances to return the donation to you.

They are out there. Just think about it.

OK, now we're getting going. But just who are these people who may help? Consider the following list for starters:

Prospective Donors

- Swim/soccer/baseball team parents and coach
- Music teacher and his/her friends
- Christmas card list
- Parents co-workers
- Orthodontist and office staff
- Dentist and office staff
- Family doctor and office staff
- Eye doctor and office staff
- Parents golf partners
- Coffee shop/grocery store manager
- Neighbors
- Pastor
- Pediatrician and office staff
- Relatives (aunts, uncles, grandparents)
- Parents friends
- Parents of your best friends
- Parents' insurance agent and office staff
- Veterinarian and office staff
- Business sponsor
- Parents/grandparents/Aunts/Uncles Service Club

Frequently Asked Questions

How many letters should I send?

Send letters to everyone who you can think of. After that, ask those people to share a letter or personal appeal with their friends and relatives. Networking is the best way to expand your fundraising efforts. The more people you contact, the greater the chance of reaching your goal.

What about Nos?

There is an old saying that you have to encounter a lot of Nos, before you get a Yes. Think of these as a path to success. It is a simple fact of life that some people will donate, and some will not. But be prepared for surprise donations to come from some places you had not expected!

How soon will donations appear?

From the time you begin your mail, or personal appeal campaign, expect 2-3 weeks to elapse before you receive your first donation. But keep persistent, and keep the letters going out even as the donations start to come in.

What is the hardest thing about fundraising?

Persistence. Many people will not keep up the effort necessary, or expand their effort into new networks of contacts, when fundraising levels off.

How do I stay organized?

Put together a fundraising timeline on a sheet of paper, or on the computer. Have your parents help you with this. Try to determine how much money you want to raise by when. That way you know how you're doing, and can use this information to coordinate new letter campaigns (or approach businesses for sponsorships).

What do I do with donations?

You can keep a fund in a bank with donations, or send them in to Earth Explore in the student's name, or referencing the student's account number. But whatever you do, prepare and send out a thank you note for everyone who has helped you. When you send out this note, send follow-up letters to those who haven't yet contributed.

Do door-to-door neighborhood campaigns work?

Yes, if you can drop off an information sheet and an envelope for donations to be returned. But be sure to always take an adult helper along. And, if you can, have friends or parents also go door-to-door. This way you can reach more homes, and more prospective supporters!

Do special events and activities work?

They certainly can, but you will be most successful if you ask for and receive as much help as possible in organizing these. Also, try to hold more than one, and provide information at each. Make a large cardboard poster that you can take to these activities, explaining what you are doing, and why.

Special Events and Activities to Consider

Number one, share information.

Make up a colorful informational poster, or large sign and take it with you to all of the fundraising events that you are organizing. It should explain why you are fundraising (for an academic science program), what your goal means to you, and how donors can help. Make a second poster, or large sign, with the names of all of the persons and businesses that have provided donations. That way, you are not only providing necessary information to potential contributors, but are acknowledging those who have helped you already.

Parties

Hold a 50s party, a sock-hop, or 70s themed event. Use black light or other appropriate effects. Consider making it a family event. Make sure that everyone knows that the goal is to raise money for a good cause. Yours! Invite all of your friends, and their parents. Ask for a donation as an entry fee (\$5/person or \$15 per family), and give out information sheets with each donation explaining what the donation will be used for. Other ideas include parent parties with a fundraising theme, like progressive dinners (a different course in each house), in which money raised will do toward your goal. Other parent ideas include carnival and casino night, fondue parties, wine tasting parties, pool parties, Hawaiian/tropical parties, etc.

Give something back

Consider offering something to a group or organization in return for a donation. For instance, you could arrange a slide (or PowerPoint) presentation for a service club upon return from your adventure, in exchange

for a donation, or the organization of a special fundraising event, such as a lunch or dinner.

Sell something

Online resources like eFundraising.com work with groups that would like to offer a product for sale as part of a fundraising effort. One person, either a parent or teacher should be the primary organizer. You will have access to products like candy, magazines, cookie dough and many other items.

Also consider approaching some local businesses like T-shirt shops or pizza shops, and ask them to offer you their product at cost. Some students take orders for specially printed T-shirts. The shirt might say I Helped an Earth Explore student dig for dinosaurs! Or I Helped an Earth Explore student walk on a glacier! Or I Helped an Earth Explore student climb a volcano! If the shirt can be printed for \$10, ask for a \$20 donation for each shirt! This has been a winning idea in the past. Perhaps you can have a hot dog or pizza stand at neighborhood yard sale, or in front of the grocery store! Always ask parents or other adults for help in this type of idea, because you will have to have your product donated, or sold to you at cost, and you will need the permission of those taking part. During the sale, it is important to prepare a large poster board explaining the student's goals, and how the funds collected at the sale are being used. Often shoppers will offer a small cash donation on the spot if they have this information.

Offer a Service

This is a great way to combine fundraising with providing needed services. And it is fun! Some popular ideas include car washes, leaf raking and bagging, snow shoveling, handyman services, lawn care, etc. Importantly, be sure to have an information sheet ready to hand out, describing why you are offering the service, and your goal. You will find that some people will provide an additional donation once they find out that you are fundraising for an educational goal.

Go Door-to-Door

Get a parent to help you take your message door-to-door in your neighborhood. Take your poster, or information sheets along, and leave a return envelope there as well. Let neighbors know that any donation will help, and that they will be acknowledged on your poster, if they can help you.

Seek out service clubs and other organizations

Many clubs exist to help out in worthwhile endeavors like yours. As mentioned previously, Kiwanis, Elks, Lions, American Legion and Jaycees are just a few examples of such organizations. They often have a budget set aside to assist, or can help to arrange a fundraising event, like a themed dinner, with proceeds earmarked to your cause. Ask parents, friends, relatives and anyone else you know if they are members of any such clubs, and if you could speak before them about your goal, or have an adult do it for you.

Community Yard Sales

Every year we mention this idea more than once, because it really works. With an adult, go door-to-door in the weeks before your weekend yard sales, asking for donations of unwanted, or used merchandise for your sale. Make sure you pass out your informational flyer stating why you are raising funds, and what your goal is. In the days before the sale, have a parent with a truck accompany you to pick up the merchandise that has been set aside. On the days of the sale, be sure to display your large poster, explaining your fundraising efforts, and acknowledging those who have helped. Surprisingly, you will find that some people will walk away without purchasing anything, but will make a donation to your cause!

Bowl-A-Thons, Golf-A-Thons, and the rest

Contact a miniature golf course, a bowling alley or the city parks department and ask about reserving time for a special event. Be sure to provide information about your project and it's purpose. In some cases the facility rental can be donated, or offered to you at cost. Then, with adult help, organize a special event like a benefit golf tournament, softball game, or bowl-a-thon and sell tickets to the event.

See if you can get a local bowling alley, or driving range to donate time for your event, or provide the time at low cost. Then, invite friends, family, their acquaintances, and everyone else you can. Charge them a \$10 donation, or other appropriate amount, to take part. Once again, make sure they know that their participation is going to a worthy cause. Remember to bring along your informational poster, and your poster-sized list of donors.

Another variation that can work is to organize an event like those above, but ask those who plan to attend to help you collect donations. Give each one ten donation forms, and tell them to distribute them to the most likely prospects that they know. When the event takes place, offer a prize to the person whose efforts resulted in the most donations.

Car Washes do Work

But timing and location are very important. Ask friends or family members to network with everyone they can to organize volunteers, and help find a suitable location for the event. There must be water available, and it needs to be a highly visible place, on a well-traveled road. Car washes are, for obvious reasons, most successful on bright, clear days. Because weather is so important, try to hold the event on at least two weekends to insure that at least one will have the good weather necessary. In cold weather areas where there is snow, car washes can be especially successful due to the dirt and grime that accumulate on cars in winter conditions. In this case as well, try to organize the event so that it's held in sunny weather

Use the Internet

If your family has access to the World Wide Web and a printer, you might consider starting an Internet research service. Again, the key is to create a flyer or information sheet on your fundraising effort and distribute it widely. Tell your potential customers that you will research a topic for them (i.e. cooking, pets, gardening) and provide a printout in exchange for a donation to your tuition. Or, alternately, you can set a small fee for the service. In all cases, tell your customers why you are in business, and how you plan to use the funds you raise.

Other Fundraising Events

- Rummage Sales/coupled with BBQ/Bake Sale
- Mardi Gras Party
- Tupperware Parties
- Auction White Elephant Gifts
(Wrap up white elephant gifts, and auction them without knowing the contents!)
- Murder Mystery Evening
- Giftwrapping at major department store near holidays
- Puppet show
- Candle Parties
- Pampered Chef Parties
- Craft Fairs
- Papa Murphys Pizza donations
- Krispy Kreme fundraising
- Babysitting Service
- Pet Walking Service
- Yard Work Service

Some final tips!

Budget enough time

Fundraising can be time consuming. Be sure you can devote the time and energy necessary to be successful.

Find Helpers

Students should ask a family friend or friends to assist in the fundraising effort. This person can help distribute information and spread the word to colleagues and friends about the student and his or her goals.

Set Goals

Be realistic here, and keep in mind the tuition deadlines and cancellation policies of the program.

Tell Everyone

This may be the most important of all. Get the word out about what you are doing and why as widely as possible. Support can come from unexpected sources.

Keep at it

With time and determination, most students can raise at least a portion of their own tuition. But if you need help (and most students do), ask for it. And keep a positive attitude! Fundraising is a great learning experience.

Let's get organized!

Sample Donor List

Letter Sent? Family and Relatives

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Letter Sent? Parents' Friends

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

- 9.
- 10.

Letter Sent? Neighbors

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? My friends' parents

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Community Businesses

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Service organizations

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Church/Synagogue

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Doctor/Dentist/Veterinarian/Pediatrician and staff

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Sports club or team Families

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Parents' work associates

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Letter Sent? Other Networking Ideas

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



One parent's fundraising experience:

Mrs. Esther Cooper's daughter Gabrielle participated in the Rockies Adventure program from New Jersey:

*"I called for the fundraising packet, and ended up learning so much more than I could have ever dreamed. On March 1st, I started our first fundraiser. I set up a candle sale, a sub and pizza sale, and a bowlathon. Gabrielle and I made up information packets from your web-site, explaining about your organization and the trip itself...we included a letter about Gabrielle and her desire to be able to attend this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. By the end of March, I was able to pay over half the tuition. I breathed, slept and ate fundraising. It was during this time that **I started to realize that I was learning a lesson about life, and people and caring.** My daughter and my son were learning that anything in this world is possible if you really want it and are willing to work to get it. The outpouring of generosity and offers for help just amazed me. There are no words to express my gratitude for the incredible gift this adventure has given my child. Thank you all at Earth Explore for the lessons and confidence I have gained from this. Now when I'm asked if I think I can do it, my answer will be, of course I can!"*



Sample Cover Letter

(to be modified for student's use)

Dear <<**Name of Supporter**>>,

I believe it's important that young people challenge themselves, set high goals, and work hard to achieve them. That's why I'm writing this letter to you.

My name is <<**student's name**>> and I am in the <<**grade level**>>th grade at <<**name of school**>> school. I have been offered the opportunity to expand my horizons and further my education this summer by participating in a program of hands-on study and adventure.

With the assistance of supportive individuals like yourself, I will be able to join my teacher on an Earth Explore Adventure to Planet Earth, to <<**program destination**>>.

Earth Explore Adventures help students and their teachers explore our planet, and create enduring connections to nature. Only 200 students from around the United States will have the chance to take part in the program this year. This is an academic program in which we will <<specific Earth Explore program highlights here>>. Through the program I have the chance to earn credit, in the area of Natural Sciences.

If there is any way that you or your company can offer a sponsorship or donation of any size to help make this adventure a reality for me, I would greatly appreciate it. In return I am willing to share with you what I have learned at the conclusion of the program, perhaps in a slide presentation or other forum.

I want to thank you in advance for your help. I plan to work hard in the coming months to raise as much of my own tuition as possible, and help make this science adventure a part of my life.

Sincerely,
<<**Student's Name**>>



Sample Information Sheet

(to be modified for student's use)

Hello,

My name is <<**student's name**>> and I am in the <<**grade level**>>th grade at <<**name of school**>>. My interests include <<**student's interests**>>. I am also active in <<**student's community activities or school activities**>>.

This coming summer I have the chance to be part of an exciting educational program called Earth Explore Adventures to Planet Earth. The program gives students and teachers the chance to explore the earth in an active way, and develop long-lasting connections to nature and cultures.

Only 200 students from around the United States will have the chance to take part in the program this year. This is an academic credit program in which we will <<**include specific Earth Explore program highlights**>>.

I want to be a part of this program because <<**student shares in own words reasons for wanting to participate in Earth Explore**>>.

I am asking for any assistance that you might be able to provide to help me cover my program tuition. I will be organizing a <<**student states his/her fundraising activity, i.e. yard sale, carwash, T-shirt sales, etc.**>> on <<**date and time of activity**>> at <<**location of activity**>> and I hope I can count on your support.

I want to thank you in advance for your help. I plan to work hard in the coming months to raise as much of my own tuition as possible.

Sincerely,

<<**Student's Name**>>