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MOMENTUM

*A Relay For Life®
Fundraising Resource*

Fundraising
Advice
from
the **Pro**

**Sneak
preview!**

Ideas
for *Fundraising*
Year Round



THIS SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW of Momentum magazine is a shortened version of the full issue that will be printed and available for all Relays to order in the fall of 2009. Enjoy this handful of articles available electronically, and keep your eyes out for the full issue coming soon! If you have questions, email the Great West Awards & Recognition Task Force at GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Three years ago when I was asked to be the volunteer chair of the brand new Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force, I had no idea what this group would become. This superb group of volunteers from the 12 states that make up our Division was solid in its desire to recognize individual Relayers and teams for their fundraising and carrying out of our mission at Relay.

One of the biggest projects the Task Force took on was identifying and recognizing our Relay For Life Top Fundraisers...those individuals raising more than \$10,000 and teams raising \$20,000 with a \$1,200 per team member average. For two years, we brought our Top Fundraisers to the Great West Leadership Summit in Reno, Nevada for focus groups on fundraising. This collection of fundraising advice is the result of those efforts from some of the best fundraisers in our Division. This magazine has been written by Relay fundraisers, for Relay fundraisers.

You will see articles and tidbits of advice from many Top Fundraisers within these pages, including our Nationwide Teams of Excellence. These teams have reached this prestigious nationwide benchmark by raising more than \$50,000 with a \$3,333 per team member average. The other fundraisers who wrote articles self-identified themselves in our focus group and submitted articles for this issue of Momentum. If you are a Top Fundraiser and are interested in submitting an article or serving on the Task Force, you can send an email to GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com to nominate yourself.

I have been a part of Relay For Life since its inception in 1985 and it's truly amazing to see how far this event has come in the last 25 years. As a Top Fundraiser myself (my family team raised more than \$23,000 last year for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, Washington), I'm awed to be in the company of the Top Fundraisers that you will read about. As I read and edited the articles, not only did I learn some new ideas, but it also brought home to me how fortunate we are in our Division to have the quality of caring people working together to find a cure.

Thank you for taking the time to read these stories from amazing cancer warriors. I have seen incredible advances in the fight against cancer in the 25 that I have been fundraising for Relay. The dollars we are raising now will bring even more advances in the coming years, and one day we will find a cure and have a world free from cancer.

Pat Flynn
Great West Top Fundraiser
National Relay For Life Hall of Fame member

Momentum is a project of the Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force. The Task Force is a group of dedicated staff and volunteers from around the Great West Division of the American Cancer Society working to recognize the hard work and achievements of Relayers across our division. To contact the Task Force with questions or comments, email GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com.

Special thanks to the following Top Fundraisers for writing or contributing to articles for this issue of Momentum magazine: *Mary Alexander, Liz Berry, Jo Ellyn Bradley, Linda Brant, Vanessa Castro, Sheryl Claypool, Sandi Cok, Karen Conley, Mike Darrah, Annie Davis, Kristen Davis, Debbie Duncan, Denise Farley, Mackenzie Forman, Bob Gallegos, Shirley Genter, April Grant, Tom Gurgui, Carol Hardie, Jim and Pat Harnish, Ted Hill, Sandi Holdener, Brent Johnson, Anne Keeney, Shae Lambert, Mark Little, Lisa Lohse, Ana Lopez, Marcie Martinez, Korri Miller, Christy Monk, Denise Orr, Arnette Pinckney, Rebecca Preston, Brady Ramsfield, Gina Romero, Cindy Schatz, Doreen Schmitt, Cindy Sheehan, Heidi Smart, Jonathan and Shelley Sprouffske, Julia Spencer, Pat Straube, Nichole Victory, Nancy Von Rosenberg, Denise Westcott, Matt Walsh*

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Shelley Mauss Sprouffske

THIS SNEAK PREVIEW

Fundraising Advice

These articles were written by Great West Top Fundraisers who identified themselves as interested in contributing an article during our Top Fundraiser Focus Group at the September 2008 Leadership Summit. If you are a Top Fundraiser and are interested in contributing a future article, please email the Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force at GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com.

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New Meaning to New Beginnings:

One Story of Starting a Successful New Team

By Jonathan Sprouffske

Jonathan Sprouffske is an attorney with Connolly Tacon & Meserve, a small law firm in Olympia, Washington, and the Team Captain of their first year Relay Team. 2008 was the first year at the Relay For Life of Thurston County for Team Connolly Tacon & Meserve and they raised more than \$22,000.



Fighting cancer has been important to me ever since I lost my mom 5 years ago. It was two years ago that I fully caught the Relay spirit through the passion of an amazing woman who I fell in love with. Relay became a part of our story.

When I proposed to my wife Shelley at the Relay in 2007, it was a package deal. She would move from the city and out to the country. She would transfer from her successful

"The key to recruiting and galvanizing new members to raise money was educating them about the incredible work of the Society."

team at the Relay For Life of Tacoma to a smaller one in our home county. And we would Relay together – as co-captains on a new team – through my law firm, Connolly Tacon & Meserve. Thankfully, she accepted, and we began our new team together.

Starting something new and convincing others to participate can

be a challenge. My role in starting this new team at our firm was to help draw others into the Relay...to "sell" the idea. Since no one at the firm had any experience Relaying, I headed up educating my colleagues about the Relay and the mission of the American Cancer Society.

The key to recruiting and galvanizing new members to raise money was educating them about the incredible work of the Society. We used email, newsletters, and web resources from the Society to spread the word – and it worked. We ended up

with around a dozen dedicated fundraisers on our team, each with their own reasons to fight cancer.

With just 19 employees in the firm, we needed to expand our fundraising reach. The only way to accomplish that was to identify and use our individual strengths to involve our separate circles of influence. To

maximize our fundraising success, each of us focused on what we did best. We let people run with their passions and encouraged creativity and healthy competition.

UTILIZING OUR INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS

Once our team members understood what Relay was about and connected with their own reasons to fight cancer, they were ready to raise money in their own ways. Each team member had different skills to offer and contacts to reach...here are just a few examples of different individual fundraising techniques from our team members:

One of our attorneys, Chris Meserve, started a letter writing campaign to her friends, colleagues and family. She invited them to support her and our team in our mission. Her letter campaign brought in about \$4,000.

Chris's legal assistant, Rachel, decided to do a challenge of her own,

"To maximize our fundraising success, each of us focused on what we did best. We let people run with their passions and encouraged creativity and healthy competition."

asking other local firms to donate to her in an effort to out-fundraise Chris – an example of healthy competition! Rachel raised more than \$1,000 for the team.

My wife, a talented photographer, used her creative talents and donated a photo shoot for a "Raffle For Relay." We helped sell tickets (\$25 each, with a limited number available) and raised more than \$1,700 through a single photo shoot chance drawing.

A combination of these individual approaches adds up to great team fundraising! What individual strengths and passions do your team members have? Envision how each member of your team can use their individual strengths and spheres of influence to bring in big bucks for your team and encourage them to make it happen!

COMING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

We also planned larger team fundraisers as a group. Two team members who excel at garage sales volunteered to coordinate a "Rummage For Relay." Within days, they

designed a weekly themed schedule to solicit donations: from furniture to kitchen items to books. Most of us were not avid garage sale enthusiasts, so we followed their lead. With two months of preparation gathering donations and publicizing the sale, together we raised more than \$8,000 with a massive two-day event.

Around the track at the Relay, we wanted to be a hub of activity to both raise money and exposure of our community involvement. Ensuring people stopped by our tent site each time they rounded the track was a great way to do so. We sold handmade lanyards, known as "lap beads," and gave away a free bead each time participants completed another lap past our tent site. Relayers could track their accumulated miles and we had a captive audience. We raised more than \$750 from lap beads...and we met hundreds of people in the process!

TYING THE KNOT

Never did we imagine that our first year team would find such success. Not only did we successfully merge

our lives together when we married (in the Relay off-season, of course), but we loved the experience of Relaying together with a new team who caught the Relay spirit as I did a few years ago.

It's amazing how everything added up in the end with the strengths and passions of our team members combined into fundraising dollars. When we offered the chance for people to personalize their experience with Relay – to use their own gifts to benefit the team's fundraising quest and ultimately, the American Cancer Society – we built a first year team that excelled to become the top fundraising team in our event in Thurston County.

The collective strengths of our attorneys and staff brought our team together to begin a new annual tradition for our firm – funding the cure for cancer. And our new team, including our baby boy born in January 2009, newest Relayer Thomas Lawrence Sprouffske, is looking forward to many more years of Relaying together! ★

TIPS FOR TEAM BUILDING

"I hold two pre-Relay meetings as the Captain at my home. We discuss fundraising ideas and I ask how they're doing. It's important to share ideas – encourage them and share new research with them. At Relay I will give each team member assorted colored bandanas or a similar gift to tie our team together. I also hold a post party after and thank everyone."

— **Cindy Sheehan**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Redmond, WA.

"Make sure everyone knows what they are committing their time to, that raising the money is going toward fighting something that can touch everyone's life."

— **Ana Lopez**, her team raised over \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of Mesa, AZ.

"Fundraising at Relay is very fun, but it can also be stressful. Team member commitment is crucial. Don't try to do too much! Have each team member agree to be in charge of one fundraising effort."

— **April Grant**, her team raised over \$26,000 for the Relay For Life of Kittitas County, WA.



ADVICE FROM THE PROS FUNDRAISING IDEAS AND SUCCESSES

Our Top Fundraisers put their ideas on paper in our workshop at the Great West Leadership Summit in September 2008. Here are some of the advice and ideas on fundraising they had to share.

"My daughters send out random e-mails on certain days of the month letting their friends know how their parents are doing. Then they mention they are setting a daily goal of say \$300 and you'd be surprised how many people come through! Keep it personal and ask...."

— **Doreen Schmitt**, her team raised more than \$25,000 for the Relay For Life of Stanwood-Camano, WA.

"We have an employee raffle with nice items. They can buy a raffle ticket for a dollar. It's a nice thank you for getting involved in other projects and we raise several thousand dollars."

— **Pat Straube**, her team raised more than \$72,000 for the Relay For Life of Eugene/Springfield, OR.

"What made our fundraiser a success was to involve lots of people. We made a cookbook and asked 600 people to contribute recipes. We made sure it was completed by Dec 1 so it could be sold for Christmas gifts. We also advertised with how many days remained until our cook book would be available. We sold 1,500 books in 4 months."

— **Shirley Genter**, her team raised more than \$23,000 for the Relay For Life of Stutsman County, ND.



"Our team got together and drew on past successes as well as looking at new ideas. One of our best ideas was the 'Run Walk and Roll.' We partnered with a bicycle club to develop a 50 and 100K ride and walking track. We sold food, had crafts for kids, a petting zoo, a jumper and prizes, prizes, prizes. We were successful enough to make this an annual event. Next year we will be even bigger!"

— **Christy Monk**, her team raised more than \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

"Find a source that you have in your area! As a youth team we had to look hard. I used my family. My sister and two brothers gave all of the money from the sale of an animal at our livestock sale. I had many people at our ranch from 8 different states for the sale. Everyone had been touched by cancer and they all wanted to help me make my Relay For Life team something magic. Everyone went way above anything I could have dreamed of. I am proud to show that even a 14-year-old can help, and I can't wait for this next year."

— **Mackenzie Forman**, raised more than \$10,500 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Kittitas County, WA.

"We have movie nights at our elementary school – families are invited and the cost to enter is minimal, but then we sell donated soda pop, popcorn, and sell inexpensive pizza."

— **Sheryl Claypool**, her team raised more than \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of East Mesa, AZ.



"We hold one large event each October, while we spend the rest of the year planning and working out all the logistical issues involved in planning it. During the planning time we also solicit donations from local businesses to help fund the event as well as increase donations. Our event consists of planning and hosting a 12-hour scrapbooking event. We sell tickets for \$65 each, secure a location, solicit corporate sponsors to underwrite the event, and organize a silent auction through donations from local businesses and individuals."

— **Nichole Victory**, her team raised more than \$23,000 for the Relay For Life of Anchorage, AK.



TEAM ALOHA



Photo Courtesy of Gretchen Crossley Photography

Heads or Tails: There's No Wrong Way to Fundraise

Interview with Karen Conley and Brent Johnson, written by Michelle Patrick

Karen and David Conley are co-Captains of Team Aloha, which raised more than \$65,000 for the Relay For Life of Issaquah, Washington in 2008. Brent Johnson is a member of their team who raised over \$43,500 as an individual last year, and is one of the Top Ten individual fundraisers in the nation.

Who says you have to be a big, corporate team to raise big money? Not Team Aloha! Their small, family team is the only team in the Great West to be a two-time Nationwide Team of Excellence, and in the eight years that they have been Relaying they have raised more than \$235,000 to fight cancer, raising more and more each year. Karen Conley and her husband David are co-Captains, and their team consists of members of their extended family who each do their part to contribute to the team's fundraising total.

DIFFERENT STYLES, SAME RESULTS

Cousins Karen Conley and Brent Johnson are like two sides of the same coin when it comes to amazing individual fundraising. They are both very passionate about fighting cancer through Relay, and they both use individual fundraising techniques to raise money for

their team. But they have differing fundraising styles, showing us all that there are many ways to be a successful Relay fundraiser.

"One of the things I love about our team is that we are all so different...It's cool that we all do it so differently and all have success."

Brent fundraises almost exclusively online, sending emails to friends, colleagues and business contacts. In fact, he has been the top online individual fundraiser in the nation for the past two years in a row, raising more than \$39,000 online in 2008. He is very analytical, setting big goals and figuring mathematical averages of how many people he needs to ask in order to reach his ambitious goals. For instance, he figures that in order to make his

\$50,000 goal this year, he will need to ask 750 people to donate based on the fundraising averages he has received in previous years.

Karen considers her style to be more old fashioned, but still very effective. She sends physical letters to her friends and community connections, complete with self-addressed, stamped envelopes to return donations. Rather than tracking averages with analytical precision, Karen concentrates on sharing her touching story with everyone she can think of. Karen and her husband Dave's letter campaign brought in \$13,475 in 2008.

"One of the things I love about our team is that we are all so different," Karen shares, "Brent has such a statistical mind, and it would never occur to me to think of it that way. It's cool that we all do it so differently and all have success."

A PERSONAL PASSION

But in many ways, Karen and Brent are alike. Both individual fundraisers have been touched closely by losing parents and other loved ones to cancer. Every year their reasons to fight cancer increase, and they focus on stories of ways the Society is making a difference in the fight against can-

"In a weird way, this has helped improve my relationship with clients...all it took was one client to share their story about cancer and it changed my perspective."

cer. Both Karen and Brent have an intense passion for fighting cancer and they are not afraid to ask anyone and everyone they know to support their Relay efforts. Both fundraisers

prioritize maintaining relationships and going out of their way to thank donors who support their fundraising through the years. And both fundraisers have a healthy sense of competition and a drive to improve their fundraising year after year.

"What makes a difference to people is making it personal," shares Karen. "The people who donate to me continually every year are part of our team, our support system over the years. Just yesterday at church, someone asked about our team progress. People are so used to this being a part of my life that they ask me about my volunteering for ACS."

CONQUERING THE FEAR OF FUNDRAISING

One of the things both fundraisers emphasize is the importance of conquering the fear of fundraising and learning that fundraising to fight cancer actually opens opportunities for deeper relationships. As a partner in KPMG LLP (a Relay For Life National Corporate Team Program company), Brent has experienced this in his professional relationships.

"Fear is something that inhibits a lot of people," Brent explains, "The first year I felt embarrassed to ask clients because I thought 'this is personal.' But all of a sudden you've developed a whole new level of connection with the client that you never had before.

The worst thing someone can say is 'No,' but most times even the 'No' responses come with a personal story or a 'Thank You' for being involved."

"We will find a cure not because we wished for it, but because we worked for it. People respond because they know that I believe in that so strongly."

In addition to not being afraid of hearing "No," Brent shares two additional keys to his fundraising success. First, he sends personalized emails, not mass emails. Each of his 750 emails to friends, clients and colleagues are individually emailed from his professional account with common text in the body and a personal-

ized message to open or close the email. He finds that many people respond because he took the time to personalize the ask. Secondly, he says that it is important to follow up two or three times with people who haven't responded yet. He calls it a matter of persistence without being a nag...people get busy and need a reminder.

WORKING HARD AND DOING GOOD

Brent also stresses the power of doing good things for other people and creating a network of solid relationships. He finds that when he is generous with his time, others are generous in response to support Relay For Life.



Whether raising money online or through snail mail, Karen and Brent are really more alike than they are different. They are working hard to fight cancer and making a difference. Their passion fuels their success.

"We will find a cure not because we wished for it, but because we worked for it," Karen reminds us. "People respond because they know that I believe in that so strongly." ★

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LETTER OR EMAIL CAMPAIGN

"I consider fundraising for the Relay to be a long term commitment, not a one time event. I keep track each year of my donors, the amount they donated, and the names they choose to put on luminarias. The following year I send a letter including the amount given the previous year (because people rarely give less) and their personal list of luminaria names to see if they want the same ones again. I include a self-addressed stamped envelope for their check."

— **Sandi Cok**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Yakima, WA.

"I sent out a series of four letters to all on my mailing list. Each successive letter thanked those who donated, without being specific, and let them know how we were doing in regard to our goal. Up until the last letter, I advised that it was still not too late. My letter also included the donation form and a footnote and they could share/copy the form to give to others."

— **Mike Darrah**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Lakewood, WA.

"Around the end of March we send out a letter letting our past donors know it's Relay time again and ask how much they would like to donate this year. We reassure them that all of their dollars are matched by Permian Auto. At the end of the Relay we send a letter telling them totals and a thank you and see them next year."

— **Vanessa Castro**, her team raised over \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

"Make a master list of who you sent letters to for 4 reasons:

1. So you know who received them.
2. So you can go back and keep track of how much they donate.
3. So you can send a letter if no response.
4. So you can send a personal thank you."

— **Brady Ramsfield**, his team raised over \$20,000 for the Relay For Life of Shelton, WA.

"The question shouldn't be who do you send your emails to, but instead who don't you send your emails to?! Any contact that you have with an email address should receive your fundraising email. However, to further multiply the success, follow up with handwritten letters if you don't get a response. Many people are still uncomfortable conducting business over the Internet."

— **Gina Romero**, her team raised over \$26,000 for the Relay For Life of Ellensburg, WA.

"I like to take one of the 'generic' provided e-mail formats, add personal information that relates to our local event or fundraising efforts and send out to friends and family with a note to 'feel free to pass on to your friends and family as well!' E-mail is a powerful tool to reach many, many people! We all pass on funny e-mails, why not pass along one where you can 'make a difference' in the lives of someone you know?"

— **Denise Westcott**, her team raised over \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

"I think of the money I spend on letter supplies and stamps as 'seed money' that grows and multiplies into thousands of dollars to fight cancer!"

— **Debbie Duncan**, her team raised over \$60,000 for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.



RAISING MONEY AT RELAY

HAVE YOU TRIED ON-SITE FUNDRAISING? IT IS A FUN WAY TO ADD "ICING ON THE CAKE" TO YOUR TEAM FUNDRAISING TOTALS, ALONG WITH HELPING TO CREATE THE CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE OF RELAY. HERE ARE JUST A COUPLE OF THE WAYS OUR TOP FUNDRAISERS FUNDRAISE AT RELAY!



"WE HOST a 'Café' every year! Staff from our elementary school team donates all of the food and time to cook, and we offer hot dogs, hamburgers, and burritos. We have a huge tent, set up tables and chairs and then cook. People come to sit, visit and relax during the Relay. It usually brings in about \$2,300"

— **Sheryl Claypool**, her team raised more than \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of East Mesa, AZ.

"MAKE SURE you choose an activity for your campsite that doesn't take a large amount of people to run. There are multiple events going on at any given time at Relay and team members will be spread out. Also, make sure that there are appropriate accommodations for your team on site at the event ahead of time. Electricity is one key factor that we always make sure is in place before we show up ready to sell"

— **Heidi Smart**, her team raised more than \$32,000 for the Relay For Life of Sandy, OR.

"OUR BIGGEST team effort is the night of Relay – cooking! Hamburgers, hot dogs, corn...all donated! Everyone is hungry and ready to eat, so our team gets together and starts cooking"

— **Vanessa Castro**, her team raised more than \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

"KEEPING OUR on-site fundraising geared toward the Relay theme keeps our Team focused. Thinking outside the box keeps our Relay site fresh!! Everybody wants to see what our team, the Aloha Spirits, has to offer"

— **Carol Hardie**, her team raised more than \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

"USE WHAT you have and do what you already know how to do. We own a big popcorn machine, so we sold popcorn at the Relay. We also sold bubbles to everyone, not just to the little kids. Everyone loves to blow the bubbles!"

— **Mackenzie Forman**, raised more than \$10,500 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Kittitas County, WA.



"WE WANTED kids to have something to do at Relay so we approached the committee and got an okay. We set up 6 games that cost 25 cents. We raise \$600-\$1,000 each year and it gets the kids to Relay"

— **Liz Berry**, she raised more than \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Spokane, WA.

"FOR FUNDRAISING at the Relay we try and find accessories that follow the theme of our Relay. We have found that items that light up at night, blinky lights, neon lights, etc., are big sellers. Items that involve the kids help them feel included"

— **Denise Forney**, her team raised more than \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.



Big Money and Big Fun: Planning Team Fundraising Events

By Jim and Pat Harnish



Jim and Pat Harnish are members of "Friends for Cancer Cure," a team of seven couples which participated in the 2008 Relay For Life in Tacoma, WA. Their team raised more than \$35,000 last year and have set a goal for \$50,000 for 2009. Some team members have been Relaying since 1985 when they supported their friend Dr. Gordon Klatt in his solo run that first year. Over the last 25 years they have raised more than \$400,000, and are one of the top teams in the Great West.

Our team "Friends For Cancer Cure," has been raising funds in the Relay For Life for the past 25 years, and the secret of our longevity is in our name. We are "Friends" who are dedicated to helping find a "Cancer Cure." Our friendship has developed over the years because we get together often to plan how to raise money, support one another, and also to have fun.

In the beginning we relied solely on individuals sending out letters to friends, relatives, and co-workers challenging them to match our own individual donation, which some set as high as \$300, and surprisingly

got several checks for the challenge amount. But in the past few years we have added team fundraising events to our individual fundraising efforts and gotten into the big money and big fun by working together to sponsor community events such as our annual St. Patrick's Day Crab Feed. With a little creativity, organization, and teamwork, your team can raise big money too!

THE PLANNING STAGES

Our planning gets going in January for our annual Crab Feed, which sells out with 200 people and raises around \$12,000. Our formula is to keep the

menu simple with the main attraction being all-you-can-eat Dungeness crab, cole slaw, garlic bread, a dessert auction, and wine and beer for sale, with most of the food and entertainment donated by local companies.

"We try to keep it simple, but also think of ways to raise additional money at the event."

Since we have such a popular annual event, we thought you might like to see what it's like when we work as a team to sponsor a fun fundraising event, step by step.

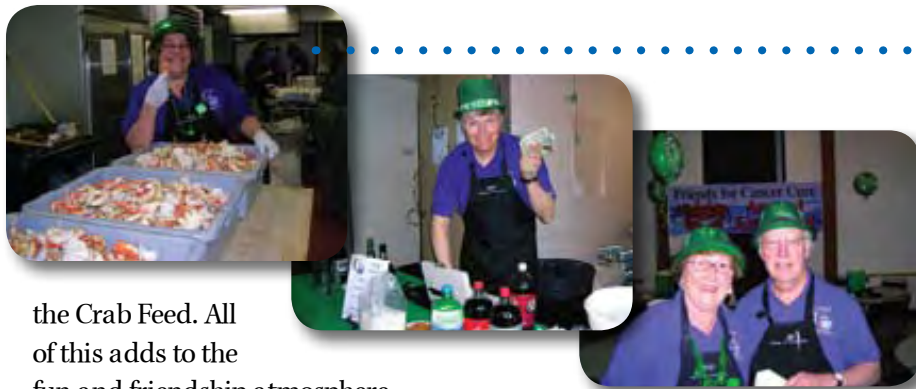
First our team gathers to set the date and identify who is responsible for coordinating all of the event details like the hall, the band, publicity, and most importantly the menu. We try to get all of these big items donated or funded by local companies. Then we can say that most of the money paid by patrons goes to the Relay. Then we set the ticket price, this year \$50 per person. By the way, all of our team members buy a ticket, even though we rarely get to sit during the Feed!

Next we decide on an invitation list of our friends, relatives, co-workers, and fellow church parishioners. This list of about 400 people gets an invitation notice before we open up ticket sales

"Breakfast the next day is when we critique our operation and calculate what we brought in, including the extra special moment when we open luminaria bags and you can hear the cheering each time a large bill or check falls out – this is FUN and rewarding and makes us realize that we are good at FUNdraising!"

to the public. Then we do other Crab Feed publicity, including producing flyers and posting them in churches and on community bulletin boards and producing articles for local newsletters and church bulletins. We also send our poster out electronically to everyone in our e-mail address book.

When mailing invitations, each member of our team uses individualized return address labels and jots a handwritten note on the invitation so people will recognize the sender. We are each responsible for filling tables, which results in attendees having personal connections to our team and knowing many others at



the Crab Feed. All of this adds to the fun and friendship atmosphere.

INCORPORATING FUNDRAISING INTO THE FUN

At the Crab Feed we try to keep it simple, but also think of ways to raise additional money at the event. For instance, adding a dessert auction is easy and can bring in more than \$1,000 – and it adds to the evening's fun. A table auction including a few items like local professional sports tickets or team hats and shirts can be

a great fundraiser too, complete with printed directions for picking an auctioneer at each table. Everyone gets into the competitive spirit...one year, a plastic St. Patrick's

Day hat grabbed off a team member's head ended up in a spontaneous auction and brought in over \$100!

We book a live band at the Crab Feed as well, which adds to the festive atmosphere as participants join in the dancing. By the end of the evening our team members do find time to end up all on the dance floor – even if it is only for the last dance to say thanks to each other for the opportunity to do this work and have great fun in the process.

In all of this fun we keep the attention on what we are about, raising money for the cure. So we introduce

the luminaria experience at the Crab Feed as well, explaining what Relay For Life is all about and why we do this. We pass out paper bags and crayons for them to create their own luminarias to honor loved ones with cancer, which we take to the Relay. We ask them to put a donation in the bag while one of our team sings Amazing Grace or plays the bagpipes. This is a very meaningful experience and connects people to the cause, not to mention the \$1,200-\$1,500 it brings in.

We also add to our bottom line by selling leftover crab in 2-pound bags, which literally fly out the door! We do hold back a couple bags for team members, which we use the next day to make crab omelets – finally sitting down.

EVALUATING THE EVENT

Breakfast the next day is when we critique our operation and calculate what we brought in, including the extra special moment when we open luminaria bags and you can hear the cheering each time a large bill or check falls out – this is FUN and rewarding and makes us realize that we are good at FUNdraising! Then we make a list of what worked well and collect new ideas, which actually begins the planning process for the next year.

EXPANDING INTO NEW IDEAS

In addition to the Crab Feed, some years we have expanded our efforts to include other events. We have hosted a Brat Fest in the fall with a silent auction, or prepared ethnic dinners for eight hosted by team members. But not every event is worth all the effort...for instance, the Bratfest was fun but we dropped it because it was too much work with all the food preparation and brought in only a few thousand dollars. Our team of seven couples realized that this was something that we probably couldn't sustain year after year. We are in this for the long run, so we don't want our team to get burned out.

In recent years we have looked for other opportunities for simple and fun fundraisers...the key is creativity. We found a great idea when one of our crab feed participants presented an opportunity for our team to help host an open house for his high-end model home. This "Idea House"

"We are in this for the long run, so we don't want our team to get burned out."

featured different vendors, craftsmen, and electronics specialists there to show off their wares. Our team's role was to greet people, help with tours, and ask for a \$10 donation to the Relay For Life. It was a win-win

ADVICE WHEN PLANNING YOUR TEAM EVENT

"Find something your team is excited about (i.e., bowling, golfing, bunco) and plan around that shared passion."
— **Sandi Holdener**, her team raised over \$40,000 at the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.

"Start small. Don't get overwhelmed too fast. You can always go bigger but if you overwhelm your team they will not be willing to continue. Try to involve as many people as possible in team events. The more projects your team members help with, the more they will feel like part of the team and the more events they will volunteer to help with."
— **Heidi Smart**, her team raised over \$32,000 for the Relay For Life of Sandy, OR.

"We got our whole team together and brainstormed ideas. From there we choose several ideas and got started and we built enthusiasm among ourselves. We got more employees involved and got the projects completed. Every year we have fun, get employees involved, and are excited to watch our dollars grow."
— **Pat Straube**, her team raised over \$72,000 for the Relay For Life of Eugene, OR.

"Wrap up is essential – do it soon after the event. What works? What didn't? How can it be done more efficiently? Keep these notes and make a notebook to refer to next year."
— **Annette Pinckney**, her team raised over \$60,000 for the Relay For Life of Grays Harbor, WA.

situation: the builder benefited by receiving free, enthusiastic tour guides and associating with a great cause. Our team benefited because with a few hours of "work" – actually it

was fun – we brought in over \$10,000 and helped raise awareness for local Relays. The builder and

his wife had so much fun associating with our team, he wanted to join us for future Relays.

Looking for creative opportunities in your own area will surely turn

up some leads. But remember, keep it simple and fun and not too labor intensive so you can sustain the effort from year to year.

Much of our success and willingness to continue to participate in Relay For Life fundraising for "Cancer Cure" is because our process is fun and simple and also because through this we have developed the kind of deep relationships that are built on supporting each other when someone is in need, which is what "Friends" do. ★



Filling a Year with Fundraising



"After struggling to fit fundraising into the last 6-8 weeks before the Relay, we realized that it made much more sense to spread our efforts out over an entire year. This simple step not only helped our team increase the amount of money we raised, but also eased a lot of our stress."

By Annie Davis

Annie Davis is the Team Captain of Team Richardson's that participates in the Relay For Life of Columbia County, in St. Helens, Oregon. Together the team raised \$20,400 in the 2008 Relay season. Annie participates in Relay For Life in honor of her mom, Eileen Kirby, a 30-year cancer survivor.

I began Relaying like many others do...I was asked. In March of 2002, my mom, a 30-year cancer survivor, asked me to start a Relay For Life team. I had never heard of Relay For Life and had no idea what I was getting into. We put together a 12-person team and started fundraising. We only had time to do a few fundraisers that year, but

after participating in our first Relay For Life, we were all hooked. We couldn't wait to do it again.

THE DRIVE TO IMPROVE

Through the years, our team has continued to participate in Relay. One of the things that makes our team so successful is that each year we set a goal to outdo our previous year. After

struggling to fit fundraising into the last 6-8 weeks before the Relay, we realized that it made much more sense to spread our efforts out over an entire year. For the past five years, our team has fundraised throughout the entire year. This simple step not only helped our team increase the amount of money we raised, but also eased a lot of our stress. We no longer

need to cram multiple events into one month. We are able to focus on one thing at a time and put all of our energy into making each fundraising event successful. This approach to fundraising year round has been very helpful to us. We have continued to raise more money each year and it actually seems to get easier as we go!

Our Relay For Life takes place in July. After Relay, we take August off to relax and recuperate, but right

away in September we start meeting and planning our fundraising for the next year. We try to have at least one team fundraiser each month. There are a few events that we do at the same time each year, and we have found that these "annual" events bring in the same people each year and people really look forward to participating in them. Doing similar events every year also helps us to not reinvent the wheel each year. Through trial and error,

we have found the events that really work for us and then have added to them to make them better. The key is to find things that your team enjoys and to have fun. ★

"Throughout the year, we also add in other fundraising events as opportunities arise, such as car washes and bottle drives. I have found that year-round fundraising has helped our team to exceed our goals and become a Top Fundraising team. I would encourage all teams to try this approach...you'll have a lot more fun and a lot less stress!"

SPREADING OUT THE FUNDRAISING

This is an example of the fundraisers we do in a typical year for our team:

OCTOBER

PartyLite Candle Show. Fall is the perfect time to sell candles and we advertise this as a great time to start Christmas shopping. Our team receives a portion of the party proceeds donated by a local consultant, usually around \$600.

NOVEMBER

We participate in two local holiday bazaars and sell handmade craft items. This is a great time to show off all the talent on your team! These efforts typically raise around \$1000.

DECEMBER

We partner with a local business, Richardson's Furniture. They host Santa Claus and we host a holiday bake sale and collect donations from customers. Last year this sale raised \$500.

JANUARY

Bunko party where we collect donations from attendees. It can bring in as much as \$800.

FEBRUARY

Private Texas Hold'em Tournament with the proceeds going to Relay, around \$2,200. This is a great fundraiser, but you need to be sure to follow local gaming laws. It is also a great opportunity to bring men into a Relay event.

MARCH

Scrapbooking Crop where the participation fees go to the Relay. This crop typically brings in \$1,000.

APRIL

Partnership with local restaurant. Each year we partner with Burgerville. We advertise our partnership, sell gift cards and then work at the restaurant for three hours. Burgerville donates 10% of the gift card sales and 15% of the profits from the three hours, which was about \$400 last year.

MAY

Pampered Chef party. We always do this in May because Pampered Chef offers special products for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and our local consultant donates a portion of the proceeds, about \$500.

JUNE

Our largest event is a 12-family garage sale. We collect item donations from all friends and family as well, and bring in over \$2,500.

JULY

Individual letter writing campaign sent by each team member. This campaign typically raises about \$4,000.