



FUNDRAISING GUIDE

Raising money can be a devil, but it is a necessary evil that we at *SPARK THE WAVE* must remain focused on. Why? Because no one will ever know how great our programs are if we don't have the money to run them!

The main thing to keep in mind when doing fundraising is the concept of “exchange.” The idea is that we will add a “value” to the community and thus people can be found who care about our programs and are willing to exchange what they have to help ensure our success. That exchange may be in the form of time (volunteering just like you), goods and services (in-kind gifts), and/or money. People are exchanging their contributions and donations for the value produced by our organization for the common good. If someone is not interested it should not be read as a slap at you. Rather, they feel more strongly about exchanging for some other value that they perceive as greater. Everyone is an individual and not everyone is into youth service or development. On the bright side, you are going to be amazed just how many individuals and organizations in the community are going to be willing to assist us. The key is that we have to ask and we have to show the people why it will be a good “exchange” for them to make.

BE POSITIVE and STICK WITH IT.

Here are some ideas that will help us all be more effective fundraisers.

- ❖ It is always better to ask in person. In one study, only 1% of individuals respond to a direct mailing whereas 50% will make a donation if asked in person.
- ❖ Individuals give more than 80% of all nongovernmental charitable contributions. Surprisingly, foundations and corporations account for less than 15% of all nongovernmental charitable giving. The take home message is that individuals are extremely important to the success of our fundraising. Most of these donors are going to be found one person at a time. That is where you come in. You need to help us find these people and talk them into helping us.
- ❖ We need to build relevance to our donors. What does that mean? We need to show them why they want to exchange with us.
- ❖ Never underestimate the value that the donor is receiving for exchanging their gifts. Most people want to give. It makes them feel good to share with others. We need to show them why they should donate to us.
- ❖ We have to produce a world-class program. We need to be seen as a true value to the community, not just a cute little camp or after-school program that no one



knows about. Never lose sight of why we are really all here-**to put on incredible programs.**

- ❖ We must communicate the value that we add to the community. **WE NEED TO TOOT OUR OWN HORN.** This can be hard. However, if we don't do it, no one else will.
- ❖ Build relationships not just donors. Everyone may not be willing to give us money but there are lots of other gifts that people can share with us. Their time and talents may be just as important. Always keep in mind that someone who doesn't wish to exchange today may very well become a friend in the future.



This packet is meant as a guidepost for you when you are looking to raise money for *SW*. The time and talent you put into this will be an invaluable gift to *SW*. It will enable us to reach more young adults that could benefit from our programs. The following are some easy steps and ideas to help you in your endeavor. Best of luck and *SW* is extremely grateful for your effort.

① Start with a budget.

Know what the expectations are on you. Trying to raise one dollar and one thousand dollars are totally different beasts. Your goal should have been clearly laid out for you. If it wasn't, then check with a team member, the director of programs or anyone on the board. Does the number seem like breeze to reach? (Then say, "Great I am going to totally crush that paltry number.") Does the number seem awfully large? (Then say, "Great, a challenge. I love challenges.") **KEEP THAT POSITIVE ATTITUDE.** If you sense it slipping, talk to someone who is fired up and get yourself pumped up again. Finally, don't hesitate to ask for help. Everyone on staff is here to help each other on this quest. Start by asking team members for their assistance.



Make sure before you begin that you understand for what purpose the money is going to be used. Are we looking for money to run our general operations, scholarships for participants/staff, or maybe a specific type of in-kind donation (Ex. copies)?

② Take the time to make a plan. (Yes, even you "disorganized types.")



Everyone's time is valuable. Don't waste it spinning your wheels. The more quality time you put into the planning the better your yield will be. Look at your capacity. Don't forget that "in-kind donations" (someone may give us food for the camp, copies for the seminar, business cards for everyone, etc.) count just as much as a cash donation. The in-kind



donation allows us to free up money from somewhere else in the budget, so YAH, IT COUNTS.

The first things to add to your plan will be your deadline and when can you work on it? Be realistic about the time you can give. (This is better than setting unrealistic goals and giving up because you get discouraged.) Now think how you are going to do this as efficiently as possible in the time you have. Still having a hard time getting the organization thing going? Ask a parent, friend, teammate who is good at it to help.

The next thing you want to do is decide how and where you are going to drum up some money. Do you want to run some type of event or are you going to search for individual/group donors?

Doing an event. (Some ideas) Make sure you always have some materials like a brochure close by to give to people. Think creatively and always remember to be telling people about our organization (not just selling them). Try to keep the event planning concepts that you have learned in mind when undertaking something like this.

Canning: Ask at local stores if you can put out a can for people to drop their change in. (Call the director of programs for the materials if you want to do this.) Go door to door or park yourself at a street corner and ask for change. (Remember do this with a friend. It is safer and much more fun.)

Sell ads in a camp program book. *SW* will have a sponsor's section in the delegate handbook. Check with the director of programs for details.

The good old car wash: Sell it as a free carwash and then talk to the people while you wash their car. Tell them about *SW* and ask if they would be willing to make a donation.



Sharing a talent (Check with town or mall officials before you do it.) Go to a street corner or a mall and set up a little "stage" for yourself. Then play an instrument, sing, read poetry or whatever it takes to get peoples attention. When you are done ask for donations. Have literature there about *SW* and be prepared to explain why you are raising the money.

Games and walks (v-ball tourney, walk-a-thon, etc.) Choosing one of these may be more than an individual or even a team could pull off. If you get motivated, try to get some other teams to help. It is a lot of work but also a lot of fun.

Chores for cash: Make an offer to your family, friends and neighbors to clean up their garage, baby-sit, paint their house or whatever they may need done for a donation. Make sure you establish limits on what you will do and how much they are willing to donate ahead of time. The people may not wish to "exchange" as much as you would like



afterwards. Your time is valuable, so don't do it for less than you think it is worth.

③ Do your homework.

First try to figure out who will be a good target to raise the type of donations for which you are looking. (Ex. Asking Kinkos for copies would be better than asking at a McD's) Make as broad a list as you can and then narrow it down. Start by asking your parents, friends, or *SW* teammates for names of individuals or companies that they have heard are generous and especially interested in donating to youth issues. Next, ask anyone you know who has had to raise some loot for some hot leads. (Ex. They had to raise money for a field trip, a service group, or at your house of worship.) How the heck did they do it? Who did they call? What groups or people helped them? What worked and didn't work?



Keep careful notes (in your computer or a notebook, but not on scraps of paper stuffed into a box) of people's name, addresses, telephone numbers, job title and how you got their name. This will become your master donation list. Really try to fill this list to the brim. Remember the old fundraising adage that it takes 3 prospects to ensure just one gift. Again, not everyone will want to "exchange" their donations through YI.

Here are some other ways to get the 411.

❖ Internet:



The internet is great for 2 reasons. First, you can google or yahoo on some common words and see who might be out there and interested. (Try key words like your home state/city, youth, service, leadership, foundation, donation, and the like.) Second, if you get a lead you can search the net for info about that organization. Would *SW* and our mission really be in line with that organization's goals? If it is, remember to include that observation in the letter you send them. You will not only seem informed but also really interested. Again, people and groups want to feel good about "exchanging" and they want to do it with groups that they believe are in line with their vision. Don't forget to search for organizations and foundations that may fund individuals. (Instead of the entire organization.)

Remember the place we all got information before the internet? Yes, **THE LIBRARY**. They are still stuffed with info and people ready to help you find what you need.



❖ **Chamber of Commerce (for local businesses)/United Way (for local non-profits)**

Both are veritable fonts of information in their respective fields. They have ideas about what groups are interested in youth issues, who to talk to, and what may be the best avenues on which to search for help.

❖ **Houses of Worship (Church, synagogue, mosque, temple, and the like)**

Many have youth groups (of which you may even be a member) and are advocates for young people and service. Remind them that the youth they help will return with new ideas and energy about how to be a better volunteer. I.e. Their group will get more bang for the buck out of each youth in the group, when that person has had some special training.

Ask if you can set up a table after the service to talk to people? Can you put a note in the bulletin/newsletter? Could you speak to the whole group during a service? Ask the leader of the house of worship for ideas about individuals or companies in the area that seem youth oriented when making donations.

❖ **Any organization for which youth volunteer**

These groups must value youth and wish to improve the lives of young adults. You can argue that you (if you are the volunteer) will be better prepared to help them because of the lessons learned at *SW*.

❖ **Parent/Guardian/Friend's Employer**

Most businesses give money to the community and you have the inside track because you know someone who works there. They can give to anyone but they might as well give it to you and *SW*. Ask the person you know there about who you should speak with on this issue. Show them the positive impact that a program like ours will have in the community in which they do business. Remember, the better the community, the more their business will thrive.

❖ **Local Businesses that seem to be involved in youth work (Ex. They have a picture of a team they sponsor in the window, posters in the window, etc.)**

Do some homework to see what organizations would be best to zero in on. You may not have a contact person on the inside, but the worst they can say is no.



❖ **School Groups/Organizations**



NHS, school service club, student council, PTA/PTO, and the school district are just a few of the places you can check. Obviously they care about youth. The question is who has some money? Well, you will never know until you ask.

4 Get fired up.



You are a great person. You are good enough, smart enough and dog-gone-it people like you. The worst anyone can say is “no.” Remember they aren’t saying no to you, they have merely decided that *SW* is not where they wish to “exchange” their gifts.

5 Know thy self.

Before you get out there and try to get people to donate to *SW*, make sure you know what we are really all about. There is an attached fact sheet about *SW*. If you don’t understand something, ASK. Why? Because the people who may make a donation just might.

6 Just do it.



If you decide to solicit individuals or groups directly this is the route you will follow. Remember, approaching your target isn’t magic. **JUST DON’T FREAK OUT.**

Write it down. You may wish to send the person a letter first. (See the appendix for a sample.) It is an especially good idea if you don’t already have a relationship with the person. It helps to establish a relationship. It also gives the person time to think about your request and process it. Remember introverts hate being cornered with no time to think about an issue.



Here are some ideas to make your letter a success.

- ❖ Start off strong. Get out a good opening in the first sentence or two. Remember many people will NOT read an entire letter that is soliciting a donation from them. People are busy and you need to show them right up front why they should take the time to read (or listen to) your message.
- ❖ A great place to start is to tell the person who you are and how you know them. (Ex. I am a student at West High School and I was



given your name by my mom-Senator Supermom. Yah, I think that would get their attention.)

- ❖ Personalize the letter as much as possible. People love to establish “connections” to people. Tell them about some of your strengths (hobbies, athletics, awards, academics, arts, etc.) and things you may want to work on through the *SW* program. It is always nice to show people that you have insight into your shortcomings and have a plan on how you might improve on them.
- ❖ Discuss *SW*, why you think it rocks and how it has affected you. You can discuss some of the items on the talking points (see appendix) or personalize a short story about how *SW* affected someone. Emphasize that *SW* is an organization focused on making youth better volunteers and people. We have a strong service-learning (that is a word that people love to see) curriculum and focus on giving back to the community.
- ❖ Give them an amount. Tell them how much you are trying to raise (your goal) and that any assistance they could give you would be greatly appreciated.
- ❖ Review the ways that we appreciate and recognize our donors. (In the staff and delegate handbook, website, newsletter, annual report)
- ❖ Tell them that you will call them within a week to follow up. Again, some people like to know what to expect and when it is coming.
- ❖ Have them refer to our website (www.sparkthewave.org) for more information.
- ❖ Include the organization contact info: P.O. Box 40038, Washington, DC 20016. tsunami@sparkthewave.org (202) 686-4354.
- ❖ Add a brochure, flyer or some other documentation of the organization and/or program.
- ❖ Make a copy of each letter you send and save it. (Yes, back to that organization thing.)
- ❖ Set up a schedule of when you are going to call each person. It is critical that you get back to the person within the timeframe you gave them in the letter.



Get personal. Time to get on the phone or make a visit to the person. Remember more than 50% of people will make a contribution if asked in person. It is very hard to say no to a person who is passionate AND present.

Here are some ideas to make your phone call/visit a success.

- ❖ Don't be nervous. (Why does everyone always say that? This is a hard even for the best of us. Just do the best you can and know that you are an outstanding person. If you weren't, you wouldn't be associated with *SW*.)



- ❖ Introduce yourself again. Tell them why you are calling. Ask to speak with the person to whom you wrote the letter.
- ❖ Be pleasant. No one wants to catch an attitude when they are being hit up for a donation.
- ❖ Be persistent. Don't give up when faced with the first roadblock. Remember the worst they can say is no.
- ❖ Be confident and informed. Know what you want to say and what *SW* stands for: then you can't go wrong. Some people like to write out what they are going to say ahead of time. If you don't, at least think about what you want to cover in the meeting. Practice it on a friend, parent, or teammate before you go in person.
- ❖ Remember your body language when you meet in person. Dress for success, firm handshake, be open, good eye contact, pay attention, and smile.
- ❖ Bring a copy of any correspondence that you have had with this person and some organizational materials. (Brochure, etc.)
- ❖ Take careful notes of any interesting items that you covered in the conversation. (Contacts, ideas, requests, etc.)



LET'S GO THROUGH A FEW SCENARIOS.

Remember half of the job of the person answering the phones is to screen calls. Don't take no for an answer.

The Intro:

Receptionist: "Good morning. The Brick-a-Brack company. May I help you?"

You: "Yes, hello. My name is _____. I wrote a letter to Ms. (use this unless you are positive they go by Mrs. or Doctor) Brick regarding my organization-*SPARK THE WAVE*. I am calling to make sure she received the letter and to make an appointment to speak with her." (If you get put on hold-Be cool and Be ready.)

Scenario 1 (the nice receptionist)

Receptionist: "Oh, you are such a nice person. Let me put you right through." (It does happen so be prepared. Skip to the next section, "You're IN!")

Scenario 2 (The miss)

Receptionist: "Ms. Brick isn't in right now. May I take a message?"

You: "Yes, could you please tell her that I called. When would be a better time to reach her?" (Don't have them call you. They are busy and likely won't call anyway.)



Scenario 3 (Let's make a date)

Receptionist: "Ms. Brick can't speak to you now. (Now s/he will usually ask you about a specific date or ask you when might be good for you. The best thing to say is "Whenever would be best for Ms. Brick, but Tuesdays are good for me." Don't get off the phone without a callback time.)

Scenario 4 (The roadblock)

Receptionist: "Ms. Brick isn't available to speak. Let me get your number and perhaps she can call you back. She is very busy and I don't know when that might be." (Now you have two options. You can give up-NO. You can let the old persistence thing kick in-YES.)

You: "I can only imagine how busy she might be. Would it be easier if I called back or come down there and make an appointment?" (Show up in person if you have to. Be persistent but not a pain!)

You're IN. Now what?

Scenario 1 (The busy bug)

Ms. Brick: "I am swamped could you call back on Tuesday?" Be as accommodating as possible, but make sure it is a time that is good for you.

You: "That would be great. Thank you for giving me some of your precious time. Would you prefer that I call or come in person?" (Remember it's harder to say no or lowball you in person.)

You get through scenario 2 (Gotta know)

Ms. B: "This sounds like a great organization could you tell me more?" (Yes, sometimes people will be ready to talk right then. Be prepared. Spend time thinking about what you want to say ahead of time. The same basic presentation can be used on the phone or in person. It shouldn't really have to change that much whether you talking to an individual, a board, or a whole organization. Think what the important points are that you want to cover if you only get a minute to chat.)

You get through scenario 3 (The brush off)

Ms. B: "Thank you for calling but I am not interested right now."

You: "Is there any thing I could do to change your mind or clarify what our organization is all about?" (If you get a "no, thank you" then thank them very much for their time. If you get a "yes" then you need to make it brief. Give them the highlights and how it has affected you. Always be thankful. You never know if s/he may become a friend of ours in the future.)

The donation

Have them make out checks to *SPARK THE WAVE* and mail it to you. Having them mail you the donation will ensure a higher success rate and it won't get "lost." Offer to pick it up in person if that is easier for them. Either way, thank them profusely for their support. Follow up if you haven't received the donation within two weeks.



The follow-up

Regardless of whether the person made a donation or not, send a thank you note. (See appendix) If they made a donation, acknowledge how much they gave us and thank them. If they didn't, thank them for their time and consideration. (Remember it's not about you. They just didn't want to exchange with *SW* right now. Keep in mind that s/he could still be a friend in the future. That won't happen if they get any attitude from you. It's all about building relationships with people.)

7 How can I do this better?

Don't wait until the end to evaluate the job you are doing. Take some time in the middle of your efforts. Rest your brain and think for a second. "How can I do this better?" If the answer isn't clear, check with a friend/family member, someone on your team, the person in charge of development, or someone on the board. It is important to realize a mistake you may be making now and not weeks from now when you missed your goal. Now you can make adjustments and do a better job. If you don't figure it out until the end you are just cooked.



8 Pat yourself on the back.



You did a great job. Don't even worry about where you were relative to your goal. You tried hard and that is what really counts. Learn from your victories and mistakes. Make a vow to yourself to do better the next time around.

Make sure you document your volunteer hours, because you deserve it!!! Yes, the time you spent on fundraising IS volunteering. Critical, vital volunteering that will allow our organization to reach and teach even more young adults. Volunteer hours are a critical measure of how hard our group works and is a vital statistic for us to keep track of. **GET THE CREDIT YOU DESERVE.**

We very much appreciate the “exchange” of time you made with *SW* to fundraise for us!!!



Sample Letter to Donors

Your street address
City, State and Zip
Phone number
E-mail address

Date

Dr., Mr. or Ms./Mrs. Donor
Their company or organization
Their title
Street address
City, State and Zip

Dear Dr., Mr. or Ms./Mrs. Donor,

My name is Joe Great Staffer. I was put in contact with you by (fill in the blank with the contact info). I am a Sophomore at West High School and would like to take a minute to tell you more about an organization I volunteer for called *SPARK THE WAVE*.

It is an incredible non-profit organization that is completely youth-centered. Our mission is to “encourage and empower youth through educational opportunities and programs to take the lead in meeting the needs of their communities through service.” What does all that mean? We want youth to be more inspired and better prepared to volunteer. We accomplish our goal through local after-school programs and summer camps. We will educate high school students in areas such as leadership development, effective communication, service learning, project planning and more. We believe that these young adults will then return to their volunteer groups (school, religious and/or community-based) better prepared to make a greater impact in their community.

I am on the staff of *SPARK THE WAVE* and volunteer more than 300 hours a year. I am also a member of the National Honor Society, the Junior Varsity Tiddly Winks team and a volunteer for the local Red Cross.

My goal is to raise \$100 dollars. I hope that I can count on you/your company/organization for support in helping me reach that goal. Your support will aid us in changing the life of another young person. If you are interested, I would love to come and speak to your organization about *SPARK THE WAVE* and all the great work we do.

I will call you next week to discuss my request. Please feel free to call me with any questions. I have also enclosed a brochure about our organization or you may prefer to take a look at our website www.wave.org for more information. I appreciate you reading this long letter and taking the time to make a difference.

Sincerely, (or fondly if you know the person well)



Joe Great Staffer

Sample Thank You Letter
(Wants to Exchange)

Your street address
City, State and Zip
Phone number
E-mail address

Date

Dr., Mr. or Ms./Mrs. Donor
Their company or organization
Their title
Street address
City, State and Zip

Dear Dr., Mr. or Ms./Mrs. Donor,

Thank you so much for your generous gift to *SPARK THE WAVE* in the amount of \$100.
(Hey, you are good. Of course, they will give you the whole amount.)

The planning for our programs are in full swing and your donation will help to ensure the future success of our organization. If you would like to visit one of our programs to see your gift in action please contact me or the organization at joe@wave.org (or whatever the contact number/address is this year). As I stated in my earlier letter, if you are interested I would love to come and speak to your organization anytime about *SPARK THE WAVE* and all the great work we do.

I am very grateful for your gift. Your commitment to youth and our community is greatly appreciated. I know with your help, *SPARK THE WAVE* will truly make a difference in our community.

Sincerely,

Josephine Great Staffer



Sample Thank You Letter
(Not looking to exchange with us)

Your street address
City, State and Zip
Phone number
E-mail address

Date

Dr., Mr. or Ms./Mrs. Donor
Their company or organization
Their title
Street address
City, State and Zip

Dear Dr., Mr. or Ms./Mrs. Non-Donor,

I received your letter stating that you will be unable to make donation to *SPARK THE WAVE*. Thank you for the time and consideration that you gave to this matter. I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

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