

Rustic Pathways®

Fundraising Guide

Find a trip. Set a goal. Make it happen.



Fundraising is about bringing together your community to make an investment, financially or otherwise, in your specific idea, goal or project to positively shape the world.

When making donations, people are investing in two things: the person and the project. When fundraising, your mission is to convince potential donors of the power of your purpose and the depth of your interest in it.

Where there's a will, there's a way.

Here are four basic keys to bumping up your fundraising:

FOUR BASIC KEYS TO BUMP UP YOUR FUNDRAISING

1. Set a Goal

Begin your fundraising with a goal in mind. How much money do you need to raise? By when do you need to raise it? What are your most effective fundraising networks? Take an hour to sit down and make an action plan moving forward.

2. Don't be afraid to ask

If you believe in what you're doing, don't be afraid to ask for help. Pursue every reasonable lead and contact that you come across. Remember that fortune favors the bold -- you'll never get something you don't ask for!

3. Be Enthusiastic

You should be proud of the great work you want to do -- let it show! Stay positive and motivated as you work towards your goal. Speak from the heart in letters and presentations. Make eye contact when speaking with potential donors and find a way to show them just how exciting this opportunity really is.

4. Know Your Stuff

Make sure you know as much as you can about the area you're visiting and what you'll be doing there. Taking time to educate yourself about the project will show donors how committed you are to your work.



TEN FUNDRAISING IDEAS

This list should help you brainstorm ideas for your own fundraiser. Remember, though, that it's not as much what you do, but how you do it. Stay motivated. Try a few different methods. Have fun!

1. Run a "service-a-thon" in your local community

Help out elderly neighbors, volunteer at a youth center, or serve meals at your local homeless shelter. Per hour you serve, friends and family can sponsor you and donate funds that will allow you to do even more community service in another country!

2. Organize a party, concert, dinner party, or movie screening

Presidential fundraisers are \$1000 a plate -- and the food isn't any good! Asking for \$50 in exchange for some great local cuisine (and a worthy cause) seems much more reasonable.

3. Make the most of your birthday

On your birthday, sacrifice a few gift cards and knitted sweaters to ask for cash towards your trip. Showing the selflessness to give up gifts in order to help others will often make people even more generous.

4. Don't forget the classics

Car washes, bake sales, raffles, and garage sales are a great way to bring people together, have fun, and raise money for your cause.

5. Create a community service organization at your school

Get together a group of like-minded students who are also interested in community service based travel. Lead the group and work together to raise money for a "community service trip fund."



6. Find a part-time job

Look for work at your local supermarket, do yard work for your neighbors, or track down a babysitting gig for weekend nights. If you work a job that pays \$8/hr for ten hours a week for thirty weeks you'll have saved \$2400—enough to cover the cost of most Rustic service trips!

7. Apply to travel & service grants

Many high schools and towns have scholarships set aside for community service and travel. Also check out websites that offer grants and funding to service-oriented high school students.

Here are a few to get you started: dosomething.org, fastweb.com, findaid.org, nlnet.com, wiredscholar.com, broweryouthawards.org, starbucksfoundation.org.

8. Log-in and start an online fundraiser

Use websites like fundraising.myevent.com, volunteerforever.com, fundmytravel.com, indiegogo.com, fund-raising.com, crowdrize.com and gofundme.com to organize and simplify your fundraising effort. Include photos and a heartfelt note in your campaign explanation and then share your campaign link via email and social media channels.

9. Get moving with sports & physical activities

If you like to run, bike, play soccer, or shoot hoops—put those efforts towards a good cause. Ask your friends or family to pledge \$1 for every mile you run in a marathon, \$1 for every goal you score this season in soccer, 25 cents for every point scored on the basketball court, and so on. This keeps you motivated to do well in your physical activities and people like it when sports serve a higher cause.

10. Start a letter writing campaign

Start by creating a mailing list of everyone you think might be willing to donate. Then, draft a standard letter or a link to your fundraising page and personalize it to each potential donor. Make sure to include a self-addressed return envelope! Don't forget to thank the people who donated or helped you with your efforts.



FIVE STEPS TO AN EFFECTIVE LETTER OR EMAIL

1. Make It Personal

Try to make a connection with the potential donor (i.e. “My father told me last year you visited a struggling community in Haiti with your church...”).

2. Keep It Simple

The shorter the letter, the more likely the potential donor will read the whole thing. Use clear, simple language so it sounds natural and from the heart.

3. Talk About the Problems

Appealing to the ‘right brain’ by giving facts, stats, and numbers is helpful, but don’t forget the majority of people are moved by personal stories. Find out more about someone you’ll be helping on your trip and tell a short, relevant story about him or her.

4. Explain Your Goals

Emphasize the importance of what you’ll accomplish and learn. Be sure to tell the potential donor why you’re interested in the particular problem you’re trying to address (“I have developed a passion for environmental conservation over the past year...”). Also mention how you plan to move forward after your trip (i.e. After I return to the States with a firsthand knowledge of the issues, I plan to...).

5. Ask for Help

Tell the donor what they can do to contribute and don’t be afraid to ask for a specific amount!

POTENTIAL DONOR CHECKLIST

- Your extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents)
- Family friends (ask your parents’ friends, parents, grandparents, or other family members for their holiday card lists)
- Members of your church, congregation, synagogue, mosque, or other religious group
- Professional acquaintances of your parents or family members (co-workers, clients, suppliers)
- Members of any social, charitable, or professional organization, to which your parents or family members belong (PTA, Kiwanis, country club, sports team)

We’re very excited about the prospect of you joining us this summer and we’re ready to support you in any way we can.

In the upcoming months, you’ll need to dig deep, work hard, and take advantage of every opportunity to raise funds. Don’t get discouraged by the big number you need to raise. Have no doubt, it is going to be tough, but determination is the most common characteristic of any person who’s ever achieved something great.



EXAMPLE LETTER 1

Dear Mrs. Baker,

My mother, Sally Jones, gave me your email address and suggested I contact you about a life changing opportunity I'm hoping to take part in this summer. She mentioned that your son, Daniel, spent two weeks rebuilding homes in El Salvador last spring. My mother said Daniel really benefitted from this trip and I'm now asking for your help so I can have a similar experience.

This fall in my social studies class we learned about the horrible circumstances that have forced hundreds of thousands of Burmese people to live as stateless refugees along the Burma-Thailand border. I was touched and saddened by the situation, but also encouraged to get involved.

I recently found out about an organization called Rustic Pathways that deals with these same issues. In 2001 the company's founder opened The Hill Tribe Children's Home in Northern Thailand. Through summer service trips and a year-round presence funded by the Rustic Pathways Foundation, the company aims to feed, house, educate, and inspire the children they care for.

After hearing about these projects there was no way I could spend my summer doing anything else. That's why I'm turning to friends like you to help make this dream possible. I've already raised \$500 through fundraising. Today I write to you to ask for an investment in me, my future and the futures of the underprivileged students of the Hill Tribe Children's Home who I hope to help.

I've started a fundraising page at [crowdrise.com](https://www.crowdrise.com) and I was hoping you'd support me on my mission. I truly believe this experience will change my life, but this change won't be possible without the generosity of people like you.

Thank you so much for your consideration. All my best to the rest of the family!

Sincerely,

Molly Wilson

EXAMPLE LETTER 2

Dear Mr. Williams,

My older brother reminded me the other day that you're an active philanthropist in urban education. I admire the work you've done to help improve the education of underprivileged students in Boston and I'm hoping that my own service work this summer interests you.

Last spring break I went on a trip to help rebuild a struggling neighborhood in New Orleans. This experience changed my perspective on the world and helped me realize I want to make community service a major part of my life. Just as I began trying to find a way to continue service work this summer a friend told me about a program through Rustic Pathways that combines three of my major passions in life—community service, soccer and Spanish language.

After doing some research I found out about this dream trip for me called “Soccer and Service” in La Paz, Costa Rica. I hope to visit La Paz through Rustic Pathways with fifteen other high school students for a nine-day period in June. During my stay I'll immerse myself in the language by staying with a local host family, playing soccer with the village team, and most importantly, serving the community by working in a rural elementary school and on a local farm.

This trip will change my life and impact the community of La Paz. In order to achieve this, I must first raise sufficient funds.

Mr. Williams, I'd love to have a chance to speak to you in person about my trip and our shared passion for community service. Please contact me if this is possible, if you have questions, or want to know how to help me reach my goal.

Thanks so much and I hope to hear from you soon!

All the best,

Craig Fitzgerald