

Simple, Cost-Effective Fundraising

Does your local unit want to participate in Foundation Month by hosting a fundraising campaign?

The following ideas may inspire you or encourage you to create your own unique fundraiser. Let TRTF know what type of fundraiser your local unit uses! TRTF will feature stories about the most successful fundraisers in *The Ledger*.

Reverse Raffle: A reverse raffle is a raffle your local unit members will not want to win! At your fall local unit meeting, provide every member with a free raffle ticket. Tell them they are automatically eligible for a special prize. If they don't want to be eligible, they can "sell" their ticket for \$1 to \$10. Why would they want to get rid of their ticket? Because when their ticket is drawn, they will have to perform an embarrassing task, such as singing a silly song, or wearing a funny hat or costume. All ticket stubs are placed in a container from which one "lucky" number is drawn. Hold the drawing early to ensure that the "lucky winner" is present!

Donation Container: This is a straightforward cash collection fundraiser. You may use old coffee cans or purchase plastic containers from your local dollar store, and cover them in bright colored paper or place a label on them. District XVII President Jill Nelson places a container on every table at meetings to collect funds for the foundation!

Craft Fair/Bake Sale: Craft fairs and bake sales are common fundraising techniques that call for your members to create an item or bake a delicious goodie. The proceeds earned from selling wares and snacks could then be donated to the Foundation.

Adult Spelling Bee: A classic childhood competition could be a great fundraiser. Many TRTA members may enjoy a grown up spelling bee! You can either collect an entry fee to raise money, or charge an "admission fee" to the audience. You may even use the official spelling bee rules, such as asking for a definition of a word and using it in a sentence! (www.spellingbee.com/contest-rules). You can use easier words for the first few rounds, and use more difficult words as the bee progresses. For ideas on what words to use in your competition and study guides, visit *Spell It!* at www.myspellit.com.

Grab Bag: Have members donate inexpensive items, anything from used books to gag items. Place each item in a paper bag and seal all the bags. No feeling or shaking of bags is allowed! Decide what to charge per bag—a few dollars is appropriate. Supporters pay the fee and then choose a bag. They won't know whether they're getting a real treasure like a great cookbook, or a silly item like a rubber ducky. That's part of the fun! You can even include scratch-off lottery tickets to make the buying more competitive and fun!

Bakeless Bake Sale: The bakeless bake sale is exactly what it sounds like! Other organizations have used the following terminology to promote their bake-less bake sale: "You are invited to

NOT bake a cake, pie, cookies, or brownies. You do NOT have to find the recipe. You do NOT have to shop for the ingredients. You do NOT have to cook. You do NOT have to wash dishes. You do NOT have to clean up your kitchen. You can write a check for \$10.00 to the *Texas Retired Teachers Foundation* and stay home and enjoy doing something yourself or with your family instead!"

Auctions: There are a variety of auctions that may be used as fundraisers. Local unit members may donate their time, talent, or treasures, which are then auctioned off to the highest bidder. Examples of time or talent include: yard or house work, piano lessons, painting a room, or knitting lessons. There is no limit to prizes when you have so many talented local unit members! Possible treasures can be handmade crafts or baked goods. If you prefer, you can auction off a romantic dinner for two at a local restaurant.

For a silent fundraising auction, each prize is displayed with a ruled sheet and pencil. The bidder signs his or her name and the amount of their bid. Other bidders sign below with a higher bid amount. Bids are closed at a set time for all, or can be closed by table in 15 minute increments. Announcements are made five minutes before closing to encourage "bidding up" of the most popular items. Once the auction is closed the winning bidder is notified and can collect the prize.

Similarly, your local unit may do a blind auction, during which members bring a wrapped package to the meeting. The contents could be humorous or something of actual value. Donors can weigh down the boxes with a brick to disguise the contents, have an oversized box for a very small present, or wrap boxes within boxes to increase anticipation. Announce that at least one of the boxes contains a monetary reward or something of significant value. The dollar value will depend on your group and anticipated bidding amounts.

If you have a live auction, make sure you have a couple of "valuable" prizes auctioned first to stimulate the bidding. You may also want to let everyone to open their box in front of the group and share what they have won.

Guessing Game: There are numerous ways to conduct a guessing game, but the premise is the same: participants are given the opportunity to guess something and must pay for each guess. The simplest version is a large jar filled with virtually any item as long as it takes a lot of them to fill the jar. For example, you could use pennies, jelly beans, or paper clips. Determine what you will charge per guess and announce the winner at your meeting! You might have a special prize available for the winner.