

Fundraising workshop “Exploring New Resources”

Introduction:

My name is Don Kitt and I am on the Parents Advisory Council at South Sahali Elementary School, a French Immersion school in Kamloops. I was Chair of the school Pac for the previous two years and am currently co-chairing this year with a plan of letting go of the position next year – the year my son graduates– from grade 7.

Although I have been involved in some way with most everything that goes on at our school from a PAC perspective for the last few years, I am looking forward to changing roles and playing on the fundraising side only in the next school year

Today I am going to talk about Fundraising – Exploring New Resources. The definition of Fundraising is: *“the process of soliciting and gathering voluntary contributions of money or other resources, by requesting donations from individuals, businesses, charitable foundations, or governmental agencies.”*

Therefore fundraising is a lot more than raising funds. It is also as a way of bringing fun activities to our community – sometimes with an initial cost and not with an initial profit. Fundraising should be a long term commitment with the goal of not just raising money but of introducing a group to its community in a positive way. To do this effectively, it is important to know who you are as a volunteer, who your fellow volunteers are, and what your goal as a group is. This will be a way of developing your most important resource – the volunteers. From there we will review sourcing ideas and developing a plan for fundraising. We will then look at accessing resources and some networking.

Exploring new resources should start with seeing the volunteers, yourself included as the best resources you have. Knowing how to work with them is essential.

Fresh volunteers may mean more energy, but there is a learning curve for everyone as they learn to be a group. People take on roles, not just positions in the group. There will be the leader, and sometimes an unspoken leader. There can be those who have lots of ideas, but may be too nervous to share them – therefore you have to draw these people out. There may be people there for the recognition, those that like to argue for the sake of argument – the ‘devil’s advocate’. Somehow this every changing group has to come together towards a common goal. Part of this workshop will be to help you develop that goal and set a reasonable time frame for it.

1) Volunteering: You the Volunteer

To be a great volunteer, you will need some awareness of the type of person that you are. The best way to be a great member of a team is to know who you are and what your strengths are and where you are a 'work in progress'. It is essential to know what you are bringing to the team.

The most important thing to remember is that your 'weakness' is often someone else's strength. If you aren't good at something, or it is not in your comfort zone, ask for help.

- Delegation : you are not a machine and you cannot do it all, always – I know from experience.
- You are the most important part of fundraising. When the organization loses you, it is a step backwards
- Must believe in what you are fundraising for to be believable. Need the passion!
- Make sure that it is a win/win. Do not set yourself up to fail. Go with your strengths.
- Ask for support when you need it. It is not a sign of weakness or lack of intelligence. It is a sign of strength and the intelligence to know you want help.
- Burn-out : It is important to know when to take a break or even say "No"
- Remember not to take anything personally. Fundraising is about your groups and isn't about ourselves. Try to develop a thick skin.
- Communication. We often think that we have explained things clearly and that the other person has said they understand. Too often people say "yes" and nod their head without a clear idea of what to do. The old "nod and smile"

George Bernard Shaw "The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place." Ask questions and allow questions to be asked.

2) Volunteering: Collective Thinking

As a group – you need a COMMON GOAL . This is a different goal than your groups reason for existence – this is your current years' goal. You can make your group a team by developing this goal together and you should do that each year. There is a more heartfelt 'buy in' to a goal if you have been involved in developing it. Your group must know what they are working towards, and should believe in it.

A goal can be as simple as "bring recognition to your group" and perhaps adding a measurement tool. Or it can be more involved like "increase membership by 10%", or "raise

\$5,000 to be used for French text books by June 30, 2014". Make the goal reasonable and measurable, so that you can congratulate yourselves when you have success.

How do we develop a goal?

Someone has to be in charge to lead or guide the process, and by virtue of you being at this workshop I am going to assume it will be you. Ask everyone to participate, and allow the goal ideas to flow. Set aside a one to two hour period with your group and brain storm what you would love to see happen for your group by the end of the year. Write down the ideas, and allow everyone to be heard. Every idea is a good idea even if it not right for this time or group. This is the creative process.

Then next move on to the mental process. From all the possible goals, write down one to three goals that are achievable, that will further your groups' reason for existence, and that would stretch your group's efforts enough to make a noticeable difference from previous years.

Work with these one to three goals to turn them into one goal that your group can believe in and work towards.

Write or type this goal in huge upper case letters and post it wherever you meet.

We probably all do a version of this somewhere in our lives. For me it was in construction. The common goal was to complete the project within a time frame while finding a way to work together with the hope of everyone making money for their business or company.

3) Sourcing Out Ideas – Ideas for an event/campaign

Your group now has a common goal and now together you want to develop ideas for achieving the goal. This too should be a fun event, not a serious task. If our most important goal is to bring recognition to our group, fundraising activities are an awesome way of doing it. Without a focus on raising money, fundraising activities can still be just about community and fun.

A. Source Out Ideas: Be Creative

- Make sure this is a group activity, remembering that the more people, the more ideas, thus the longer the process will take.
- Think outside the box. People are comfortable with the same thing but they love something original. Eg. Ribfest, Hypnotist show, Talent Show, Movie Nights, popcorn, pancake breakfast and a movie, TP toss, fun fairs
- Have other groups attend and be a part of the event EG. Big Little Scient Centre attended our last school Fun Fair. Other schools, or even groups that may compete for

the same funds. Have a clear agreement of money distribution prior to the event as well as set-up locations agreed upon. More than 1 group, means more volunteers, potentially more attendees, and you can accomplish multiple goals (eg getting your name out there and fundraising – but more on that later)

B. Source Out Ideas: What Works?

- Cost per volunteer hour – what is worth your time – fun versus fundraising. The sale of Entertainment Books has made our school about \$20 per volunteer hour which is a great return, while I have spent numerous weekends trying to sell raffle tickets for about \$.50 an hour.
- Contact someone who has already done what you want to do. They may have information as to what worked for them, and more importantly, what didn't.
- Mass mail outs.
- Grant writing
- Raffles, draws, 50/50 – remember to get your gaming licences prior to the event. Check out the www.kamrcga.ca for the Interior area for help with gaming information. www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/licences for general information
- Donations versus sponsorship. Is there a company or business that would donate to you in return for advertising. We always put out thank you signage for all our donated items but would you be comfortable with T-shirts that read CPF – Pepsi?
- Can you share a project/result? An example is the Kamloops Daybreak Rotary hosting a “Ribfest” in 2012 and 2013. It proved so popular that the volunteers were really stretched to the limit of what they could do so early in 2013 that they put out a request to other groups in the Kamloops area looking to raise funds for their own organizations. \$5 an hour would be donated to your group in exchange for volunteer hours. In 2012 they estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 people attended the three day event. In 2013 those numbers were up to 45,000 to 55,000 people over that same time period and over \$60,000 was raised which was an increase of 50% more than the first year. All money that in some form will end up staying and supporting our community. And it was fun!

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C. Fun...Really?

- Are you having fun- because it does show. – it is so important
- If the event involves family/ community is it fun for them? There will always be stress in fundraising and putting on events but that stress is best kept to one's self. Outwardly just have fun. Everything is a reflection of you or the organization you are fundraising for. If you wish to repeat this fundraiser and people have not received a “fun” or “good” impression of events they may not participate the next time.

- There are times when it is OK to just have fun with money not being the object. Eg. Art Cards, BBQ
- The rule I like to tell the volunteers who take on heading these events is that the goal is not to raise money but to have fun. It takes the pressure off of trying to raise money and puts it on to the fun aspect. Not so surprisingly we always seem to make money and the events grow and become more popular every year.
- That community or that sense of community is what builds your fundraising base and the money will come.

D. Brainstorming for Ideas

Try a brain storming session. Have one person record the information and allow everyone to shout out ideas for a period of time eg 10 minutes. At the end of 10 minutes, read out the ideas that resonate with the group.

Now, take those ideas and review what ones you could next. Review whether some of the ideas can be coordinated into one project. Keep brainstorming with these ideas, taking a second set of notes on the possibilities for another period of time. At the end of this time, come to a group consensus as to which idea(s) will be used for your next project.

Whether you use brainstorming or other similar methods, keep your notes for your next project.

- Make sure to be upbeat, positive but realistic. Give compliments where deserved for great ideas and recognize each person for what they bring to the table.
- Why we brainstorm as a group. There is power in our collective thought. We can be more creative. Perhaps a great idea gets even greater or a plan that could use some tweaking gets the ideas and support it needs to move forward. I have seen good individual ideas that have gone nowhere because although it was a good idea, it had no plan, no group input and no one to carry it through. A group effort at the start and it would most likely have been a different outcome.
- Enthusiasm is contagious.

E. Volunteering: Developing a Plan

Now that we have a goal and an event, we need to develop a plan to achieve the goal and put on the event.

Develop a fundraising plan/event/campaign:

- Determine the theme or message of the fundraising campaign/event. People, organizations will give and give more if there is a reason for it. EG. The playground. It

was something people could relate to and we made sure to have pictures of the proposed playground so everyone could visualize the “goal”.

- Start by determining what you want to accomplish, and then add in what benefits you would like to see. Example: Join us at the Fun Fair – have fun, bring your friends and family, and support the library fund. Keep the theme simple
- “Dream Big” – start small and you will get smaller and smaller. Dream big and adjust accordingly. Who knows what you can achieve
- Goal setting: Be reasonable with your plans and timeline for results, and make notes as to what each volunteer will do. EG. Week 1 - set up schedule; Week 2 - contact sponsors, set up budget; Week 3 - do flyers and distribute, set up plans for event. Consistently review where everyone is at, therefore increasing accountability and ensures that you plan is going according to schedule. It also gives a chance for others to seek support if required. Great ideas are often stalled or stopped because people will not ask for support. Plans can easily be adjusted as necessary, but ensure that you can still reach your goal on time. Focus on the end result
- Select the volunteers for each task that best suits their capabilities. Not everyone is comfortable with asking others for money and not everyone is good at writing grant applications.
- Support each other in their tasks. If someone’s job is to ask for donations and needs help for ideas, have the group brain storm on a prospective list of donors.
- Track your results: What events work best for raising money with the least amount of work. What was a lot of fun and worth the effort, even if it didn’t raise a lot of money
- Have fun but be on purpose. Volunteers are there for a reason and roles need to be laid out for them as well as expectations. Their time is important to them. Eg. I have attended a planned hour long work party on a weekend that turned into a three hour process due to a lack of planning and it was difficult not to get resentful of the situation. My time and your time is important and when we fit in the hours to support what we believe in it is important that we feel valued. Make a plan to make the most of your activity. Promote it - have cards, or posters or information about your group. If you are having a raffle draw, use the start of it as an opportunity to let everyone know about your group and what you do for the community.

F. Accessing Resources

- 1) Accessing Resources: Who and Where – Who can help you with your goal/event
 - Individual donors and by that we mean individual people. You as members and your friends, family, people in the neighbourhood and community.

- Business organizations. If they are not interested in giving money perhaps check into products for gift baskets, booth, etc. One of our local mines in Kamloops offers donations of product such as shirts, backpacks and die-cast mining equipment toys. They look at the donor list twice a year and give these items that can be used for raffles and gift baskets. One of our local playgrounds received a very generous donation of half the required money by a local company who heard about the project and just wanted to support their community.
- Make sure when requesting items for events that you have a written request to hand out on official letterhead. Eg. Safeway gives great deals on the meat and buns for BBQ's if you contact them with enough lead time and give them an official letter from your group. Others that we have received from include Walmart and Tim Hortons.
- Grants - examples of grants. They are specific so check to see if a grant can work WITH another group to succeed . Having two groups that combined their request for one grant enabled one of our local areas to get a centre for group activities and a great sound system that neither would have gotten by standing alone. Network with other groups, email exchange, and remember you are not in competition with others. Make sure the grant is specific to what you want. Grant criteria changes so what may work one year may not the next. It takes a lot of work to research and put together a grant application. Make sure it is worth the time.
- Community Service Organizations such as the Lions Club. Remember that there can be numerous chapters of the same group in your community and to check with each one.
- Find groups in the community that need to put in volunteer hours - High School programs, KISSM, TRU volunteers Eg. RBC has a volunteer program for their employees where they put in 40 hours volunteering for local worthwhile charities or groups such as our school. Once they have completed their hours they have to receive a letter from us verifying the volunteer hours and the employee can then apply for a donation from RBC that will be given to the school in the amount of \$500. Win – win for everyone and we get a donation and 40 hours of volunteer time.
- Check with members and see who has contacts through companies they work for. The list of donations we have received ranges from offers of engineering assistance, signage, concrete blocks for the playground, backhoes. Just by asking.
- Some other examples are used book sales Kamloops Symphony Orchestra raises over \$50,000 with their used book sale every year.
- Grocery receipts from certain stores Eg. GC Superstore, Coopers Foods a division of Save-On. Members save the grocery receipts which are then handed back to the stores in return for gift cards. Check to see if any of your local stores have this offer.
- Remember to include the children. More people will give if children are part of the equation and although it is Canadian Parents for French it is about the children.

- Check into city grants as they also have money set aside for different things. They are also a wealth of knowledge on events that occur in your town or city.
- Check with your local hockey team. In our case the Kamloops Blazers have a fund set up to give back to the community on funding requests. They also give free tickets to games that can be used as prizes and they also encourage the players to attend community events to promote that sense of community spirit.

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2) Accessing Resources: Make it Community

- Look closely at the community you are in. Eg. Local school trying to raise \$180,000 for a new playground but do not believe the parents at the school are wealthy enough to raise the money themselves. School came to a DPAC meeting looking for ideas from the group and were overwhelmed with the ideas they got on how they could raise the funds. They are situated in a commercial /residential area and have access to a vast number of local business's that can be sourced out for assistance. Why not approach them?
- Work with other groups. Can you work together for slightly common goals. It goes back to the Ribfest example or of Scouts and Guides working together.
- The bigger the collective group the bigger the event.
- Follow up on volunteers – make contact. Get to know who your volunteers are, who is in your community, School, neighbourhood, etc. Spend the time to connect and ask how others are doing and smile.
- There may already be a large number of people out there who are associated with your group but do not belong to it as members. In our case it is with the school and past students, relatives, and staff.

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G. Networking

1) Networking: Who Are You

What is CPF: Parents for French not Parents of French. Be very clear of what you are promoting and the purpose of your group.

Ask yourself the questions

- Who is the CPF
- What do you represent
- What do others think CPF is.

2) Networking: Branding

- How well known are you in the community and why not?
- Are you associated with any other groups. Again why not more?
- Do you set up at open community functions...just to give a presence.
- Smile and talk to people. Ask for nothing just communicate and remember to listen.
- Build for the future with your networking such as what the school dances have done for our school - they also build a sense of community that brings everyone together.
- Events like Ribfest or even our school BBQ, Halloween Dance, Fun Fair and Pancake Tuesday are events that have and will continue to grow with time.

3) Networking: Again with the Community

- How, where, when, and with who can you network.
- What other groups can you network with?
- Is there a CPF Facebook or Linked In site you can either go to or access that will allow you to share your ideas, and to look at other ideas that have or have not worked. Updates of current events and meetings. Questions and a sense of community. Try and keep it to positive things or word things in a positive way.
- If you have a Facebook page do you have guidelines and a safe administration. Facebook pages can be set up for events to promote them.
- Radio ads are sometimes free for community groups. The same with newspapers.
- How about with this group. Can you make contact with 3-5 people here that aren't in your group, that you can network with?

4) Networking: Follow Up

- Follow up with thank you to donors who have given to the fundraiser. Make sure they realize they are appreciated. Bake cookies, thank you letters and cards. Do not lead them to believe you are being extravagant with the money they have donated or you have raised with their help.
- Thank everyone for their support. It is always nice to receive an honest thank you for a job well done even if the results are not what was wished for.
- Be positive
- Emails are great for information but do not always convey the emotion and gratitude that an in person meeting has.
- Look for ways to 'treat' your volunteers, whether it is baked goods, thank you's, or special mentions. Volunteers are your best resource.
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Summary:

Fundraising - Exploring New Resources. We have now reviewed the volunteer aspects of fundraising, setting your goals, getting great ideas and developing a plan. Remember that it begins with you as a resource. Patience is a must to grow the community base to support your fundraising.

Support a workshop on dealing with conflict in the group because the more people work together the more that conflict can happen. Find ways to resolve the conflict before it hurts individuals or your group.

Remember: Some people come into your lives as blessings, others come in your life as lessons.

Remember to have fun and use humor as much as possible. If this fundraising effort doesn't work the way you had planned, you can try again next time. Consider it a learning experience and let it help you make the next project even better.

Hopefully I have given you some ideas about how to access new resources through your volunteers, and by networking in and out of your community. It is my hope that you will make contact with people here as a starting resource.