

# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY IDEAS: FUNDRAISING CAN BE FUN!

*Your United Way campaign can be energizing and bring people together under a common cause. The more you educate people about United Way and have fun doing it, the more success you are likely to have.*

*Special event fundraisers should not be the focus of your campaign but rather “icing on the cake”. Emphasize the annual campaign, LIVE UNITED Leaders, recognition and education, but use special events to enjoy and celebrate your campaign.*

Here are some ideas for activities:

## **Academy Awards Night**

Have employees dress as their favorite celebrities. Create video movie “skits” using your favorite movies with a United Way twist.

## **American Idol Contest**

Employees can conduct an Idol contest, based on the hit TV show *American Idol*. Employees make a donation to vote for the singing group of their choice. The duo or group that attracts the most votes will sing a song of their choice in front of an audience. Include lip synching for those who don't sing.

## **Backyard Barbecue**

Set a sale price for the BBQ. Pre-sell tickets to the event. The event may be set up as a potluck picnic with everyone bringing a dish to share. You may wish to include a volleyball net, Frisbee, music from a boom-box, etc., as time and space allow.

## **Bake Sale**

Have employees donate baked items (homemade or store bought) and sell them at a United Way rally.

## **Bakery Cart**

Wheel a cart of bagels, donuts, Danishes, coffee and juice through the office, collecting United Way donations in exchange for goodies.

## **Balloon Pop**

Employees donate prizes for this event—a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of a prize. Employees pay \$1 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they've won.

## **Be a Lifesaver**

Have some fun, beach style! Sand, sunglasses, beach balls and The Beach Boys make your office feel like you are on the beach. Employees who donate are awarded life preserver vests to wear at the next meeting and Lifesavers candies in their offices.

## **Best Putter Contest**

Construct two putting courses. Employees rent a bucket of balls for \$1 to see if they can get the most holes in one (one chance per ball). Two winners are determined each day.

## **Book/Video Sale**

Employees donate their old books, DVDs and CDs for an employee book sale.

## **Boss Cooks for You**

Have a special breakfast at which top managers cook for contributors.

## **Candy Messages**

As part of campaign, print messages on colored paper with campaign updates, words of encouragement, United Way statistics and/or words of thanks. Attach pieces of candy, mints, packs of gum, etc., and leave on employees' desks.

## **Carnival**

Have a one-day carnival theme with hot dogs, soda and popcorn. Employees try their luck at games like ring toss and the fishpond. Include entertainment and art displays from youth projects.

## **Casual Day**

Sell “casual day badges,” allowing employees who purchase them to dress casually.

## **CEO Car Wash**

Employees donate \$5 to have their car washed by their boss; United Way staff can also volunteer their time. Charge for extra services such as cleaning inside or polishing. Charge for photos of the employees and the boss washing their cars.

## **Chair Race**

Set up a relay course for employees or executives to go through sitting in chairs or riding tricycles. Use a stopwatch to time contestants. Observers wager \$1 on their favorite contestants.

## **Chili Cook-Off**

Employees sign up to bring homemade chili for lunch at the office; for those who would like to help, but are not master chefs, napkins, utensils and bowls also are needed. Donations such as bread sticks, cheese garnish, sour cream and beverages may also be added. Spice up the event by encouraging a Western theme with employees dressing up in cowboy hats and bandanas. Bowls of chili are sold for a set price. Hand out blue ribbon prizes to the winners.

## **Collection Drives**

Raising money is important, but you can energize your employees by giving them an opportunity to collect needed items. Options: food, clothing, pet food products, baby items, toiletries—the list goes on and on. Be creative. We can help you think of more.

## **Comedy Hour**

Ask a local comedian or improv group to donate their services during the lunch hour. Have employees buy tickets to attend.

## **Cookbook**

Collect and group recipes and helpful household hints into a customized cookbook. Employees or community kids create illustrations for the cookbook, including the cover. Print and bind the books at a local business.

## **Dress up the Boss**

Boss wears a costume voted on by all employees if the campaign goal is reached. Examples: tutu, animal costume, devil costume, etc.

## **Driving for Dollars**

Rent a driving range and plan a company golf tournament or play miniature golf as a staff.

## **Duct Tape the Boss**

Sell one-yard lengths of duct tape during the lunch hour and tape the boss to a wall. Have the boss stand on a chair and after there is enough tape holding him/her, pull the chair out. Sell photos of employees standing next to the boss to raise additional funds.

## **Dunk Tank**

Arrange for a dunk tank to be set up on site. Arrange for volunteers to take shifts in the tank and post a schedule of their assigned times. Have employees pay \$1 a ball to sink their co-workers.

## **Employee Car Wash**

Develop a team of car washers who bring in sponges, rags, soap, buckets, hoses, a radio, etc., on the day of the event. Set up wash site in the parking lot. Wash tickets may be purchased in advance or washers may recruit cars on wash days.

## **Executive Prison**

Transform an office into a jail cell. Arrest managers and executives and allow them to make phone calls to their staff members to bail them out (or manager pays their own bail at a higher cost). All bail proceeds go to United Way.

## **Experiences Auction**

Executives create packages of experiences that employees can bid on at a special auction. Experiences could include fishing trips, dinners or movie tickets. Employees can also auction their special services: cooking a special dish, singing at a wedding/party/special event, lawn mowing, changing car oil, baby-sitting, washing cars or washing windows.

## Garage Sale

Find a volunteer willing to loan garage space or work site. Two or three weeks before the sale, employees bring in sale items which volunteers price and sell the day of event. Advertise within the company and outer community.

## Harvest Festival

Employees bring items from their home gardens (plants, fruits, vegetables, bouquets of flowers) to be purchased by employees with proceeds going to United Way.

## Hawaiian Luau

Have a mini-luau. Serve ham, pineapple upside-down cake and other Hawaiian fare. Give prizes to employees wearing the most outrageous Hawaiian attire.

## Health and Giving Events

Each department in your organization hosts a special event to raise money for United Way and improve the health of employees at the same time. Yoga classes, brown bag lunch workshops, stress reduction classes, etc.

## Indoor Miniature Golf

Each department designs a creative hole using only materials already in their department: wastebaskets, letter trays, machine parts, etc. The employee committee rounds up some clubs and staffs the course during the lunch hour for the week of the campaign. Employees play the course as often as they like for a small fee. Prizes are awarded to the department with the most creative hole and to the best mini golfers.

## International Food Day

Employees team together to create tasty treats from around the world, decorating booths and dressing in appropriate costumes. A panel of judges award prizes.

## Jail N' Bail

Hold in correlation with an employee picnic or carnival. Have a booth where employees pay to have co-workers, supervisors, managers or executives "incarcerated" for short periods during the event.

## Karaoke Party

Participants pay \$2 to enter and are given a list of songs and a pledge form in advance. Participants ask employees to support them by pledging an amount of money.

## Kite-Flying Competition

Arrange a kite-making, kite-decorating or kite-flying competition. Hold awards for the smallest, largest, most creative and highest flying kites. Create office displays with kites, wind socks and mobiles. Afterward, donate exhibit items to a youth-related agency. Order a kite-shaped cake to celebrate the start or finish of the campaign.

## LIVE UNITED Heroes

Promote the United Way campaign by using the concept of being a hero in your community by giving, advocating and volunteering.

## Lunch

Different departments donate lunches to auction every day for a week. Use your organization's intercom or other employee communication system to temptingly auction the lunches. Employees call in with their bids. A variation of this event is to have employees pay \$5 for the boss to deliver coffee and muffins to them, with all proceeds going to United Way.

## Mini Mini Golf

Set up a mini mini golf course on a table top. Use a slanted tooth brush or a miniature hammer as a club and a ping pong ball or large marble as a golf ball. Create unique holes with common office items.

## Monster in the Office

Purchase an inexpensive, inflatable "monster" from a party store and stick it in your CEO's office. Have her pay to ship the monster out of her office and into another employee's cubicle. After that, each of your employees must pay to get rid of the monster in her office or cube. This also works great with pink lawn flamingos!

## **Nacho Party**

Plan an afternoon to sell nachos or popcorn to interested employees in your breakroom. Employees pay per serving with proceeds going to United Way.

## **Photo Contest**

Employees bring in a favorite baby or pet picture labeled with their name on the back. Pictures are numbered and posted on a bulletin board. Employees purchase a chance to match coworkers with baby pictures. The employee with the greatest number correct wins a prize.

## **Raffle**

Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize: pies, lunch, car wash, tickets to an event, weekend stay at a vacation cabin, one day vacation, prizes donated by vendors. Employees who turn in pledge forms early receive three raffle tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the early date but before the campaign final event receive one raffle ticket.

## **Rootbeer Float Sales**

Seek donations or purchase rootbeer and vanilla ice cream. Other items needed include straws, spoons, cups and ice cream scoops. Have committee schedule and work shifts.

## **Scavenger Hunts**

Employees participate in a scavenger hunt that requires them to find unusual items from around the neighborhood or office building as well as to demonstrate community knowledge. You can plant items with selected employees for others to discover. Teams of four pay a group entrance fee. If each team member has a different job title or is from a different department they automatically get 10 bonus points. Teams have one hour to accumulate as many points as possible. The entire team must be present at the end of one hour. If a team arrives late, assess a penalty of two points per minute. Award winners get something special just for their team.

## **Silent Auction**

Contact large retail outlets (Burlington Coat Factory, Bed Bath & Beyond, etc.) and ask them for an in-kind donation to use for silent auction. Gather items and create bid sheets, being certain to provide a minimum bid for each item.

## **Smile Grams**

Sell smile grams for a week and deliver a helium balloon with a smiley face to co-workers. This is a great way to make someone smile.

## **Ticket Giveaways/Gift Certificates**

Give free tickets to movies, theater productions, amusement centers and other local attractions for pledge incentives. Give movie passes to every employee who meets the challenge of pledging a certain dollar amount. In addition, enter the names of all employees who turn in a signed pledge form during the first hour following the kickoff into a special drawing.

## **Trivial Pursuit Match**

Create a pool around the winning team and give all employees who bet on the winners a prize. Hold the challenge during a staff meeting. Give the event a game show flavor with participants using bicycle horns if the answer is known.

## **United Way Trivia**

Ask trivia questions about United Way at campaign meetings. Give away prizes for correct answers. Encourage staff to visit [uwsc.org](http://uwsc.org) to do “research.”

## **White Elephant Sale**

Employees donate white elephant gifts that others can buy at affordable prices.

## **Zoo-Mobile**

Rent the Zoo-Mobile—a van that brings various small animals to children’s birthday parties and companies. It touches employees’ “inner child” and makes them excited about United Way.