



# Smart Fundraising for Healthy Schools

## **Selling candy, cookies, and soft drinks sets a poor example.**

Candy and other foods/beverages with little nutritional value are often sold as school fundraisers. Schools may make easy money selling these items but students pay the price. An environment that continually offers sugary treats promotes unhealthy eating habits that can have a lifelong impact on children. As we face a generation of undernourished, overweight children, many schools are turning to more positive fundraising alternatives:

- School fundraising efforts should support the health and well-being of children and their families.
- Selling candy, cookie dough, and other foods/beverages of limited nutritional value promotes poor dietary habits for those who purchase and consume these items.
- Family members and friends may want to support fundraising and feel obligated to buy items, but many feel uncomfortable about the lack of positive options.
- There are numerous fundraising alternatives that promote healthy lifestyles and, at the same time, successfully raise needed funds for schools.

## **Creative fundraisers support healthy, successful students.**

When children and teens are well-nourished and physically active, they have fewer school absences, fewer behavior problems, and more ability to focus on classroom tasks. Healthy children also tend to score higher on standardized tests and have higher grade point averages. Families, schools, and communities must provide young people with the opportunities to develop the habits that will make them fit, healthy, and ready to succeed.

Creative fundraisers are an important part of the equation. Schools around Mississippi and across the US are using smart strategies that consider the schools financial needs and address concerns about student nutrition. Instead of candy, schools are selling nutrient-rich foods, including products from local farmers. They are also selling an ever-expanding variety of non-food items and utilizing a wide variety of fundraising events. Here are some real-life examples of very successful school fundraisers.

## **Nutrient-rich choices make health and economic sense.**

School fundraisers can support healthful eating habits for the whole family through the sale of foods and beverages that are low in fat, sugar, and sodium, such as:

- ★ Produce from local farmers (examples: U-Pick U-Sell or Farm-Day events)
- ★ Bottled water (may be personalized with school logo or mascot)
- ★ Fresh fruit (boxes of citrus are popular in the winter months)
- ★ Fruit and nuts baskets (especially popular around holidays)
- ★ Popcorn, nut, dried fruit, and cheese selections
- ★ Smart snacks (e.g., trail mixes, pretzels, jerky and energy bars)
- ★ Dried soup mixes or whole grain baking mixes

## Successful FUNdraising works wonders without food.

Teachers, families, and community members can work together at school, enhancing children's well-being by consistently sponsoring positive, healthy fundraisers. For more details and a list of company contacts, download a free copy of *Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can be Healthy and Profitable* at [www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf](http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf)

### Events that promote physical activity and celebrate fitness

Active FUNdraisers can accomplish several goals at once. They raise money for needed school programs, they provide opportunities for physical activity, and they show students and their families that being active can be FUN!! Here are some of the creative ideas:

- ★ **As-THON-ishing results:** School groups raise thousands of dollars when students get pledges for miles biked, distance walked, time jumped, or time skated. Bike-a-thons, Trike-a-thons, Walk-a-thons, Jog-a-thons, Skate-a-thons, and Dance-a-thons, as well as 1K or 5 K races, are a few examples.
- ★ **Hidden talents = fundraising treasures:** Talent shows are a fun and healthy way to raise money. Children can sing, dance, juggle, perform magic tricks, do gymnastics, and get ready for an appearance on American Idol!
- ★ **Friendly competitions:** Tickets sales for games can really boost the bottom line. Example = basketball games between a high/middle school team – and a team of teachers, police or fire department members, or local college players.
- ★ **Sport-o-rama:** A bowling alley, miniature golf course, or club (tennis, swim, or fitness) can help sponsor/organize a tournament or family fun night.
- ★ **Rent-a-teen programs:** Young people can set up a 'job bank' to rake leaves, water gardens, mow lawns, walk dogs, wash windows, or do other services.

### Other events that involve communities in supporting schools

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| ★ Carnivals or game nights                 | ★ Car washes and dog washes          |
| ★ Spelling bees for kids <u>and</u> adults | ★ Recycling (cans to ink cartridges) |
| ★ Book fairs and read-a-thons              | ★ Singing telegrams                  |
| ★ Giant yard and/or craft sales            | ★ Holiday gift-wrapping services     |
| ★ Auctions of products and services        | ★ Grocery store rebate programs      |
| ★ Raffles for products and services        | ★ Bake-less bake sales               |

### Non-food items to sell

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| ★ School spirit items, especially those that support healthy choices, such as water bottles, Frisbees®, and other sports equipment and clothing. Other options include decals, bumper stickers, cups, and stadium pillows/blankets |                             |
| ★ Coupons books  | ★ Jewelry and baskets       |
| ★ Calendars  | ★ Bath and beauty products  |
| ★ Magazine subscriptions   | ★ Flower plants and bulbs   |
| ★ First aid and car safety kits  | ★ Vegetable seeds or plants |
| ★ Holiday wreaths, candles, greeting cards, and wrapping paper   |                             |
| ★ Newsletter and yearbook space or advertisements  |                             |
| ★ School supplies (notebooks, pencils, pens and crayons)   |                             |
| ★ Arts and crafts made by students and/or school staff   |                             |

