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Youth Programs

Fundraising ideas

In need of some inspiration? Check out the following lists for different fundraising ideas:

- [Goods and services](#)
- [Holiday events](#)
- [Donations and partnerships](#)
- [Raffles and auctions](#)
- [Special events](#)

Here are some useful tips to keep in mind for any fundraising event:

Always coordinate your efforts with the local Habitat affiliate. Before reaching out to donors, touch base with your local affiliate to coordinate plans so that donors are not approached twice.

Be familiar with Habitat for Humanity and its programs. Be able to answer questions about the organization's mission and how it operates to establish credibility and communicate the mission.

Contact local and campus media for publicity. Find out if your campus or local paper has a "Community Calendar" or other free publicity space. Contact campus media well in advance of the event. Radio or TV stations may even do free announcements.

Any event can be an educational event if you provide participants with information about HFH and your group. Attach informational flyers to your bake sale goodies. Hand out pamphlets to everyone who signs a stud. Have a poster with your chapter's Web site and meeting times.

Any event can be an advocacy event if you provide petitions to sign or recruit people to become online advocates. Check out advocatewithhabitat.org for the latest information and resources.

Document all events as they are planned, and evaluate after completion, for future reference.

Develop a donor recognition program. One of the best ways to retain donors is to acknowledge their contributions. Thank donors in your newsletter, hang a banner with their logo on the work site or list donors on your group's t-shirt.

Goods and services

An effective method for raising funds is to sell items that are donated or low-cost. Groups can also get creative in providing a service to the community and asking for donations in return for their help and time.

Adopt a plant

Acquire flowering plants to be adopted by individuals for a \$2-5 donation. Choose a price that at least covers the cost of the plant. Then plant the plants in the yards of Habitat houses.

Baby-sitting

In order to give parents a night out, you can designate a place and hours for group baby-sitting. Perhaps see if you can use your school gym or a church recreation room. Groups charged a certain amount per child or per family or per hour for their baby-sitting services.

Birdhouses and flowerpots

Have young people build birdhouses or decorate flowerpots. Put a tag on each item listing the name and age of the young person who made it. Set up a Campus Chapter/Youth United display in a popular area. Post signs explaining to passersby that by selling these items, young people are able to contribute to the mission of Habitat. As items are purchased, mail the tags back to the young people letting them know that their item has been sold and how much money was donated to Habitat through its sale.

College care packages

Partner with campus groups and your community businesses to put together welcome baskets for incoming freshmen. Advertise to parents during the summer and during move-in day. Include things like food coupons, maps of campus, video rentals, cookies, a mug and other goodies.

Company picnic

Young people can provide labor for a company picnic. One college was able to raise \$300 this way.

Concession stands

A lot of sporting events give donations to charities when you work their concession stands. See if local athletic venues, or even special events (marathons, races, etc.) will partner with your group and pay for volunteering your services.

Cookies by the pound

Partner with your affiliate and community for the "Giant Cookie Sale." Churches, community volunteers and students all bake cookies, which are sold on a Saturday at a local church for \$5 per pound. Get volunteers to help with labor and sales, and try to get ingredients donated.

Coupon books

Young people sell coupon books for \$25 each. Habitat will usually receive about 50 percent of the profits. This strategy works well to unite young people in different groups toward the same cause without having to schedule a number of meetings.

Dog houses

Sell doghouses built with scraps from the construction site. Detailed [instructions](#) can be found on the resources page of the youth programs website.

House component sale

Breakdown the components of the house and "sell" them to campus organizations, clubs and local businesses. An example would be to sell a "bedroom door" for \$50. Groups can then be a part of the building day that involves that component.

Monopoly

A campus chapter worked with a company to develop a specialized Monopoly board. The chapter sold spaces on the game (like Boardwalk) to on-campus departments, student groups and local businesses. After the board was completed, they sold the game to students, alumni and parents.

Nail sale

One group raised \$100 selling nails for 25 cents apiece. Afterward, they donated the nails to the affiliate. It is possible to make more money by having the nails fill in the letters of a sign that reads, for instance, "MHS is fighting poverty." Paint the letters on a board with dots for nails and then fill in the sign with the nails.

Rake-a-thon

Have young people accept donations for raking yards. If there are enough people/organizations involved, make it a competition. Give an award to the group who has the most enthusiasm and the group that rakes the most yards.

Rent-a-worker

Get out into the community and expand your donor base. Advertise in the local newspaper, church bulletins and around campus that chapter members will help with household jobs for a donation to Habitat for Humanity.

Rug resale

College students collect the rugs from dorm rooms at the end of the spring term, store them for the summer, then clean and resell them in the fall. They sell the rugs for \$20-80.

Sports camp

Get varsity players at a high school or college to conduct a camp for the day for younger students. Charge a fee for each student.

Square-foot sale

Individuals and groups can sponsor a square foot of the unfinished house. Sell sponsorships on campus and by visiting local businesses and organizations. Sponsors can then come and decorate their square foot of the unfinished floor or framing of the house. Post donors names on a sign outside the house and offer publicity to businesses and organizations that help sponsor.

T-shirts

Have young people submit a design for your campus chapter of Youth United's t-shirt. Get the design printed and seek a vendor that will donate the t-shirts. Sell the shirts to raise money for your group.

Valet parking

Provide valet parking for university functions. One group did this, collecting a fee from the university, and all tips went to support Habitat for Humanity.

Holiday events

Holidays throughout the year provide opportunities to sell seasonal goods or services that are in high demand.

Alternative gifts

People donate money to Habitat for Humanity in the name of their friends and family members as a holiday gift. Send out personalized cards to the gift recipients telling them of the donation.

Christmas campaign

Create and sell Habitat-themed gift tags, candleholders and ornaments around campus. Looking for ideas? Try picture frames made by gluing broken tiles from the Habitat restore onto inexpensive frames.

Crush sales

The week of Valentine's Day, set up a booth on campus selling cans of "Crush" soda and offering to deliver the cans with an anonymous note to students' crushes.

Gift wrapping

Wrap gifts at a local toy store, bookstore or mall in your community during the busy holiday shopping season. Collect donations for your efforts and spread some holiday cheer. Make sure the fact that donations go to building a Habitat house with young people is highly publicized.

Gingerbread house building contest

Obtain materials for making gingerbread houses such as gingerbread or graham crackers, frosting, candy, etc. Hold a house building and decorating contest in which young people pay an entrance fee for a team of three people. Have a panel of judges determine the best three designs and plan to display them in a central location for the week following the contest.

Holiday cards

Have holiday card-making parties using sponges and paints to decorate cards. Sell the cards at key holidays.

Holiday season help

Ask local stores if they need extra help for the holiday season. Have members volunteer on the weekends to stock shelves in exchange for a donation to Habitat. Also, you can offer help to community members in putting up lights and other festive decorations for donations.

Pumpkin patch

Sell pumpkins at a local church, or other visible place, for Halloween. Go to www.pumpkinsusa.com to order pumpkins and materials.

'Souper' bowl dinner

Hold a soup dinner around the time of the Super Bowl. Contact local stores to get the supplies donated. One group sold potato soup in homemade glazed bowls made by local high school students and artisans.

Trick-or-treating for change

Before Halloween, distribute fliers in local neighborhoods letting the community know that your group members will be collecting change on Halloween for Habitat for Humanity. You can wear tool belts and hardhats as your costumes.

Turkey sales

A campus chapter raised \$11,389 selling smoked turkeys for the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. The chapter bought the turkeys at cost from a local grocery store and then smoked them.

Donations and partnerships

Habitat for Humanity is all about creating partnerships. Reach out to schools, businesses and foundations to either directly ask for money or to make arrangements for other types of support.

Bike & Build grants

Bike & Build is a great organization that raises over half a million dollars each year to be distributed to affordable housing organizations (like Habitat for Humanity). Their grants aim to mobilize young adults to affect the affordable housing cause, which is exactly what campus chapters and Youth United are all about. Organizations may apply for up to \$10,000 each year. Applications and detailed information can be found on their website: www.bikeandbuild.org.

Church youth presentations

Have your group members make presentations to their congregation during a Sunday service. Bring all of the youth to the front of the church and ask them questions about their homes (i.e. "Do you have your own room? Is there a stove in your house to cook with?"). Explain what Habitat is and how your group involves young people in Habitat's mission. If possible, tell a story about a child living in an unsafe house and how hard it was for him/her. Tell youth how they can get involved with your group and ask the church if the offering that day can be donated to your group or local Habitat affiliate.

Collegiate Challenge

If your affiliate already hosts [Collegiate Challenge](#) trips, this partnership can be perfect for raising significant funds towards a youth sponsored home. Ask your affiliate to donate the proceeds from their Collegiate Challenge participants to your group's efforts of home sponsorship. In return, you can make lunch to bring to the work site during the trips, host a dinner for the participants, or coordinate some fun activities while they are in town. If your affiliate does not currently host Collegiate Challenge trips, ask them to register as a host site!

Dollar for dollar

Ask local groups, businesses or individuals to match the amount of money that young people raise, dollar for dollar.

Faculty and staff giving

If you go to a public state university, contact your administration to find out if Habitat for Humanity can be listed as one of the charitable organizations through the "State Employees Appeals Campaign." Through this campaign, faculty and staff can choose to have deductions taken from their paycheck to go toward a charitable organization.

Greek system partnership

Involve the Pan Hellenic Council and the Pan Greek Council on campus in your fundraising efforts. Fraternities and sororities hold many philanthropy events and are looking for great causes to donate the proceeds to.

"Just a dollar" campaign

Challenge your campus/community to donate just one dollar per person during a week. Challenge dorms, faculty, staff, clubs, organizations and departments to encourage everyone to donate just a dollar at your group's donation collection sites around campus.

Letter writing campaign

This is perhaps the most effective fundraiser for the amount of time put into it. Have youth send a letter to everyone they know (who will recognize their name) and ask for a reasonable donation to your group. A personal, handwritten letter is the most effective. Educate the person about both Habitat and your group. Refer to the Fundraising guide on my.habitat for detailed instructions on how to hold a letter writing campaign.

Meal donation

Students sign up to "donate" the cost of a dining hall meal to your Habitat for Humanity chapter. The meal amount is taken from their meal plans by the university and donated to the chapter.

Percentage from restaurants

Local restaurants agree to hold a benefit night for Habitat on a night when business is typically slow. Your group provides free advertising and attracts customers for them. In return the restaurant agrees to provide you with a percentage of its sales that night. This is a great annual fundraiser that has the potential to get bigger every year if done well. When the event is over, be sure to send a letter to all the restaurants you contacted explaining how the event went and thanking the participating restaurants.

Performance donations

Charge a fee for attendance at a concert or play that a group of young people regularly perform. If possible, go up and down the aisles with wheelbarrows at intermission asking for donations. Make an announcement in the playbill, at the beginning of the show and/or before intermission so people will know that the proceeds of the event will go to your Habitat group.

ReStore partnerships

Have young people volunteer to work in your affiliate's ReStore and donate a portion of the profit from those days to your group. You can also pick up used furniture at the end of the school year and take it to your affiliate's ReStore. Arrange with the ReStore to have the proceeds from the sale of the furniture go to your chapter.

Rotary grant

Have young people give a presentation to a nearby Rotary Club or other civic group (i.e. your local Elks lodge) about Habitat for Humanity. One high school received \$1,000 from the Rotary Club toward house sponsorship.

Shares

Sell "shares" of the Habitat house you will build. Prices can vary from \$5 to \$25, depending on your target group. Each "shareholder" receives a certificate of "stock appreciation." Invite all shareholders to an appreciation luncheon where they can see a presentation about the house building and are able to make a pledge for next year's house.

Student activity fee

Students sign a petition to pass a one-time, \$1 increase in the student activity fee, to be donated to Habitat.

Youth United membership dues

Each young person who wants to be an official member of Youth United pays a set amount, such as \$5. The membership fee should be low enough so that a child would be able to raise or collect the amount if their parents were unable to provide it for them. Have local businesses donate T-shirts, buttons, etc., to give to members. In addition to having individual young people pay for the membership, get adults and local businesses to "sponsor" a certain number of young people by making larger donations.

Raffles and auctions

As an extension of selling goods, raffles and auctions are a way to increase funds raised especially when groups are able to partner with businesses and receive donated goods.

50/50 raffle

Sell 50/50 tickets at sporting events. The winning ticket is drawn at halftime, and the winner and the Habitat chapter split the money raised from ticket sales.

Auction items

The key to a successful raffle or auction is getting great items donated. Consider these sources for items:

- Faculty and staff – dinner with the dean or a popular professor, the principal's parking spot for a week, cooking lessons
- Local businesses – video rentals, baked goods, a night around town including dinner, theater and limo service
- Alumni – autographed books, works of art, photos
- Students – artwork, dates, laundry service for a month
- Sports teams – autographed footballs or basketballs, tickets to a game
- Celebrities – autographed pictures and CDs
- Your chapter – decorated birdhouses, custom doghouses, playhouses
- Your affiliate – talents and services of affiliate board members

Art auction

Seek donations from artistic people, local galleries and art students. If possible, display the artwork for several days before the auction. In your advertisements, invite people to visit the auction site to see the art on display. This can be a silent auction or live auction.

Birdhouse auction

Have young people build and decorate their own birdhouses. Display the birdhouses at a local business. Later, auction them at a local arts festival, community event or other gathering.

Habitat playhouse

Build a playhouse to be raffled off at a local home show or community gathering. See if a local hardware store will donate or discount the building materials. (The Youth United group in Geauga County, OH raised more than \$30,000 by building and auctioning playhouses.)

Homecoming

Take advantage of the alumni in town for a homecoming weekend. One campus chapter raffled off a football signed by the players and coach during homecoming weekend. They sold the raffle tickets to alumni and raised \$700.

Parking space raffle

Contact your administration and find out how your chapter can raffle off a prime parking space for parents' weekend, homecoming or another busy-traffic weekend.

Prom auction

Host a prom fashion show and silent auction. Students model the latest prom fashions before a large audience, and auction off goods and services donated by local businesses.

Silent auction

Ask for donations, find a place to display them and publicize a two-hour silent auction. For instructions on putting together a silent auction, refer to "How to host a silent auction" (found on my.habitat).

Special events

Events can take a lot of planning but are a great way to educate people, expand your donor base and raise awareness while raising funds. Popular special events include dances, concerts, dinners, races and tournaments.

Athletic events

Make any athletic event a competitive fundraiser. Charge an entry fee and you can also take up a collection at the event. Consider finding an individual, group or organization that will match whatever you raise for the day. Some ideas include:

- **Bike race**

Challenge campus and community biking enthusiasts to a race. Organize the route—it can be across campus, across town, across the state or across the country! Participants pay an entry fee or collect sponsors for the race. Get local businesses to sponsor the event as well.

- **Fun run**
Organize a 5K run, involving people from the campus and local community. Attract participants from high school track teams, running clubs and fitness centers. Runners are charged an entrance fee and prizes could include t-shirts and donated items.
- **Jump rope-a-thon**
Young people are sponsored to jump rope for a certain period of time.
- **Hack for Humanity**
Students gather pledges to hacky sack for 24 hours. Bands entertain the "hackers." The fundraiser can also include selling t-shirts and refreshments to help raise money.
- **Row for Humanity**
Hold a joint fundraiser with the men's and women's crew teams. Students get pledges for rowing a number of meters on 20 indoor rowing machines.
- **Tournaments**
Challenge organizations and community members to three-on-three basketball, a "Twister tournament," or a "Dodge ball Showdown." Charge entry fees per team and have music and prizes.
- **Volleyball marathon**
Sponsor a fundraiser in which young people agree to play volleyball for 72 hours. Encourage community members to challenge the group to a game and to sponsor the venture.

Battle of the bands

Challenge the rockers at your school to a "Battle of the Bands." Collect admission at the door and have the audience vote on their favorite band. The winning band could get great exposure—contact local venues and radio stations and ask if the winning band could get some air time or other prizes.

Brick by brick

Sell cardboard bricks that are used to build a cardboard replica of a house. Contributors purchase a cardboard brick, sign their names and donate it to the cardboard house. Find a prominent place to build the house where contributors can be recognized.

Building block event

Teams of two to three elementary and/or middle school students give a donation to participate in a race to build a home from toy building blocks. Participants wear hard hats and each team is armed with a set of 300 small, plastic building blocks. Awards, certificates and prizes can be given for participation. Refer to the Building Block Event Manual on my.habitat.

Campus concerts

Contact a popular music ensemble on campus and ask them to donate a performance to your chapter. The chapter provides ushers for the event and receives the proceeds. Consider acapella groups, your campus' choir, orchestra or band performances.

Carnival activities for younger children

- Coin toss: Give a different prize for each kind of coin landing in a bowl/pool of water (the quarter being the best prize).
- Balloon lotto: Fill a room with balloons. One can take a balloon for \$1. The balloon either contains nothing or a prize.

Carwash/Recycling

Hold a carwash in which young people not only wash cars, but also collect and recycle the bottles and cans that people have in their cars.

Change drive

Utilize local elementary schools and ask them to collect change for Habitat. If there are many classes/schools to work with, make it a competition! The winning class/school gets a pizza party or a similar prize. You can make cardboard houses to collect the change in, or order coin boxes from the Habitat store on my.habitat.

Chapter challenge

The officers of an organization can challenge every member to donate \$50-100 (or any amount) to the house. The members can raise their \$50-100 in any way (donations, etc.).

Community-based musical

Organize and present a Broadway show with singing, dancing and skits. Either adapt a normal musical to have a Habitat theme or write your own. If you choose to use a musical as-is, make sure you have someone come onstage before and after the show to talk about Habitat.

Encourage homeowners to attend. The homeowners in Talbot County, Md., earn sweat-equity hours for being part of the musical. They also sing a Habitat song, "Habitat Angel," at the end of the show every year.

Dances

Host a swing or salsa dance on campus. Invite a professional instructor or individuals involved in a local swing or salsa club to lead the dancing. Charge admission and offer refreshments for a fee. Dancers can donate money to play a special song. Give the dance a theme and make a costume contest out of it, or hold a "Dance-a-thon," dancing all night—start around 8 or 9 p.m. and finish the next morning having participants collect sponsorships.

Don't dress to impress

Have students sign up to wear odd outfits or costumes every day for a week. During that time and the week before, they should walk around with a container to collect money. Give a gift certificate to the person who raises the most money.

"Duck" run

Wrap chapter members in duct tape (sticky side out) and have them run through the seating at a campus sports event. Spectators stick cash (and checks!) to the tape.

Eating contests

Participants gather sponsors, who donate money for each chicken finger (or hot dog, or cup of pudding, or whatever!) devoured. The winner receives a prize, and your group collects the sponsorships. Find a business in your community like a grocery store or catering service to donate the food items. (In one competition, Marriott Food Service donated 600 chicken fingers, the winner received a trophy for eating 46 chicken fingers and the endeavor raised more than \$2,000.)

Habitat tea

Invite seven people for tea with a university president or other popular figure. Each invitee donates \$10. Those people then ask six people to their house for tea, and each of the six give \$10; those six each invite five people for tea, and so on.

Hat for Habitat day

Adults and youth pay \$5 for the privilege of wearing a hat to school or church (usually this is not allowed). Every participant should wear a sticker that says "Hats for Habitat."

Jail and bail

Fourteen community leaders, the student body president and others are approached two weeks before the event and are asked to raise \$500 to bail themselves out before being "arrested." One chapter raised \$15,000 for their house sponsorship this way.

Number-guessing contests

This is easy to do at any religious institution, community center or local business. "How many jelly beans in the jar?" is one of the cheaper and simpler versions of this. At a gathering of people, have the prizes donated and charge 25¢ to \$1 per guess. A few easy suggestions:

- Make it seasonal: How many seeds in the pumpkin? How many candy hearts in the jar?
- Make it Habitat-oriented: How many nails in the jar? One student made a miniature house in shop class and filled it with M&Ms. Students and staff at his school paid \$1 to guess. The winner received a \$25 gift certificate to a nearby mall.

"One hit club"

Give people the opportunity to hammer a nail in a board for one dollar. If someone hammers the nail completely in the board in one hit, their name is added to the famous "One Hit Club" that gets celebrated publicly. This is a great event for carnivals or other gatherings. You can mark out a board with a saying so that once all the nails are hammered it will read as a sign for your group (i.e. "Habitat for Humanity at the University of Virginia")

Pink flamingos

Purchase a bunch of pink flamingo lawn decorations. Make a list of people in your community who would be interested in your group's goal. Pick the name of a good-humored person from your list and plant all of the flamingos in his or her yard with an announcement introducing your group, explaining why you are raising money, and offering to remove the flamingos for a donation of \$10. Clearly express your appreciation and mention that larger donations will be accepted. For an additional \$10, they can choose another person's yard that they would like to have "flamingoed." For \$10 more they can also buy "flamingo insurance" guaranteeing that their yard will be flamingo-free throughout the duration of the fundraiser.

Puzzle house

Form a puzzle in the shape of a house. Every time \$50 (or any increment you want) is raised by your school, group or organization, add a piece to the puzzle.

Rubber ducky race

Sell rubber duckies for \$2-5 per ducky and race them down a river. The winner receives a donated prize (like a DVD player). Make sure you have nets to catch the duckies at the end of the race. Use a waterproof marker to number the duckies clearly and assign people's names to a number as the duckies are purchased. Owners can clearly see the numbers and can cheer for their duckies, and the duckies can also be reused the next year. Make sure you advertise extensively before the race to get the word out. Add to the competition by getting groups such

as sports teams, families, grade levels, Sunday school classes, etc., to buy teams of duckies and compete with one another for a group prize.

Shantytown

Educate other students and community members about substandard housing while raising funds for your group and advocating for change. Challenge your campus community to help raise a set amount of money in one week. Participants build shanties, and sign up for round-the-clock shifts in your cardboard shanties on campus, asking passersby to donate. Chapter members also can get pledges for the number of hours spent in the shanty. Hand out informational material and have petitions for people to sign based on Habitat's legislative priorities. Please refer to the Shantytown guide located on my.habitat.

Sign-a-stud

Set up a table at a prominent place on campus, or during a community gathering. For a donation (suggested donation = \$1), individuals can sign the stud that will go in the next Habitat house.

Spaghetti dinner or pancake breakfast

Have the food donated or buy it in bulk and have young people, their parents and other volunteers cook. Have the meal in an easily accessible location. Consider handing out personal invitations in classrooms, meetings, etc., as a form of publicity. Charge \$5 - \$10 per meal.

Talent show

Host a talent show! Sell tickets for admission to raise funds for your group.

Feel free to adapt any of these ideas to suit your group/community better. Also, if you put on a fantastic new fundraiser, please share it with HFHI so that other campus chapters and Youth United groups can learn from your success!