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Fundraising for Your GSA

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GSA Fundraising Made Easy

Your GSA club probably has a lot of wonderful ideas and projects in mind, but does not have enough money to support them. In order to be an effective leader of a strong GSA club, it is very important to understand how fundraising works. Many students elect a treasurer to be in charge of all financial responsibilities, but fundraising is work that everyone needs to know how to do! This resource sheet will help get your club on the path to raising dollars to spend on queer-fabulous events!

It is important that every GSA member understands fundraising and thinks about ways to help the club members raise money.

- If you are unaware of your school?s fundraising policy for clubs, talk to the Student Government (or Associated Student Body) Advisor. Invite them to a GSA meeting so they can explain the process for fundraising to all of the GSA members.

- Download the PDF version below to see a chart that describes the steps that some GSA clubs have to follow in order to have a successful fundraiser. ***The fundraising policies are different at every school, so it is important to understand the fundraising policies at your own school.***

Have a GSA meeting dedicated to understanding what fundraising is

- Have the facilitator of the meeting define fundraising: fundraising is the act of raising money for an organization or club?s mission and projects.
- You can also start planning a fundraiser during that meeting by asking your club members what ideas they have.

Here are some successful GSA Fundraising Ideas

1. Selling rainbow pastries (rainbow cakes, rainbow-sprinkled cupcakes, rainbow-chocolate chip cookies).
2. Team up with the Drama/Theater club and sponsor a play with LGBT issues, charge admission, and then split the profits.
3. Sponsor a competition (essay writing, poem, etc) and have local businesses donate items/money for winners
4. A lot of local businesses allow school clubs to have fundraisers. For example, Jamba Juice donates 20% of all the purchases made during a specific period of time. All it takes to get this started is filling out a simple form.
5. Murrieta Valley High School?s GSA had a silent auction were businesses and individuals donated items that were auctioned off and the proceeds went to the GSA club.
6. Students can mail letters or call parents, teachers, local businesses, and community members to donate money.

Plan a fundraising event

Once your GSA has decided on a possible fundraiser, use GSA Network's ?How to Plan an Event [2]? Resource Guide to help you with the logistics of the event. Follow the numbers with the Event/Project Planning Worksheet

1. Event: What is the name of the fundraiser/What type of fundraiser is your GSA planning?
2. Date: When does your GSA plan on having the fundraiser?
3. Goals: How much money does your GSA expect to fundraise?
4. Objectives: What is the purpose of the fundraiser?
5. Strategies: What are the steps, due dates, and who is responsible for each step? For example, if you need to reserve a specific space, who is going to do it and how much time in advance does the reservation need to take place?
6. Materials: What items are going to be needed and who can provide them?
7. Evaluation: How did your fundraiser go? Was it a success? How many people attended? How much profit did you make? Did you sign up more people to support the GSA?

If your GSA has a very successful fundraiser event,

let us know at news@gsanetwork.org[3]?we?d like to hear about it!

FUNDRAISING RESOURCES ? Sample Phone Call Script & Sample Letter

If you are unsure of how to ask for donations here are a few examples:

Sample Phone-Call Scripts

Short Version:

Hi, May I speak with _____? Do you have a minute to discuss (school name)? I am a student there and we have (a problem, an opportunity. Explain what it is in 1 sentence). This is what we want to do (explain your project in one sentence); and we need your support. This is how you can help (ask for something specific like donate $20, buy 2 tickets, donate food to feed 10 people, etc.) Do you have any questions? Your donation will (be specific: make our school safer, help 10 students, buy 2 books for our library, etc.) Will you support us?

Longer Version:

Hi, may I speak with _____? Hi, this is _____ calling, I wanted to talk to you about an organization I?m involved with at school, do you have a few minutes?

I?m a member of a student-run club at school called the _____. We work to fight homophobia and transphobia and anti-LGBT harassment in our school by educating our peers about sexual orientation and gender identity issues as well as providing a safe space for queer youth and their allies.

Some of the projects and event we?ve sponsored in the past include: _____. This year we?d like to _____ [mention a particular project your GSA is working on]. We also have weekly meetings at school, where folks come to hang out, have a snack, plan events and talk about what we can do for social justice.

I?m calling to ask if you?d like to become a supporter of the _____ by making a donation to our club. [Give them time to think before you say anything else.]

If yes:

Great! Do you have a pen? You should make your checks payable to: _____. You can send the check to: _____.

[Thank them]

[In a few days, call them to see if they?ve had a chance to mail the check yet.]

If maybe/unsure:

[Don?t give up right away! Ask them to donate any amount they can]

[If they want to know more about the GSA, try to answer any questions they have and offer to send them GSA-related materials if you have any]

If no:

[Thank them for their time and move on to the next person. You can?t win them all. You should expect as many as half of the people you ask to say no, that?s normal. People have many reasons for saying no, don?t assume it?s personal.]

Sample Letter

[Date]

Dear _____:

For the past ___ months, I have been involved with a student-run club at my school called the _____ Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). We work to fight homophobia and transphobia and anti-LGBT harassment in our school by educating our peers about sexual orientation and gender identity issues and providing a safe space for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning) youth and their allies. I am writing to ask you for you to donate any amount possible to this organization to help make some of our upcoming projects possible.

Harassment towards LGBTQ youth is a very real problem in our school. In _____ [your town] harassment and bullying against queer youth in our remains a serious problem. In many schools, students hear words or phrases such as ?fag? and ?that?s so gay? multiple times a day. For instance, [Give specific examples from your school]. Our GSA club was started to help make our school safer for LGBTQ students, teachers, and staff by educating the school community about sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

I joined the GSA because [explain why and how it has helped you].

Some of the projects and events we?ve sponsored in the past include: _____ [list previous projects]. This year, we?d like to work on _____ [name a specific project. Make it clear what their money will go towards]. We also have weekly meetings at school, where folks come to hang out, plan events, and talk about issues in their lives and social justice.

We can?t continue this important work without the support of individuals who really believe in what we?re doing to fight homophobia and transphobia in our school and make it easier.

Thank you,

[sign the letter]

P.S If you have other questions about the GSA please call me at _____. I hope you will support our GSA and its efforts to make our school safer for LGBT youth.

[If you send a letter, it is very important to do follow-up phone calls about a week later. This will increase your success in getting donations.]

FUNDRAISING RESOURCES ? Grants

Community Grants

Community grant-making programs give money to organizations or student clubs that submit an application that explain why they need the money. Usually, the grants are given to organizations/clubs that have specific detailed projects they would like to work on, but need money in order to accomplish it.

Here is some advice from Julie Dean of the Community Foundation Silicon Valley:

- Be SPECIFIC about what you plan to do with the grant what activities your GSA will do and how you will spend the money (research your budget and make it realistic)
- Be clear WHY you want to do the project described in your grant. For example, how will the project benefit your group? Benefit your school? Benefit others in the community? What is the effect your project will have? It is important to describe the activities you will do, but also explain why your group wants to do the project and why it is important.
- Be YOURSELF. Don?t try to so hard to make your application sound ?professional? that it doesn?t sound like anything you would ever say. The people reviewing your application will usually be more impressed if you keep it real than by big words.
- Be THOROUGH. Always double-check that you included all the information requested, whether it is filling in a form, writing on a separate sheet, or attaching a list, budget, or other info. When you are providing a phone number/address for a contact person, it is usually helpful to indicate if it is a youth or an adult, and to provide contact info for one of each.

The following organizations/foundations have funding available for youth-initiated projects. Sign up for GSA Network News at www.gsanetwork.org [4] to stay updated on various grant opportunities.

Also check out these organizations that have funded GSA clubs before:

- Youth Grants Board (Youth Leadership Institute)- Marin County, two or three grant cycles

per year, call 415-445-1676

- CTA GLBT Safety in Schools Grant and Scholarship Program (California Teachers Association- Human Rights Dept.), call 650-552-5446 for more information.
- Fresno Regional Foundation ? Grants Advisory Board for Youth (GABY) funds youth-led projects. For more information call 559-226-5600 or email info@fresnoregfoundation.org [5]
- Gay and Lesbian Allied Administrators ? Greater Los Angeles region, gives GSA of the Year Award (includes cash prize along with recognition) call 213-241-7614 or email info@galaaonline.org [6] for more information.
- The Riverside & San Bernardino Counties Community Foundation ? Two grants for youth programs: Community Impact & Youth Grants. For more information, call 951-684-4194 or go to: www.communityfoundation.net [7]

Don't forget to check with your local community?s foundation to see what kind of opportunities they can offer to your GSA! To see what?s in your area, just do a search online for the name of your community and ?community foundation.?

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[1] http://www.gsanetwork.org/files/resources/Fundraising.pdf
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