

# Healthy Fundraisers in Elementary Schools

## Why Healthy Fundraisers?

Fundraising is extremely important for most schools to supplement their yearly budget. It can pay for equipment, materials, events, and other activities that otherwise would not be funded. There are numerous opportunities during the school year to raise funds. Each fundraiser is an opportunity for schools to model positive, healthy behaviors. Fundraising can be profitable, fun, and healthy!

Unfortunately, non-nutritious foods and beverages - those high in fat, sugar, salt, and calories - are often used for school fundraising. For example, typical bake sales make money, but they do not support a healthy school environment. Health-promoting schools ensure that healthy, nutritious choices are included in all activities that involve food and beverages, including fundraising. To provide an optimal learning environment for children, schools strive to create an environment that supports and encourages healthy behaviors. Limiting the sale of non-nutritious food and beverage fundraising items supports healthy schools.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Can healthy fundraisers make as much money as selling foods and beverages with minimal nutritional value?**

**A:** Yes! There are numerous great examples of healthy fundraisers that are practical and profitable. In Twin Falls, ID, Lincoln Elementary School raised \$9,100 net profit selling spirit cups through BRAX Fundraising. Lincoln Elementary is a Title I school with, on average, 87% free and reduced lunch rates and 469 students in grades PK-5. (Please see the *Healthy Fundraising* list for ideas for alternatives to non-nutritious foods and beverages.)

### **Q: What are examples of non-nutritious fundraisers?**

#### **A: Examples include:**

- Bake sales (cookies, doughnuts, cupcakes, cakes, and cookie dough). Selling candy, chocolate bars, chips, ice cream, and pizza.
- Cake walks.
- Coupons or gift cards for non-nutritious foods or fast-food restaurants.
- Fast-food fundraisers (many fast-food establishments offer schools a percentage of the sales on a weeknight.)
- Foods and beverages of poor nutritional quality sold à la carte, or via vending machines or school stores.
- Label redemption programs (schools can enroll, then families purchase products and turn the labels in to the school, which redeems them for supplies or money.) In the Campbell's Labels for Education and the General Mills' Box Tops for Education programs, 80% of eligible food products are of poor nutritional quality.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What are the potential consequences of using non-nutritious foods and beverages for fundraisers?**

**A:** Selling non-nutritious foods and beverages to raise funds does not support a healthy school environment or promote healthy lifestyle choices. Non-nutritious foods and beverages can contribute to poor health, which is linked to decreased academic potential. Selling non-nutritious foods and beverages also contradicts school nutrition messages. Nutrition education taught in the classroom can be confusing for students if it is contradicted by school activities that promote non-nutritious choices.

**Q: What can schools do to support healthy fundraising?**

**A:** There are numerous ways elementary schools can generate revenue without selling non-nutritious food and beverage items. (Please see the following *Healthy Fundraising* list.) Start or join a school wellness team and invite parents to join. Wellness team members can share ideas for healthy fundraisers and discuss challenges at meetings. Write about the profitable success of the healthy fundraiser in the school's newsletter and thank parents, community members, and staff for their support in the school's newsletter.

## Sample School Fundraiser Announcement – *Name of Fundraiser*

Name of Elementary School is excited to announce its first annual name of fundraiser (insert date)! Please help support Name of Elementary School by (insert how parents can support - attending, selling, donating, helping to promote, etc.) Donations will help fund name of activity.

This school year, we are making improvements in how we raise funds to align with our goal of being a health-promoting school. At Name of Elementary School, we want to promote the health of all of our students because healthier students learn better. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, our school is creating an environment that supports and encourages healthy behaviors, including our fundraising efforts. We are confident that with your support, we will have a successful and profitable name of fundraiser.

Name of Elementary School is dedicated to supporting fundraisers that model a healthy school environment. Healthy ideas are welcomed and discussed with the School Wellness Team. For more information on the School Wellness Team, please contact the School Wellness Team Co-leaders at phone # and e-mail.

Thank you for supporting name of fundraiser!

## Healthy Fundraising

### Alternatives to Non-nutritious Foods and Beverages

- *Events* - Auctions/silent actions, book fairs, car washes, bowl-a-thons, walk-a-thons, jog-a-thon, fun runs, skating parties, other physical activity fundraisers, raffles, parties such as a disco party with dancing and healthy snacks, and movie night. Ask for cash! Hold “bake-less” bake sales. Parents and others can donate the amount of money to the school that they otherwise would have spent at a bake sale and no baked goods are sold.
- *Healthy Foods and Beverages* – Spices and herbs. Fresh fruit baskets or assortments (fruit kabobs, fruit salads). Call a fruit vendor for prices or get volunteers to create “do-it-yourself” fruit baskets. Collect healthy recipes from students, families, and staff to create cookbooks to sell.
- *Non-food Products* - Calendars, stationary, greeting/holiday cards, holiday decorations and ornaments, picture frames, candles, ceramics, jewelry, accessories, wrapping paper, and trash bags. Gift catalogs with non-food merchandise. Magazine subscriptions. Plants, flowers, seeds, seedlings, and bulbs. Safety and first aid kits.
- *Recycling Fundraisers* - Recycling companies purchase used items such as clothing, printer cartridges, and cell phones from schools.
- *School Spirit/Promotional Items* – T-shirts, sweatshirts, pens, pencils, book covers, water bottles, cups, travel mugs and other school-branded items.
- *Scrip/Schoolpop* – These are gift cards for use at local grocery stores, clothing/retail stores, or coffee shops. Schools purchase scrip at a discount from those retailers. There is no added cost to parents who purchase the scrip for the full face value. Schools make money by keeping the difference between the discounted price they pay the retailer and the full face value that parents pay.
- *Sporting Equipment* - Toys and games that promote physical activity (jump ropes, hula hoops, balls, and frisbees.)



### Ideas to Make Healthy Fundraisers Successful

- Be creative! Don’t be afraid to try something new. Involve students in the planning.
- Buy decorative supplies, fruit, and any needed materials in bulk at large discount stores.
- Create a simple questionnaire for parents to give feedback on what types of healthy fundraising options they would participate in. List healthy fundraising alternatives for parents to check off which options they support.
- Discuss ideas and challenges with the school’s wellness team.