# *Sample Fundraising Plan: Neighborhood Park Coalition*

## Prior Year’s Fundraising Results

In the past 12 months, the Coalition achieved the following:

* Recruited an active eight-member fundraising committee to assist the board.
* Raised sufficient funds to complete landscape architecture costs and city permits for W.R. Adams Mini-Park. Initial landscaping was completed by volunteers, and the park is already much improved.
* Raised sufficient funds to repair park pathways, planters, and benches.
* Raised a total of $158,000 over 12 months with 91 percent of funds coming from government, corporate, and foundation resources.

Prior Year’s Fundraising Results

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Fundraising Source | Numbers of Donors | Totals Raised |
| City government grant | 1 | $75,000 |
| Foundation grants | 5 | $95,000 |
| Corporate grants | 3 | $4,500 |
| Individual donors | 40 | $5,400 |
| Memberships | 180 | $9,000 |
| Park Walk Event | 89 | $7,085 |
| Gardening classes | 30 | $1,050 |
| Year-end mailing | 78 | $3,886 |
| **Total** | **426** | **$200,921** |

Committee’s analysis of prior year’s fundraising results:

1. The project seems to be a good fit for the city’s neighborhood parks expansion and improvement plan. Future support at a similar level seems unlikely because of five percent cuts to the city’s budget.
2. Now that some improvements have been made, the park provides a more appealing focus for site visits from foundation representatives, major donor visits, and corporate/business contacts. The committee will focus on increasing contributions from grants and on cultivating some major donors.
3. Committee member Jerome has done an excellent job of compiling and maintaining a donor and prospect database using eTapestry. He’s volunteering to continue as the committee’s “donor data guru.” This makes it much easier to manage individual donor cultivation, the membership drive, and the year-end letter drive.
4. The organization’s website is rudimentary. The committee is working to recruit a volunteer who can help make it more engaging and attractive to potential volunteers and donors.
5. Committee members Evelyn and Sophie have grantwriting and fundraising experience and time to contribute them to the committee. However, the government application is lengthy, and the committee will hire a consultant to assist with it.
6. The committee is redesigning the park walk event. The financial return has been modest considering the volunteer hours required to recruit walkers and collect their pledges; and the park will be under construction in the spring when the event is usually held. The committee proposes developing a new special event, a gardens tour to neighborhood homes with beautiful plantings. The event would focus attention on the neighborhood where the park is being developed, attract families and children (key constituents to be served by the finished park), introduce more neighbors to one another, and provide photo opportunities for the upgraded website.
7. Theo’s gardening classes last year cost very little to produce and were well-received. He’s willing to bring in additional friends from the horticulture field to help him expand the classes. The committee proposes experimenting with a two-class curriculum ($30 per class) with an option for taking a single class (for $35).

### Coalition’s strengths

* Committed volunteer committee with strong fundraising skills
* Careful attention has been paid to creating a good donor database
* Merchants and residents close to the park care about its being improved
* Good fundraising momentum was achieved last year
* First-time revenue-generating project (gardening classes) showed promise

### Coalition’s weaknesses

* Organization’s part-time staff member has little time and resources to devote to fundraising. All efforts depend heavily on volunteers.
* Organization has not developed attractive printed materials or an engaging website.
* Organization is heavily dependent on a single city grant. That grant is likely to be less than in previous years because of cuts to the city’s budget.

## Current Year’s Fundraising Goals

Over the coming 12 months, the Coalition fundraising committee will work to achieve the following:

* Recruit five additional, active volunteers for the fundraising committee, including someone with website design skills
* Increase the number of foundation grants submitted and received
* Increase the number of corporate gifts
* Develop a major gifts program and recruit larger contributions from individuals
* Introduce a new fundraising activity (the garden tour) that raises more funds than the park walk and is well-aligned with the park’s purpose
* Increase percentage of income from individuals and special events
* Raise a total of $235,000 for the coming fiscal year
* Raise sufficient funds to complete installation of new playground equipment and replanting of W.R. Adams Mini-Park ($30,000 more than the Coalition’s annual operating budget).

Current Year’s Fundraising Goals

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Fundraising Source | Numbers of Donors | Revenue Goals |
| City government grant | 1 | $71,000 |
| Foundation grants | 7 | $120,000 |
| Corporate grants | 5 | $10,000 |
| Major gifts | 7 | $7,000 |
| Memberships | 212 | $11,200 |
| Garden tour event | 95 | $9,250 |
| Gardening classes | 65 | $3,000 |
| Year-end mailing | 90 | $4,500 |
| **TOTAL:** | **482** | **$235,950** |

### Analysis of anticipated sources of support

#### Goal: Recruit five new members for fundraising committee.

1. Host celebratory brunch to thank previous year’s committee. (Evelyn and Jerome)
2. Make follow-up calls to previous year’s committee to recruit their assistance again this year. (Lana and Jose)
3. Compile list of donors from previous year. Include contacts from companies where last year’s members and donors work. (Theo and Elaine)
4. Review list of past donors with previous year’s committee. Identify seven or more prospective volunteers, with each current committee member to call at least one person about helping. (All committee)
5. Host potluck dinner with new and old committee members to kick off year’s fundraising effort. (Theo and Elaine)

#### Goal: Increase average size of grant and number of grants received.

1. Renew contract with grantwriter to prepare city government grant. Due to budget cuts, the Coalition assumes this grant will be smaller than in the previous year.
2. Submit final reports for previous year’s grants. (Jerome)
3. Renew government grant. Include report and proposal deadlines in grant-writing calendar. (Elaine with assistance from Jerome)
4. Review guidelines for foundations that supported project last year. (Jerome)
5. Unless dissuaded by guidelines, call current foundation supporters to check eligibility for further and increased support. (Jerome)
6. Conduct research into additional foundation prospects at the Foundation Center Cooperating Collection. (Sophie)
7. Develop a grant-writing and submission calendar for the year. (Jerome and Elaine)
8. Write and submit proposals. Request additional support based on growth of project, previous year’s success, and increased program costs (for completing playground area). (Jerome)
9. Invite foundation program officers to visit mini-park, view architectural plans, and talk to selected committee and board members. (Jerome and Elaine)

#### Goal: Increase number of corporate gifts

1. Ask new corporate contact on fundraising committee to chair corporate effort. (Todd)
2. Compile a corporate leaders list from three sources: regional newspaper and magazine listings of the region’s top companies, national resources the local chamber of commerce, and the Foundation Center’s *National Directory of Corporate Giving.* (Elaine)
3. Review master corporate list, marking names of anyone committee members know personally. (All)
4. Draft and review two-page corporate solicitation letter. (Todd and Elaine)
5. Submit corporate solicitation letter to committee members’ contacts—signed by the appropriate committee members. When possible, arrange visits prior to submitting letters Send corporate solicitation letters to other local corporations with stated interests in neighborhood parks. (Todd or new committee member)
6. Make follow-up calls and visits to corporations receiving letters. (Todd with help from new committee members)

#### Goal: Introduce new fundraising activity to replace prior years’ park walks.

1. Review and refine ideas for garden tour. (All committee and board members)
2. Seek in-kind support — concessions, graphic design, printing, prizes, photography, other. (Ruby)
3. Compile list of extraordinary private and community gardens and review with committee members. (Jerry)
4. Make calls to recruit homeowners’ participation. (Jerry and Elaine, plus committee members who know garden-owners personally)
5. Prepare letters to local businesses and park neighbors, inviting them to sponsor the tour. (Maryanne says she can do this on a weekend at her office.)
6. Visit garden centers, schools, and clubs to recruit participants. (Ruby)
7. Call upon local businesses, recruiting them as event sponsors. (Ruby and David)
8. Call upon art departments at nearby college to seek a student to design garden map and fliers as a service learning project. (TBA)
9. Write news releases and public service announcements. Submit to media and make follow-up calls. (Ruby)
10. Organize volunteer tasks. (TBA)
11. Coordinate event production. (Ruby)
12. Write and send thank-you letters. (TBA)

#### Goal: Increase percentage of income from individuals and special events, including: increasing major gifts, memberships, year-end gifts, and gardening classes.

Raising Major Gifts of $10,000

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Goal for Number of Gifts | Gift Level | Number of Prospects |
| 2 | $2,000 | 8 |
| 2 | $1,500 | 8 |
| 3 | $1,000 | 12 |

#### Steps to take to increase major gifts to $10,000

1. Review current donor list and identify prospects who could give more. (Jerome and Elaine)
2. Share list of identified potential donors with all committee members, identifying people they know. (All)
3. Develop case statement. (Sophie and Elaine)
4. Assign prospects to people who know them. All other prospects will be approached by Jerome and Elaine. Host a role playing dinner at Marianne’s home that includes asking committee members if any of them could give $1,000 or more
5. Call identified prospects to request brief meetings. (All)
6. Most prospects will need reminder/follow-up calls or visits. Committee contacts should invite them to review the garden plans, meet the landscape architect, drop in on a gardening class, and so on.
7. As gifts are received, write personal thank-you letters. (Committee member who knows donor or Elaine)
8. Update donor data base to include new contributions and preferences of prospects approached through this campaign.

Increasing Memberships to 212 ($11,200)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Goals for Number of Members | Member Levels | Prospects |
| 40 | Patron @ $75 | 667 |
| 50 | Family @ $50 | 830 |
| 65 | Standard @ $35 | 1,083 |
| 57 | Students/Seniors @ $25 | 950 |

\*Plan assumes a 6 percent return on a mailing and emails to previous members and new prospects — conservative estimate for previous members and generous expectation for new donors (using current organization list and lists brainstormed by committee members)

#### Steps to take to increase membership income to 212 ($9,200)

1. Review mailing lists (electronic and street addresses). (Jerome is already doing this.)
2. Contact local college campuses’ environmental studies and urban planning departments for possible interns/student volunteers, mailing lists, and places to post information about the urban mini-park project. (TBA)
3. Draft membership appeal letter – to be distributed by email and through the U.S. Postal service. Revise suggested gift amount to $50 or more. (Sophie and Elaine)
4. Check functionality of “Donate Now” feature on website. Make sure it is prominent and easy to use. Post fundraising goal. (Jerome)
5. Host volunteer addressing and mailing party for potential donors for which the Coalition has street addresses. (Theo and Elaine)
6. Update website with campaign progress and share that news with emailed prospects. (Jerome)
7. Three weeks after mailing and emailing, host phone-athon, making follow-up calls to former members who have not responded. (Marianne’s office)
8. Contact above college campus groups and nearby senior centers to see if the coalition can make presentations in classes, club meetings, or at other gatherings.
9. Write and send thank-you letters. (Marianne)
10. Update donor database as contributions are received. (Jerome)

Sustain Number of Year-End Gifts Income at 90 Gifts but Increase Average Amount ($4,500)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Gifts | Average Size | Number of Prospects |
| 90 | $50 | 1,800 (5% return) |

#### Steps to take to increase year-end gifts to 90

1. Review mailing lists and email lists after returns from memberships and major donors. (Assume some of these donors may make a second, modest gift if the committee is close to but has not achieved its goals for the year.) (Jerome, all committee, and board)
2. Mark potential donors’ list with names of committee contacts. (All)
3. Draft and produce year-end appeal letter. (Elaine)
4. Host a mailing party and potluck at which committee members personalize letters to potential donors they know or bring their laptops and distribute emails to friends and acquaintances. (Marianne or new committee members)
5. Write and send thank-you cards featuring a photograph of the park. (Ruby)

Increase Revenue from Gardening Classes to $3,000

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Number Enrolled | Fees | Prospects |
| 20 | $60 | All members and donors |
| 35 | $35 | All members and donors |
| 23 | $25 | Seniors/student contacts |

#### Steps to take to increase revenue from gardening classes

1. Develop new two-class series (one on organic vegetable gardening and one on maintaining small flowerbeds year-round) for $60; increase fees for taking a single class by $5 to $35 for general participants and $25 for seniors and students.
2. Develop flier for classes. (Ruby)
3. Develop flier distribution plan to nearby community centers, campuses, florists, gardening supply stores, and home improvement centers, and coordinate volunteers to distribute fliers. (Theo)
4. Mail flier to all members and donors. (Marianne)
5. Write and distribute news releases to community newspapers. (Ruby)
6. Gather preregistration materials and confirm attendance. (Theo)
7. Conduct gardening classes. (Theo and his friends Dave and Sheila)
8. Conduct brief “exit interviews” with class participants about future class topics they would find interesting. (Ruby)