



LFCSA's 101+ Tips For Fundraising

Write It Down

A personalized letter is the most basic tool of fundraising, and that is because it works. Regardless of whatever else you do, write a letter first! Use it to explain the facts - Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts was created by local parents, educators and community leaders, and provides an arts-integrated, project-based elementary school curriculum, using the arts on a daily basis to promote learning. LFCSA is the only arts-based public elementary school in Los Angeles. LFCSA receives state funding that covers only a portion of the amount needed to support our mission. Send your letter to everyone you have an address for, and then look for more addresses and send even more letters. Don't forget to include a donation form, and a pre-addressed return envelope.

Work the Neighborhood

There are countless opportunities to raise money within a few miles of your home. Think about it: the coffee shop, gym, workplace, laundry mat, car wash, supermarket, newsstand, dry cleaners, video store, dentist's office, bar, deli, parking lot, bike shop, and the pizza place. You patronize these businesses all of the time -- ask them to help you out with your fundraising effort. How?

- Just ask for the donation.
- Put a poster in the window, explaining what you are doing and how to help.
- Display a donation box and/or letters & donation forms on the counter.
- Ask the business to donate a portion of their proceeds on a given day.

Get Social

Making contact with as many people as possible will be key to your fundraising. Chances are, your friends and family will be more than happy to be a part of your fundraising campaign, but you will probably need to go beyond your inner circle.

- Throw a party!! Ask everyone who attends to write a check when they enter the front door.
- Host an event -- a film screening, boat cruise, or a band night in a local bar.
- Ask your friends to ask their friends for donations.
- Then ask their friends to ask their friends.

Bring It to the Office

Your place of work is another good source for donations. How can your business help:

- Just ask for money. Your company might be happy to donate to your LFCSA fundraising goal.
- Then, ask for more -- see if your company has a matching gift program.
- Send an e-mail to the entire company with a donation form attached
- Set up a small display -- hang your child's picture and your LFCSA T-shirt in a prominent place.
- Approach clients, vendors, or anyone else that your company does business with (make sure it's OK with the boss!).
- Host a lunchtime meeting and do a presentation about LFCSA and your commitment to our mission.

Timing is Everything

Special circumstances can provide an ideal opportunity to grab a donation. For example:

- Use March & April to suggest a great way to use tax refunds.
- Birthday coming up? Ask for donations in lieu of presents.
- Throw a Super Bowl party, selling betting squares with 50% of the money going into the pot and 50% towards your fundraising goal. Who knows -- maybe the person who wins the pot will graciously choose to donate those winnings towards the goal as well!
- Do the same with Golden Globes and Oscar parties -- put together a sheet of all the nominees for all categories and get everyone to select who they think will win. You can do this as a party, or even as an office pool.

Go Paperless

The Internet and e-mail have significantly affected the fundraising world. Use them to your advantage:

- Build a website where people can learn about your commitment and donate money.

Get Crafty

We are nothing if not a tremendously creative community. Use your creativity, whatever it may be. Everyone has the ability to do something well; sell your product or skill to benefit your fundraising campaign. A few ideas: cookies, lapel pins, knit caps, poems, chili, short stories, tax preparation abilities, photographs, babysitting time, car washing, drawings, language tutoring, personal training, t-shirts, designated driving, dog-walking, errand-running, gardening.

There's No Limit...

To creative effective fundraising...

Big Corporate Sponsorship - Identify one or more several large companies and contact them directly. They may be willing to sponsor you completely.

Garage Sale - Time to get rid of all of those miscellaneous items in the garage and attic. Ask your friends to do the same. Put it in your front yard and sell, sell, sell! Put all the money raised toward your fundraising minimum!

Bake Sale - Become Julia Child (and ask your friends to do the same) and host a bake sale. You can even have it in conjunction with your garage sale. It is a fact that people will buy more stuff on an empty stomach!

Extra "Change In My Pocket" Box - Create these little boxes for your friends and family and have them place it on their dresser. At the end of the day they can drop that spare change in the box. Before the pledge deadline, you can gather the boxes and count the dough!

Office Fundraising Challenge - Speak with everyone in your office and get them to challenge each other to raise the highest amount. Give the "winner" a prize. Maybe some movie passes? Gift certificate to dinner?

Answering Machine Message - This will alert everyone who calls you at home that you are up to something special! Let them know that you need their support!

Return Address Labels - Print return address labels for your outgoing mail. Print something like, "Please give to my child's educational future". You may want to include a pledge form and a self-addressed envelope to make it really easy for them.

Internet Chat Rooms - Post a message on an Internet chat room. You'd be amazed by how many people will be willing to help you.

Ask your local waiter/waitresses to donate a portion of one day's tips - Ask your local waiters and waitresses to donate a portion of their tips to your cause.

Ask your local bartender to donate a portion of one day's tips - Ask a local bartender to donate tips from one night. You can create a sign for the bartender to place on the bar stating that "All tips collected tonight will go directly to Los Feliz Charter for the Arts, the only arts-based public elementary in L.A.". If the patrons see that sign they may be willing to dig a little deeper in their pocket!

Fundraising dinner at your local favorite restaurant - Ask your favorite local restaurant to host a fundraising dinner for you. They supply the food and you supply the pledge forms!

Happy Hour party - Invite all your friends (and their friends!) and get them to sign your LFCSA t-shirt that you'll be wearing at the Run/Walk for Charter schools next spring. Charge \$10.00 per signature.

Theme Party/Dinner - Hold a theme party for 10 (or more) of your friends. Donation: \$50.00 per person. Spend no more than \$20.00 per person on the food and you'll have \$300.00 (or more) in donations by the end of the night.

Movie ticket donation - Ask your local movie house to donate several movie tickets. Sell them and put the money towards your pledges.

Local theater to donate tickets to a performance - Ask a local theater to donate a couple tickets to one of their plays or musicals and auction them off.

Valentine's Day pledge - A great time for your sweetheart to make a donation.

Delegate - Give 10 of your friends 10 donation forms and ask them to help raise money for you.

Creative Friends - Find a local artist or a creative friend to donate art or jewelry to be auctioned.

House Warming Party - Are you moving anytime soon? If so, ask your friends to make a donation instead of purchasing a gift for your new place.

Color Donation Forms - Capture your recipients attention. Send them in colored envelopes too. These will stand out among your friends' bills.

Signing your Correspondence - Get in the habit of signing your note cards and letters with your name and LFCSA or Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts Patron. You will be surprised at how many people will ask you what that means.

Business Cards - Print up some inexpensive business cards (you can even do it on your own computer). Have all of the pertinent information on the card including your name, Los Feliz Charter for the Arts Patron, and your address (or PO Box #). Hand these out to everyone you meet!

Travel Agency - Do you always make your travel plans through the same agency? Ask them to donate a travel voucher. You can auction it off at one of your parties.

Doctor / Therapist / Veterinarian / Insurance Agent - Ask him/her to make a check out for you instead of the other way around!

Dentist - Hopefully you won't have to pull teeth to get him/her to help you out a little!

Chiropractor - They have cracked your back. Now ask them to crack open their checkbook and make a pledge.

Yoga Instructor - You have bent over backwards for them ... now it is their turn to do the same for you!

Radio Station - Call your favorite radio station and ask them to make an announcement on the air. They may even interview you. Donations can be sent directly to the pledge office.

Gym - Ask your gym to place a Pledge Jar at the front desk! Leave a stack of pledge forms at the counter, too.

Spinning Class - Have a stack of pledge forms with you and ask your spinning instructor to make an announcement in class.

Hair Salon - Ask your barber or hairdresser to donate \$2.00 from every haircut they complete during the weekend.

Picnics - National holiday picnics are a great place to raise some money!

Mow-a-thon/Clean-a-thon - Get your kids involved in this weekend activity. Check ahead of time with all your neighbors and ask them if you can mow their lawn or clean their car/driveway for \$50.00.

Neighbor - Write to all your neighbors on your block (or in your building). Attach a letter stating what we're raising money for and ask them to make a donation.

Free Rent! - Ask your landlord to donate one-month's rent to the cause! (You never know).

Garden Tour - Check with a local historical society to see if they would sponsor a garden tour of one or several homes in your area. Promote the event in local newspapers.

Meet the Press - Does your company distribute a newsletter? Does your company have an intranet message board? Take advantage of these! It's a perfect way to get the word out.

House sit - Friends going out of town for awhile? Maybe they will pay you to watch their place.

Neighborhood Chores - Are you a Mr. or Ms. Fix-it? A lot of your neighbors would probably rather pay you than someone else. Place signs around your neighborhood advertising your services (i.e. watering gardens, cleaning roof gutters, sweeping the driveway, fixing an easy plumbing problem, painting a room, etc.)

Karaoke Night - Who cares if you can't carry a tune. Spend a Friday night at a Karaoke Bar and sing your guts out! Have the announcer tell the crowd that you're singing for pledges!

Talented Friends - Is there a little piano bar in your neighborhood? Do you have a talented piano-playing friend? Ask the owner to let you host a cocktail/piano fundraiser. Charge anyone who attends and let them know that it's a benefit for Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts.

ebay.com - Remember the garage sale idea? Auction off the remaining items on Ebay.com.

Company Vacation Days - Ask your boss or human resources director if they can swap one of your vacation days for a day's pay.

Because my child deserves a quality education... Include a picture of your child (At school, with their teacher, with friends) on your pledge letter, at your parties, etc.

Donations for each day of school- Ask supporters to pledge an amount for each school day.

Pet Television show finale Party - Remember when Chandler married Monica? Remember when Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer ended up in jail? How about when Tony and Carmela sat down at the diner in the "Sopranos" finale? Gather a big group and friends and watch a series finale. Charge them at the door of course, and put the \$\$ toward your fundraising.

Game night - Get out those board games and start playing! Break into teams and let the fun begin.

Host a poker game - Call your serious (or not so serious) card-playing friends and invite them over for poker night.

Bowling Nights - Plan a fun night of bowling at the local alley. Ask the owner to waive the fees and you can collect that money and apply it to your campaign.

Used book sale - Old books sitting in the attic collecting dust? Ask your friends, family and neighbors to donate whatever they've have and host a book sale in your front yard. Wear your LFCSA t-shirt and put up some signs so people will know where the money is going.

Local Stores - Ask a local store manager what the hot selling item is these days and whether or not they would be willing to donate a % of sales from that particular item to you.

Curse Jar - Place a Curse Jar in your office and whenever someone says a bad word they have to open up their wallet, grab a dollar and put it in the jar.

Dress Down Day - Ask your company to allow an official LFCSA Dress Down Day. For the privilege of dressing down, employees pledge \$20.00 toward the fund.

Company Grants - Find out if your company offers grants to employees who volunteer their time for charitable causes. If so, you can volunteer your time at LFCSA and get paid grant money for the work. You may need a letter from us stating that you'll be volunteering in the office and we'd be happy to make that happen.

Church Bulletin - Place an advertisement in your church bulletin letting the congregation know what you're up to!

Crafts Distribution - Create small crafts with your child. Sell them to your friends, family members, etc.

Is there a teacher in the house? - Get your students to help you fundraise. Kids are incredibly creative and cute, too! Have them put together those crafts with you!

Other Parents - If your kids play on soccer leagues or any other sports teams distribute your pledge forms to the other parents at the event.

Remind Them - In case you didn't receive an answer the first time you asked, ask again! Your potential donor may need a little coaxing.

Inspirational Book Marks - Create them and sell them to your friends and family.

Universities and Colleges - Contact your local schools and ask if you can put an advertisement in their school newsletter asking for donations. Some of the organizations may even invite you to make a short presentation.

Art Supply Companies - Contact a couple of art supply stores. Tell them what you are raising money for and ask them if they would like to sponsor you. You may even get some cool supplies.

Computer Screen Savers - Create an LFCSA screen saver and send it to everyone in your company! A gentle reminder is a good reminder!

Mechanic - You have given them lots of money to work on your car. Now it is time for them to give a little back to you!

Rock on! - If you know any musicians, ask them to perform a benefit concert. Tell people that their admission ticket is a check made out to LFCSA.

Share the Experience - Tell your story. The more you talk about how you came to the school, how much your child is learning, how unique we are, the more people will share in that excitement and want to pledge to you.

Children's Party - Throw on that Star Wars or Princess outfit and get out there! The kids will be having fun as their parents are writing you pledge checks!

Wine and Cheese Party - Host a party at a local restaurant and ask the owner to donate the wine and cheese.

Temporary Tattoos - Swap a temporary tattoo for a pledge.

LFCSA Students' Art- Display some of our artists' work at your fundraising party.

Do you have a favorite magazine? - Call the editor and ask them to be your sponsor. If you have subscribed to a particular magazine for a long time they may be willing to give something back to you.

Fraternities and Sororities - Contact the national chapter of your college fraternity or sorority and ask them to make a donation.

Alumni Organizations - Call your own college or university and ask them to place an ad in the alumni newsletter asking for donations.