

# FUNDRAISING ALTERNATIVES

*Brought to you by NYS Parent Teacher Association  
and NY Council on Problem Gambling*



The NYS Parent Teacher Association and NY Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG) are working together to promote healthy fundraisers in communities across New York State. It is our hope that local Parent Teacher Associations will help reduce youth access to gambling by using the fundraising activity options below to replace gambling-related fundraisers.

For associations who are participating in gambling-related fundraisers, it's important to ensure that youth are not put at risk through direct participation in these fundraising activities, or through purchase or sales. All associations must follow charitable gaming rules and regulations as outlined by the NYS Gaming Commission.

<https://www.gaming.ny.gov/charitablegaming/>

NYCPG staff are available to support associations who wish to modify existing fundraising activities and policies. For more information and assistance, please contact:

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## Language Matters: RAFFLE VS. GIVEAWAY

A raffle is when someone buys a ticket for the chance to win a prize. A giveaway is when someone is GIVEN a ticket for the chance to win a prize. For example, a 50/50 raffle is when I buy tickets with the chance to win 50% of the money collected by selling the tickets, while a giveaway might be that I get a prize (or the chance to win a prize) through filling out the survey. In a raffle, I paid for the chance to win something, while in a giveaway I earned the chance to win something. Raffles are gambling, giveaways are not.

Key question in determining raffles vs. giveaways: Are you risking the loss of money with the hope of winning more money?

Language matters! It's best not to use the term "raffle" when you're conducting giveaways and vice versa. Using the term "raffle" for everything normalizes gambling which in turn increases risk for problem gambling.

# GAMBLING-FREE FUNDRAISING ALTERNATIVES

*\*The suggestions below were compiled from a variety of sources including National PTA, North Carolina and Michigan Action for Healthy Kids, Center for Science in the Public Interest and California Project LEAN, and BRiDGES in Madison County, NY.*

[Click Here](#) to view NYS PTA's Fundraising Position Paper

[Click Here](#) to view NYS PTA's Guidance on Charitable Gaming

[Click Here](#) to view NYS PTA's Guidance on Cash Payment Apps

**Dress Down Day** – Employees contribute a small fee (e.g., \$5.00) to wear jeans or shorts on the last day of the work week. All money collected goes to your organization or designated charity.

**Guessing Game (how many pieces of candy in the jar?)** – Participants pay a fee to make an educated guess of how many pieces of candy are in the jar. At the close of the game, the candy pieces are counted. The person who has the correct guess or closest to the correct guess without going over wins the jar of candy. The fee is donated to your organization or designated charity.

**Costume Contest (for humans, dogs or cats)** – Participants pay a small fee to be entered in the contest. Others judge each costume and the person/pet with the most votes for best costume wins. Raise even more money by requiring voters to vote for the best costume by placing money (.25, \$1.00, etc.) in jars designated for each costumed participant. Have multiple contests for best overall costume, best food-themed costume, best Star Trek themed costume, etc.

**Scavenger Hunt** – Items are hidden, or are available for free, throughout a building, neighborhood or city. Individual participants or teams of players pay a fee to participate (have individual fees and team fees) and receive a list of items they must hunt for throughout the house, building, neighborhood or city. Limit the amount of time players must find these items, giving less time if the game is conducted in a building and more time if the items are hidden throughout a neighborhood or city. The person or team that collects all the items first wins the prize. Get local vendors, friends and family involved in providing the items to be found. For example, the list of items might include a chocolate chip cookie from a bakery. Your organization will have pre-arranged with the bakery owner to make these cookies and have them available for free only to scavenger hunt participants who arrive asking for a chocolate-iced peanut butter cookie. Another item might be an old right shoe from a thrift store in the same neighborhood. The participating thrift-store owner will have agreed to place a business card in an old right shoe that is not saleable and give it to anyone asking for such an item. At the conclusion of the scavenger hunt, the winning individual or team gets a prize donated by another vendor (e.g., dinner for four at a local pizza shop) and all participants are awarded with a party with food and entertainment provided by other restaurants, vendors, chambers of commerce or merchant associations.

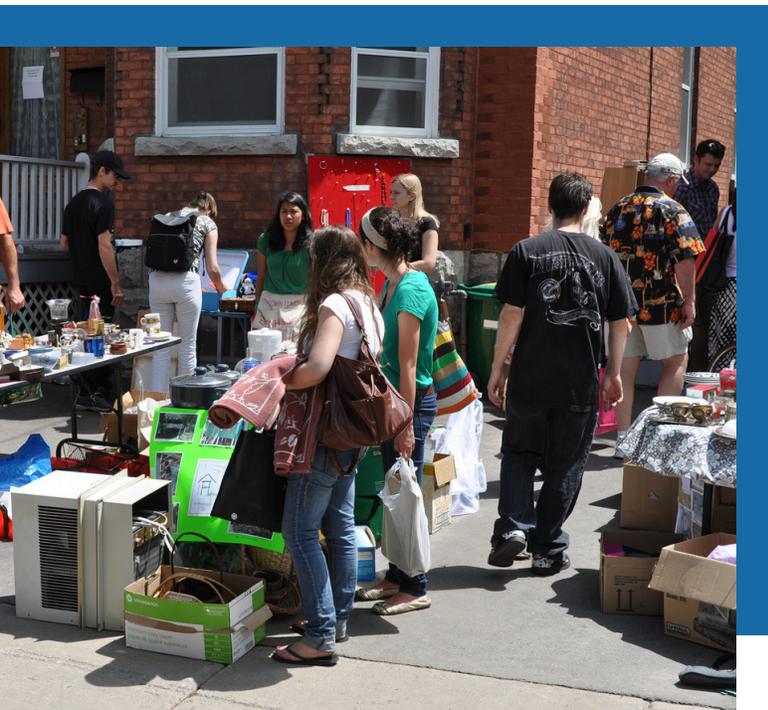
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**Bake/Candy/Cookie Sale** – Sell baked goods, candy bars or frozen cookie dough to raise funds for your organization or youth sports teams. Organizations can make the goodies themselves or purchase them for resale from organizations that cater to fundraisers.

**Bazaar/Garage Sale** – Ask members of your organization and their friends and families to donate goods that people don't use or want anymore and sell them at reasonable prices in the front yard, gymnasium, or common room of your organization's building. Money collected will go towards the cause for which one is fundraising. Consider combining a sale with eBay training by teaching people (who pay to attend the class) how to photograph, list and sell the items using eBay and PayPal accounts set up under the name of the non-profit organization. Your organization will get free help listing the items, money from class fees, and proceeds from the sale of goods.

**Silent Auction** – Silent auctions are good fundraising activities to hold as part of a bigger fundraising event like a cheese-tasting event, conference, or pot-luck dinner. Obtain donations from members, the public, and local vendors of items to be auctioned. Set each item out on a table with a lined sheet of paper placed next to the items. Throughout the event, participants compete with each other to bid for items by writing their name and bid amount on the paper. Hold the silent auction for a set period of time and let participants know what time bidding will close. Give participants periodic warnings of the close time ("bidding will close in 30 minutes") and stop all bidding at that time (no exceptions). When bidding has closed, the person who made the highest bid pays for the item and takes it home. Auction items can include hand-made quilts, jewelry and crafts, baked goods, unused gifts (the duplicate toaster from your wedding shower), or vendor-donated gift certificates, wine, services or store merchandise.

**Sporting Events (Bowl-A-Thon, Basketball Tournament, Softball Tournament, 5K Run/Walk, etc.)** – Teams or individuals pay an entry fee to compete against other teams or individuals. The best 3 teams or individuals win trophies or other prizes for first, second and third place. Do not allow people to place bets on who will win, as this would convert the event from a legal activity to an illegal gambling activity. The organization can make more money by securing advertising sponsors, selling food and drinks, T-shirts and mugs, etc.



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**Car Wash** – Gather members of your organization, friends and family, and all the rags, sponges, buckets, soap and hoses they can muster. Assemble in a parking lot with access to a water spigot. Raise funds by charging car owners to have their vehicles washed and dried by volunteers. Raise more money by charging an additional fee to vacuum the car, and sell ice cream, cookies, drinks and other snacks to people waiting in their cars.

**Craft Sale** – Organization members can donate craft items that they have made to be sold to benefit a fundraising event. Rent space at a community fair, or set up in the basement of your church or school. Sell jewelry, t-shirts, paintings, quilts and other home-made items.

**Cookbook Sale** – Members of your organization contribute their favorite recipes for inclusion in a cookbook that is sold for a profit. Print the cookbooks at your local printer or at one of a number of cookbook publishers who specialize in fundraising cookbooks. Make more money by keeping your costs low through donated paper and binding from local print shops and office supply stores.



**Pizza-by-the-Slice Sale** – Sell pizza by the slice or do a combo of two slices and a drink for a set price. Make the pizzas yourself or strike a deal with the local pizza shop to sell you pizzas at a discount.

**Popcorn Sale** – Set up in the lobby of your workplace and sell popcorn and drinks. Sell boxes and bags of popcorn for more money. Bring your corn poppers from home, or rent a popcorn popper for larger scale events.

**Soup/Chili Feed** – Ask your members with a flair for making soup or chili to whip up a big batch. Ask other members to bring a salad, corn bread, side dish or dessert. Charge the fee per bowl. Sell drinks and dessert as an add-on! All proceeds made at the fundraiser will go towards the cause.

**Hot Dog Feed** – This event is similar to a soup or chili feed, but ask your members to bring packages of hot dogs (pork, beef, kosher, vegetarian) and buns instead of soup or chili, and baked beans, potato salad, and deviled eggs for side dishes. Hold the event indoors by heating the hot dogs all morning in several crock pots, or hold the event outdoors by grilling. Charge per hot dog. Sell drinks and dessert as an add-on!

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**Wrist Bands** – Purchase rubber wrist bands “engraved” with an inspirational message or your organizations name or cause and sell them. Wrist bands can be in support of a cause such as breast cancer or be in support of your school with a school logo or mascot.

**Snack Day** – anyone interested in participating brings in a baked good or appetizer and donates a small fee (\$3.00 to \$5.00 per person) to eat the snacks.

**Sports/Chess or Checkers Tournament** – Participants pay an entry fee to participate in tournament-style games. All participants play an initial round. The winners of the first round move on to the second round, the winners of the second round move on to the third round, and so on until a champion emerges. The champion wins a prize.

**Duct Tape A Teacher** – Students at an elementary school fundraiser in Downers Grove, Illinois duct taped a kindergarten teacher to the wall to raise money for Thanksgiving gift baskets for needy families. Colorful duct tape strips were \$1 each or a donation of \$5 was good for six strips. The kids raised \$450 for gift cards to go with the donated items in the gift baskets created by each class.

**Zombie 5K Run/Walk Fundraiser** – The Rising out of the Thicket Zombie 5k Fun Run/Walk in Longview, TX raised money to benefit the Coalition for Drug Free Youth. Runners and walkers could participate in plain clothes as “survivors” or dress in zombie costume and gory makeup. There was also an “undead” blood drive where participants were encouraged to give brains or blood!

**Potty Drop** - Basically, you drop the potty on a lawn, and the homeowner has to pay to have it removed. \$10 for removal, \$20 to move it to a friend's house, and \$30 for the above + the promise that it won't come back to them. So far (with 1 notable exception) everyone who has gotten the potty dropped on their lawn has been a good sport about it, and almost everyone has chosen to pass it on to a friend.

**Karaoke Fundraiser** - A grill/pub owner donated their place for the night and even covered the karaoke service. So, the event didn't cost anything. Here's how the game was played: \$30 – paid at the beginning of the night to completely buy out of having to sing all night, but you can still pay to see others sing. They wore beads so people knew not to write their name down. \$10 – to make a buddy sing, you pick the song \$5 – buddy can add a friend, or change the song \$15 – buddy can get out of it completely, and make the original person sing, unless that person did a complete buy-out.



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**Text in dollars** - Have people text to donate a small amount, which will simply be added onto their phone bill. Promote the campaign by word of mouth and social media. For example, the Red Cross uses this kind of campaign very successfully. Online Fundraising Bootcamp for Nonprofits is a specialized course that will fine tune the tech and social media marketing skills for your event, to enable you achieve tremendous success.

**Wrap events around holidays** - Get people to donate a certain amount of money on their special events. Target occasions such as birthdays and public holidays where it is easy to meet many people simultaneously. Valentine's Day would be a great choice. For example, you could partner with a local bakery for Valentine's Day to have people purchase a certain type of premium baked goods where a percentage of the proceeds go to your charity.

**Pump in the dollars** - Organize volunteers at gas stations to wait on drivers. They should pump the gas, clean the windshield, and collect donations for the cause. You can also partner with local gas stations to offer car washes.

**"Go casual" day of support** - Organize with top management of key organizations for a great students/employees deal. Ask them to allow a casual dress code if the employees or students reach a certain target of donations.

**"...-a-Thons"** - Organize events like walk/bike/dance/skate/jump rope-a-thons or fun runs for which sponsors pledge money by the mile/hour or by the sit-up or push-up (sit-up for cents or push-up for pennies).

**Book Reading Contest** - Hold a book reading contest where families seek sponsors and raise money based on how many books are read.

**Parent vs. Teacher Event** - Plan a parent-teacher talent show or basketball game and sell tickets for admission and/or charge for participation.

**Book Fair** - Host a book fair through a fundraising company to promote literacy and raise revenue.

**"Taste of the Town" Event** - Invite chefs from local restaurants to donate healthy hors d'oeuvres and desserts for a "Taste of [your town]" event - charge for admission.

**"\_\_\_\_\_ Who Cook"** - community members (moms, dads, leaders, students, etc.) serve as a group of "chefs" that prepare a community meal together and charge by the plate (grocery stores often donate food) - partner this event with a cookbook fundraiser.

**Local Support Event** - Seek support from local businesses and ask them to donate a certain portion of sales from a given date or time to the school - avoid fast-food chains; promote restaurants with only nutritious options.