Virtual Fundraising

As our Rotary meetings and events continue to be impacted by the Corona virus pandemic, we are all seeking opportunities to continue to engage and raise much needed funds for our various causes.

With that in mind, we wanted to share some ideas you can explore for Virtual Fundraising. There are many articles and resources online where you can easily get more information. This is just meant to get you started! Many of these can be specifically used for World Polio Day too! So here goes:

1. Documentary Movie Watching: Show “Dare to Dream” – How Rotary became the heart and soul of Polio Eradication. Set a time for everyone to start virtually watching together, while also joining together in a chat room. Then, have a special host answer questions and facilitate discussion.
2. Virtual Bike, Walk or Run – have people sponsor minutes or miles on a stationary bike, or treadmill. Can be expanded to laps in a pool, or number of pushups achieved in a certain amount of time. Pick a date (or a date range, to give participants more flexibility), set up registrations, and enable your participants to raise funds. When the time comes, you can live-stream a kick-off ceremony and send your participants off to complete their bike, walk or run on their own. They can track and submit their best times and still engage in some friendly competition.
3. Virtual Gala/ Ungala- donate the money you saved on not buying a new outfit, paying a babysitter, buying an expensive Rotary Chicken dinner, or getting your hair and nails done!
4. Virtual Discussions or Tours – do you have a local museum or house of interest either historically or architecturally that could be shown?
5. Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Campaign – challenge someone or a business to match funds raised.
6. TED Talk-style Event- we know there are lots of experts out there you can call on to help with this one! Have a featured guest speaker, or series of guests speak from their home to your community for a great hour of inspiring presentations. Make this a livestream showing links for donating before and after each speaker.
7. Virtual Talent Show or Open Mic Night This can be done on Zoom or You Tube. Be sure to announce the winner at the end of the contest! If possible, share a photo and name of the winner on your social media platforms and in an email update.
8. Partner with an Online Business for a Donation at Checkout - ask them to include a donation prompt at checkout. Sort of like they do when you are checking out at Publix, but this is all online. People are already typing in their credit card number to make a purchase, so asking them to add on a dollar for a good cause isn’t asking for much. Recent statistics show that 69% of customers say yes when asked to donate at checkout, so it can really add up to a significant amount over time.
9. Virtual Silent Auction - Plan out all the details as you would for a regular silent auction, then choose a software like Auctria to execute it. You’ll be able to post photos of your items, allow people to place bids, announce the winners and take payments — all done completely online.
10. Virtual Cooking Class or Lessons Fundraiser – Cooking, sewing, origami, magic tricks or whatever…people will be drawn in and excited to learn something new while donating to a good cause. Find a local celebrity, professional, or fabulously talented Rotarian to lead the class.
11. Online Gaming Tournament Fundraiser- Start by figuring out which online game people would be excited to play for a great cause. It should be a multiplayer game with scores, and there should be some kind of time limit, so your tournament doesn’t go on indefinitely. Some suggestions are: Call of Duty, Rock Band, Mario Kart, FIFA, and Halo.
12. Virtual Game Night – or rather than video games, how about Board Games for the whole family to play? The possibilities here are endless! People can play board games at home, on their phones, or even online games with their friends remotely. Have them register and make a donation at that time!
13. Virtual Paint or Craft Night Fundraiser- Similar to the virtual cooking class, this virtual fundraiser is entertaining and gives people a chance to create fun art for a good cause. Many people are familiar with the "wine and design" events where you go to a painting studio and sip wine while the instructor leads you through step-by-step instructions to paint a picture. This type of event requires advanced registration because you’ll need to send (or deliver) the painting supplies to each participant.
14. Birthday Challenge Virtual Fundraiser – ask your friends and family to donate an amount equal to your age to our awesome Charity Navigator 4 star rated Rotary Foundation or to Polio Plus!
15. Virtual Wine or Beer Tasting – or just promote a Happy Hour! Everyone is relaxed and visiting without an agenda or designated speaker. That alone may be incentive for a donation!
16. Facebook Live Fundraising Event – have a speaker, such as a polio survivor, or a band perform and ask for donations!
17. Free Digital Download With Donation – you can offer a variety of items much like they do on public television for different donation amounts: Actual gifts like books, artwork, local artisan food, coupons, discount codes, or a Rotary specific item. You can offer a video download, a digital book, a printable poster, audio file, image, or some other digital donor gift in exchange for a minimum donation as well.
18. Social Media Challenge – Remember the ALS water bucket challenge? Ask people to do something specific — the task can be fun, challenging, impressive, surprising or anything in between — and have them post a photo or video of them doing it. People can donate on a dare or in order to see themselves on your page. This is a great way to bring awareness to your cause and to Rotary. #PeopleofAction #RotariansHavingFun

Then, after making a donation to your cause, they can post the challenge on their own social media, tagging you and using a special hashtag you created for the challenge.

1. "Rubber Ducky Race" Virtual Fundraiser- choose four specific projects you’d like to get funded that cost about the same. Then, challenge donors to give to their favorite project! The "race" is to see which project gets fully funded first. You can add small incentives, like a gift to the people who gave to the winning project if you want.
2. Virtual Raffle Fundraiser - Set up a custom donation page for the raffle campaign. For every $1, $5, or $10 someone donates (or whatever increment you’d like to use), the individual receives an entry into the raffle drawing, just like a standard raffle fundraiser.

Make sure you broadcast the virtual raffle far and wide on social media and in your email updates.

These Virtual Fundraising Ideas are all fairly easy to organize. Not a lot of committee meetings, venues to rent, flyers to print, money to lay out. You should have a plan though and set some goals. Then think about how best to reach them. Most of all you need to figure out what technology you will be using. Good luck, have fun, and let us know how you do! Don’t forget to hashtag the District on any of your Facebook or Instagram posts #RotaryDistrict6890