

# FUNDRAISING

Raising support for a mission trip doesn't have to be as scary as it seems. In fact, the process of raising support can be a very positive one as God uses this experience to build your faith in Him. When God provides you with the money you need to go, He will receive glory. And God receiving glory is really what missions is all about. So, your mission trip begins here, with raising support. This process also allows others to participate in missions by giving them an opportunity to give financially and pray strategically for you as you prepare to go.

We have seen some students raise much more than they ever expected, or even needed. We have also seen some students who received the remaining sum of their money just before the deadline. Take a moment to ask God to be glorified through the process of raising support. Stop and do so now before going any further. Continually ask God to build your faith in Him as you see Him provide for your needs.

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

Raising support for a trip like this will not happen overnight. As you trust God to provide, you also have the responsibility to do your part in getting the word out. Below you will find 5 steps that will lead you to fundraising success.

1. **Pray.** Ask God to provide for you as you begin the process. Acknowledge your dependence upon Him and ask specifically expecting Him to answer.
2. **Begin now.** Fundraising is not a task that goes well with procrastination. The more time you invest into this effort, the more success you will have. Start writing your support letter today. Deadlines are quickly approaching, so get started now.
3. **Spread the word.** You need to sit down with your family, your friends, and your pastor and/or youth minister as soon as possible. Ask them for help as you prepare for your trip. (See section on church involvement.)
4. **Develop a plan.** After you read through the ideas for fundraising, you will need to decide on a plan of action to help you accomplish your goals and meet your deadlines. Begin implementing your plan now. Don't take the "it will all fall into place in its own time" approach. There's a difference in having faith and being irresponsible.
5. **Get help.** Don't hesitate to ask or call us if you need help and/or encouragement. We are here to pray with you and assist you as you work through this aspect of your mission experience.

## THREE FIELDS OF FUNDRAISING

There are three key fields to tap into when raising money for a mission trip: your church, your family and close friends, and the general public. You'll notice that the three sections below correspond with one of these three fields. Be sure not to limit yourself to one or two of these fields. The most successful stories we have heard come from participants who have made efforts to raise support from all three fields. Each strategy is outlined in more detail in the subsequent pages.

**Note:** Every participant is expected to make church involvement the first priority. Whether or not you use one or both of the other two strategies as means of gaining support is up to you, but getting your church involved in the process is mandatory.

1. Church Involvement is ESSENTIAL because it is the Biblical way to do missions. God does not want us to be lone rangers. When we go, we are supposed to be sent by a local body of believers. Remember that during the fundraising process, your goal is not only to gain financial support, but spiritual support as well. In fact, by not getting your church involved, you are robbing them of a chance to be a part of what God is doing around the world as well as robbing yourself of the prayer support they will surely provide. This is the most important field, and it absolutely cannot be overlooked by anyone.
2. Writing Letters is the best way to spread the vision to friends and relatives whom know you well. Letters are especially effective when it comes to informing people who do not live near you. Pay attention to the tips given when writing your letter. There is definitely a right and wrong way to do this.
3. Classic Fundraisers are the best way to reach those in the general public to whom you would have never written a letter. Keep in mind that there are Christians who do not go to your church and are not friends or relatives who may want to get behind what you are doing. We should not omit these people from our spectrum. God may very well use someone you do not even know to help fund your trip if you will make your need known.

# CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

It is very important that you share your missions experience with your church family. Even if a friend or relative offers to pay for your trip in full up front, your church still needs to be involved in sending you. They need to know how God is leading you as well as how they can be involved. Below are some simple steps to help ensure that your church is aware of your journey, and how they can help you as you prepare.

**Step 1.** Talk with the staff member of your church that you know best. This might be a youth minister, college minister, or the pastor. During your appointment, explain how God led you to be a part of an iWitness team this summer. (You can direct them to the iWitness website if they have any questions regarding our ministry.) Express your desire to have your church commission you for this assignment. You should also share your need for a team of senders who will support you with prayer and financial gifts, and discuss your fundraising strategy. **Note:** If your church has a missions minister, you will need to talk to him/her to find out if your church already has a system in place for helping you with this process.

**Step 2.** Ask the staff member you speak with if the church will provide assistance for the handling of your mission trip funds. Your church can designate an account so that people can write checks and make donations to the church, which can be tax-deductible gifts. Your financial supporters will appreciate the opportunity to make their gifts tax deductible. The IRS has strict rules regarding this. Some general guidelines for you to remember are:

- a. Have supporters write a check or give cash to the church.
- b. According to tax codes, **your name should not appear on the check itself**. They can designate the money for you on an envelope or in an accompanying letter.
- c. The church will then include this gift for your mission in their statement to the individual, noting tax-deductible gifts and love offerings to the church in the previous year.
- d. Your church bookkeeper can then write a check to iWitness Ministries when payments are due. However, do not try to pass off this responsibility. Keep track of when payments are due and remind them before that date comes up. **Note:** Make sure that you communicate clearly your payment deadlines. It helps to remind them when a deadline is approaching.

**Note:** It is mandatory that you follow through with step 2. Your deposits need to be paid to us from your church. If for some reason, your church cannot help you in this area, please contact us immediately to talk about another option. You can email us or phone us for assistance.

**Step 3.** Discuss ways in which your church could help you in the area of fundraising. Some possible ways they could help are:

- a. You could be allowed to make a presentation to the church where a love offering could be taken.
- b. You could make presentations to Sunday school classes or bible study groups who might adopt you as a missionary.

*If you have an opportunity to make a presentation to your church, prepare your presentation well. Limit what you say to 3-5 minutes. Your presentation should include the following components:*

- i. Introduction*
  - a. Introduce yourself. Some may not know you.*
  - b. Briefly mention how God called you to participate this summer.*
- ii. Information*
  - a. Share what you will be doing on your trip.*
  - b. Share personal goals and expectations*
- iii. Closing*
  - a. Share your need for a support team to pray consistently for you*
  - b. Share your financial need as a member of the team. Give specifics about the amount needed, deadline, and what the cost covers.*
  - c. Share that you are trusting God to provide for your trip. Tell them that they can talk to you if they have any questions.*

- c. You could be given a list of people to contact with addresses.
- d. Your church might have a missions committee with funds available for projects such as these.
- e. Depending upon your fundraising strategy, your church might be able to be involved in a fundraising event. (see section on classic fundraisers.)

**Step 4.** Keep asking. It is tempting sometimes to make one appointment with a staff member and then sit back and say, "I did my part, now it's up to them." Talk to your staff member on a regular basis about how much support you have raised and how you can continue to inform your church of your needs. Your church wants to help you, however, you need to continue to put your needs in front of them so they will know how to do so.

## WRITING LETTERS

Writing letters is a great way to let people know what God is doing and how He has led you to be involved. It also gives an opportunity for you to invite them to participate with you. So, where do you begin? Below are some practical steps and hints.

1. Pray. (In case you haven't caught it, this is always step 1.) Pray specifically that God will lead you to the right people. As your list develops, pray for these people specifically.
2. Make a list of at least 50 people you know as God brings them to mind. Your parents can be a great help in this area. Think of relatives, friends, co-workers, church members, parents' friends, etc. (Don't limit your list to believers. God can use non-believers to supply your needs as well.)
3. Write a warm and personal letter. The following are some helpful hints regarding the content of this letter.
  - A. Introduction: Your introduction is crucial to your letter. Work on a first line that will grab the reader's attention.
  - B. Explain your involvement: Let the reader know where you are going, what you will be doing, and how God led you to be involved. It might be good to share what you expect to learn from your experience.
  - C. Present your need: Be very specific when you present your need. You want them to consider joining your team by providing prayer support, financial support, or both. One helpful hint is to work the dollar amount needed into the letter in several spots. Don't forget to include a due date.
  - D. Give instructions: Make it very clear what they need to do in order to give money for your trip. Set up an account with your church and encourage them to write checks to the church and put your name on an attached letter or envelope (see instructions in church involvement section).
  - E. Have it proofread: Get someone such as a parent or friend to read over your letter to make corrections and suggestions before you send it out.
  - F. Follow up plans: It is suggested that you indicate in your letter that you will be calling them in a week to see if they would like to be part of your sending team and to answer any questions they might have.
  - G. Closing and P.S.: Close your letter by expressing your appreciation for the person you are writing. Also, the P.S. in a letter always stands out and is often read first. Your P.S. should include the action you are seeking, the amount you are requesting, and the deadline. ***(Don't forget to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. You want to make it easy for them to respond.)***
4. Call your recipients about seven days after mailing the letters. When you call, ask them if they received your letter, if they have any questions, and if they have had a chance to pray about supporting you. If so, ask them how God has directed them. Note: Calling to follow up is a crucial step. Don't expect people to give just because they received a letter.

5. Send a personal, handwritten thank you note as soon as you receive a contribution from someone.
6. After several people have responded, it can be helpful to send a second letter letting people know how far along you are. Thank those who have given and let them know how much is still needed to reach your goal.
7. Keep track of letters, phone calls and thank you notes. Attached is a sample chart that you can use to keep up with these records.

## SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

Dear [name]:

God has called me to do something this summer that I know will transform my life. From *(dates of the trip including orientation)*, I will be participating in a short-term mission trip to *(country)* with iWitness Ministries. iWitness Ministries is a ministry that is devoted to teaching, training, and sending students around the world on short-term trips. All iWitness teams work with career missionaries and Journeymen from the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention or national pastors affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

While on this journey, my time and energy will be spent doing *(give a short description of your trip based on the information you have received from IWM)*.

I want to invite you to be a part of this experience in my life by becoming a “sender.” I need “senders” who will commit to pray for me as I prepare for this trip. I also need “senders” who will commit to support me in this trip financially. The total cost of the trip is *(insert cost)* and includes all expenses such as airfare, accommodations, food, and training. I will be making some personal sacrifices for the next couple of months as I try to raise the money for my trip, but I know that I cannot raise all of it on my own. I need your assistance to help cover part of the cost for this trip. Would you consider investing in my life and in the lives of those to whom I will be ministering by giving financially toward my trip?

If you would like to help send me, we have set up an account with *(name of church)*. You can make your check payable to *(Church name)*. Please do not put my name anywhere on the check. Instead, you can designate the money for me by putting my name on the envelope. All contributions are tax deductible. \$1000 of the total cost is due on *(deposit due date)*.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I will be calling you in the days to come to see if you have any questions.

Gratefully,

*(your name)*

P.S. I am confident that this experience is going to be a marker in my spiritual life, and I thank you for considering being a part of it. I know that God will build my faith by providing the *(total cost)* and that he will stretch my faith as I make Him known to those who have not heard the Good News of Jesus.

### Chart for Tracking Fund Raising

Sender's Name and Address	Phone Number	Date of Letter	Date of Call	Amount Given	Thank You Sent

## CLASSIC FUNDRAISERS

Writing letters isn't the only proven way to raise support. Some mission trip participants have put their creativity to work in order to make the support raising process more fun. Some ideas that others have used are:

- a. **Personal Sacrifice.** Before you ask for support from someone else, you should ask yourself what sacrifices you are willing to make in order to contribute to your own support. God might be leading you to cut corners, get a part-time job, offer to do odd jobs, or even ask for contributions instead of a birthday gift this year. One of our former students asked for money instead of the laptop her parents had planned to give her as a high school graduation gift. She used that money to pay for her trip. Another girl chose not to attend her senior prom and used the money she would have spent on a prom dress.
- b. **Pledge a mile.** Map out your trip and indicate the miles it will take for you to get there. Figure up the cost per mile to pay for your journey (divide the trip cost by the number of miles from your house to the country) and ask people to buy a mile or more to help get you there.
- c. **Dinner/banquet.** This can be done quite easily. Hopefully, you can get someone to donate or help prepare the meal. You then either sell tickets to the dinner or you advertise the time, date and place and charge people at the door.
- d. **Homemade crafts.** You can make jewelry, t-shirts, birdhouses, hot sauce, or whatever. Sell the goods to people after explaining to them where the money is going to be used.
- e. **Bake sale.** This is a great way to get your whole church involved. Ask members of your church to donate items they have baked and then set aside a day to sell these items.
- f. **Restaurant Cuts.** Some restaurants are willing to give you a cut of their profits if you will volunteer to work / advertise for them. In 2006, several students from Oklahoma passed out advertisement flyers for Pizza Hut. In turn, when someone came in and presented one of their flyers, Pizza Hut donated a percentage of their check to the students' trip. Other restaurants may ask you to do different things. Many programs like this are already in place and at your fingertips if you will simply ask around.
- g. **Stock show animal sale.** In 2005, one girl had the announcer explain that she was using her profits at the sale to pay for her mission trip and someone paid for her whole trip that night! This principle applies across the board: When people see you making efforts and sacrifice, they see your willingness and passion and are more likely to get behind you in that.

- h. **Auctions or garage sales.** Another great way to get your church involved is through a garage sale or auction. You can have church members donate items to your cause and then sell or auction them off.
- i. **Youth group auction.** This is the same as above only instead of items to sale, you auction off members of the youth group for odd tasks that church members might need done. For example, you might auction off one student for 5 hours of baby-sitting, another student to do yard work, etc.
- j. **The Old-Fashioned way.** Earn some of your money by doing yard work, washing cars, washing windows, cleaning gutters, etc. When doing tasks like this, be sure to mention to those you work for that the money you raise from this will be put towards your trip. Them knowing this may cause them to give more than they normally would for your services.
- k. **Create your own.** Invent a new way to do fundraising by using your own creativity. Don't forget to share it with us so we can share it with others in the future.

No matter how you choose to raise your support, make sure that you follow up with very supporter after your trip. These people want to know how things went and they love to hear how their gift was used to make a difference.