



Creative Ideas for Food and Cash Drives: Civic Groups and Schools

School Food Drives

- Have a competition between classrooms. The winning classroom has a party or a special treat. Give awards for most overall donations, and most “special items,” such as peanut butter, toilet paper, tuna fish, etc. Check with your local food shelf to find out what they need.
- Sponsor a “Minnesota FoodShare Poster Contest:” students draw posters to encourage food donations. Posters can be placed in local businesses.
- Provide lapel-sized green ribbons for students and teachers to wear throughout the month. Create large green ribbons to place on visible doors to serve as a reminder that the Campaign is on, and to bring their donation.
- Use helium-filled FoodShare balloons to decorate the food collection area.
- Competing High Schools: hold a “Food Bowl Challenge” to raise food for the food shelf. Leading up to a sporting event where the two schools are competing (when rivalries are at their peak), organize a food drive. Announce which school collected the most food at the game.
- When students meet a food collection goal, the principal or another high-profile teacher or coach can perform a stunt such as kissing a pig, shaving face or head, dressing like Elvis, etc. This works wonders — some schools have even gotten on local television news!
- Collect food as admission to a school sporting event, musical event, play or school dance. Civic Group Food Drives
- Organize a “Shopping Cart Race” between the police chief and sheriff (or other local leaders). Contestants race through the grocery store to fill carts with food items for the food shelf. The cart with the most food in the allotted time wins. Businesses or civic groups “back” one participant or the other, and pay for the cart of groceries.

Sales Ideas

- Run bake sales, donut sales or sell “bagels for a buck.”
- Use a traveling dessert cart to sell homemade desserts at an event or meeting.
- Issue a Chili Challenge. Serve batches of chili that get progressively hotter each day (have the server of the hottest batch dressed as a fire fighter). Sell tickets to benefit a food shelf.
- Sell ice cream cones in the cafeteria at lunch.
- Rent a popcorn machine and sell fresh popped popcorn during the afternoon.
- Barbecue brats and/or burgers in the parking lot at noon for lunch or dinner break. Charge for the meal to benefit a food shelf.
- Sell singing telegrams with proceeds to go to the food shelf.
- Fill a jar full of jellybeans or other small items and sell guesses of how many are in the jar. The winner gets a prize and the jar. Proceeds to the food shelf.
- Hold a rummage sale to benefit the food shelf.

Auctions & Raffles

- Have a live or silent auction of merchandise, weekend get-aways and dinners, services like dog walking or child care, skills like carpentry, or special items like quilts or homemade pies. Solicit local business owners for merchandise and tickets. Solicit friends, family and co-workers for special skills and homemade items.
- Sell raffle tickets for any valued item. Approach local businesses for merchandise, services or event tickets to raffle.

Special Events

- Organize an “Empty Bowl” event: artists and students donate handcrafted ceramic bowls. The public comes to the event and pays a flat fee for a bowl and a soup dinner (donated by area restaurants to add interest).

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- Host a “Celebrity Waiter” lunch or dinner. The meal can be donated, and a local, business, government, school or media personality serves the participants. The celebrity waiters donate their tips and the meal cost to a food shelf.
 - Hold an annual brunch or tea (have a special guest of interest to attract attendees, such as the Easter Bunny for children, or a local celebrity for adults). Proceeds go to the food shelf.
 - Sponsor a run (walk, skate, bike or dog walk!) around the lake, where participants raise pledges for the food shelf.
 - Sponsor a _____ a-thon. (dance, karaoke, checkers, storytelling, bowling, etc!) You fill in the blank with an activity that your group would be willing to do for an extended amount of time. Have participants raise pledges for the food shelf.
 - Collect spare change for hunger. Encourage group members to bring either all of their change on a given day, or specific coins on specific days. Provide a coin rolling machine.

Entertainment

- Coordinate a fashion show with a local clothing store (serious) or a funny fashion show (not serious, but fun). Admission fees go to the food shelf.
- Host a tacky "Debutante Ball" or "Prom" party as a fund-raiser. Encourage participants to dress as tackily as possible in old formal wear. Admission costs go to the food shelf.
- Individuals can host a FoodShare party at their home. The host invites guests of their choosing, and serves dinner and pleasant company in exchange for either food donations or cash.

Competitions

- Hold a “Tacky Outfit” and/or “Tacky Tie” Day: invite everyone to wear their tackiest. Take cash “votes” for the person wearing the tackiest outfit and/or tie.
- Run a putting challenge — set up a single hole, provide a putter and ball. Participants pay \$1 per stroke until they sink the ball. Those achieving a hole-in-one are posted for recognition.

Other

- For those friends and relatives who are difficult to shop for, make a cash donation to a FoodShare or a Minnesota food shelf in lieu of gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays or memorials.

Looking for new ideas to encourage and collect nutritious food donations? Try these:

- Ask congregants to bring “meals in a bag,” such as the following:
 - Spaghetti sauce, pasta noodles, Parmesan cheese, canned fruit, and salad dressing.
 - Tuna helper, cans of tuna fish, canned fruit, and muffin mix.
 - Cans of beef stew, cans of green beans or corn, muffin mix, and fruit cocktail.
 - Cans of chili, cans of pears, canned vegetables, box of soda crackers, and jar of peanut butter.
 - Cans of soup, box of soda crackers, canned fruit, juice, and jar of peanut butter.
- Invite the group to bring a different meal each Sunday during March:
 - Week 1 = Breakfast: Hot cereal, canned fruit, bags of sugar, canned juice, muffin mix, and hot cocoa mix.
 - Week 2 = Lunch: Soup, crackers, pickles, tuna, mayo, cookies, and juice.
 - Week 3 = Dinner: Canned beef stew or canned spaghetti sauce and pasta, canned fruit, and dinner roll mix.
 - Week 4 = Personal Products: Toothpaste, tooth brushes, toilet paper and paper towels.

All of the resources you need to plan a great March Campaign are available at:
www.gmcc.org/foodshare/marchcampaign