



# How to Hold Your Own WCYR Fundraising Event

## Introduction

You've got a passion to make a difference and help build a strong community...but now what? How do you raise money to help Women's Centre of York Region reach their goal? Fundraising is one way of engaging the public in community development issues. There are many ways to take action to change the world, and making a financial contribution is one of them.

Individuals, groups or corporations wishing to assist Women's Centre of York Region can plan and run an event where money raised supports our organization. Events can be big or small, private or open to the public.

Holding a special event or exciting activity is a great way to have fun, build community spirit, and raise money to promote Women's Centre of York Region's mission of working together to improve the lives of women who have experienced violence or difficult life circumstances.

## Step 1: Identify Your Goals

Be strategic in how you use your time and energy. Determine if you should pursue a one-time fundraiser or if it would be more effective to have an on-going campaign, or a series of mini W-project events.

## Step 2: Develop a Strategy

This is where your creativity comes in. While fundraising ideas are endless, tried and true strategies include:

**Seek donations**, either cash or in-kind, from friends and family, neighbours or other community members. People often respond generously when asked to give to a good cause. There are many different ways you can seek donations:

- Ask family, friends, and fellow students;
- Collect pledges for your activities;
- Have a donations box at your place of work
- Encourage donors to give directly to WCYR and credit you for sending them
- Submit proposals to service clubs (e.g. Rotary) and other local grantmakers

**Raising Money Online for WCYR** – Visit and refer friends and family to <http://www.wcyr.ca/index.php?page=donate&sub=donateform> to donate directly on-line.

**Host Events** such as silent auctions, bike-a-thons, bingo nights, Feast or Famine dinners, movie nights, etc. (See more ideas below)

Organizing fundraising events are a great way to inform people about the WCYR and raise awareness about issues facing our community. In fact, no event should be strictly about money – it should also be about educating and advocating.

If you decide to raise money through events, you must budget carefully to ensure the event is profitable. If you're selling items or services (e.g. garage sale, car wash, auction, etc.), make sure the price is high enough to cover the cost of the goods/services, as well as turn a profit. While this sounds obvious, it can be tricky. Events sometimes have hidden costs that don't get factored into the budget. If you produce the item or service yourself – bake sales are a good example – make sure you account for the cost of ingredients. Even better: get the ingredients donated in kind!

## Examples of Fundraising Events

Below are some examples of fundraising initiatives that might work for you.

### Casual Dress Down Days at the office

- Choose one day/week/month for staff to dress down
- Have staff pay a certain \$ amount to participate

### Bake Sale

- Bake some goodies and sell to family and friends

### Donation in lieu of gifts

- Do you have a birthday coming up? Have friends and family donate to WCYR on your behalf
- Do you have a person on your list who is difficult to buy for? Make a donation on their behalf
- Women's Centre of York Region will provide note cards to indicate that a donation has been made in their honour.

### Change Drive

- Do it often – spare change can really add up over time.
- Arrange to collect change through a donations box
- Pass a donation box around the classroom or office
- Find finding creative ways to collect the change (e.g. sticking it to a wall of double-sided tape, throwing it into a can from a distance, passing an actual hat).

### Bottle Drive

- Collect bottles that you can return for a deposit (check the recycling rules for your municipality to find out which bottles are eligible).
- Ask neighbours, friends and family, student residences, or businesses if you can take their bottles.
- Drive through your neighbourhood on a Saturday or Sunday morning to collect bottles.
- Distribute flyers to homes in advance, so people can put out their bottles for you.

### Worker for the Day: Will Work for Change

- Babysit, mow lawns, clean garages or basements, etc. in return for a donation.
- Operate on a semi-permanent basis or as a one-weekend fundraising project.
- Advertise through public service announcements in local media.

### **Bingo**

- Seek in-kind donations of items or gift certificates from local businesses to offer as prizes.
- Arrange to have a share in a bingo organization's profit in exchange for voluntary work...it's worth a try

### **Raffle, 50/50**

- Have local businesses donate prizes or items for a gift basket.
- Have people write their names and phone numbers on the tickets.
- Sell tickets at a discount when they're purchased in large quantities.
- Ensure volunteers are ready and tickets have been printed in advance of ticket sales.
- Advertise ticket sales to friends and family or co-workers.
- Try holding a 50/50 raffle at a dinner party or among friends and family. Have Participants pay to enter their names in the draw, and the winner receives half the draw's revenue.

### **Yard sale/moving sale**

- Having a yard sale, why not donate all proceeds to WCYR?
- Encourage neighbours to join in on the sale, and make it into a street sale.

### **Pot luck dinner/theme evening**

- Invite your friends over for nice dinner, and have everyone make a donation

### **Music/comedy/talent night**

- Hold an open mic night, or get together some local talent for a night of music and fun
- Charge admission at a certain price point, or by donation only (a suggested amount sometimes helps)

### **Sporting tournament**

- Ultimate Frisbee? Soccer? 3-on-3 Hockey? You name it, choose your sport and make it into a WCYR tournament.

### **Marathon/walkathon**

- Participate in a physical activity event, and have friends and family sponsor you

## **How We Can Help...**

- Provide printed information about Women's Centre of York Region for hand-out or display purposes
- Offer fundraising staff and volunteer support to provide guidance and assistance
- Discuss donor recognition benefits and opportunities
- Issue tax receipts if appropriate
- Help with promotion and marketing through Women's Centre of York Region networks (newsletter, website)
- Loan Women's Centre of York Region donation containers if applicable

## **Unfortunately We Can't...**

- Assume any legal or financial liability associated with the event
- Incur expenses, or provide funding for third party fundraisers

## **Next Steps**

For more information on how you can get started and to view the fundraising guidelines please contact Women's Centre of York Region at 905-853-9270 x107.

## Points to Remember

**Fundraising isn't only about money, it's also about people.** People give to people. If more emphasis is placed on building relationships, the chance for a successful outcome is greater and that means a higher degree of support.

**Don't be scared of rejection.** If you don't ask, you won't get. And don't take rejections personally: people have limited resources, and choosing which cause to support can be challenging. When someone turns you down, thank them for their time and keep them on the list for next year.

**Stay accountable.** Make sure your Local Committee has a bank account, an identified treasurer, and three designated individuals with signing authority. Donors need to know that their money is being spent properly, and they won't contribute to your cause if they see the Local Committee mismanaging or squandering its existing funds.

**Show appreciation to people who donate.** It's much easier to keep an existing donor than to find a new one. When you have received a donation, your chances of receiving a subsequent one are much higher if you show appropriate recognition. Thank your donors in person, by telephone, or in a letter. Let them know how successful your campaign was and how their donation made a difference. Doing so keeps donors engaged and makes them feel happy about giving you support.

**By now, you should be on your way to organizing and effective fundraising campaign for WCYR.**

**Good luck and have fun!**

