

## YOUR IRONTEAM STAFF FUNDRAISING IDEAS



**COACH, Dan Russell:** I've raised almost \$43,000 with letter writing only spread across 10 seasons. The key is to get the letters out early and to send one to every person you know or even just met once or twice. I usually send out 300 letters (\$50 of postage has a tremendous return in donations!) and another 200 emails. I use my church membership list, dentist, eye doctor, family physician, co-workers, vendors (this works great since they usually want your business) even my high school reunion list. I also use my company email list and send an email to everyone I think will know my name. Include the TNT logo and the logo from the Ironman you're doing. You can download these from their websites and paste them into your letter. Use pictures of you from other triathlons showing you on the bike or in your wetsuit. It helps to make a personal connection. Most important of all - include a donor form with a space for credit card information. List various levels of donations starting at \$25 or higher. I listed several levels and had many donors give \$300 to \$500. If you list a smaller amount - that's what you'll receive. Lastly, include a return by date so your donors will have a deadline (of course you'll receive money after that date!). It's great fun to check the mail each day and watch the amounts total way up.

**COACH, Kristin Drees:** Make your letter(s) personal! You can divide your addresses into target groups (work, childhood friend, former dates) and make sure each group gets a letter that speaks to your relationship with them. That's the key word, "relationship." Build a strong bond and you'll create a donor for life!

- spin-a-thon: just you, your bike, your trainer, and a place for passers by do put donations. It's highly recommended to get permission from the land owner first. We had them at mini-/strip-malls with grocery stores and a Starbucks or Jamba Juice on weekend mornings. Signs, music, and an umbrella help. Some folks went for hours (as many hours as was on the schedule for a ride that day). Or, you could pick a local Starbucks or Peet's and ask permission directly from the store.

-Other ideas: group raffle/silent auction events, Speed dating night at a local pub, Find a raffle item for your next letter campaign. Give people one ticket per \$1 donated. So, more dollars donated = a better chance to win.

- This is untested: I bet you could make bucks at Wildflower serving up tasty coffee on Sunday morning or providing a service that takes items from transition back to campsites.

- One of my mentees made a bundle tutoring high school kids.

**TRAINING CAPTAIN, Dana Booth:** After many seasons with Team in Training I have had to get creative with my fundraising tactics. The first few seasons the standard letter writing campaign worked *really* well - pulling in somewhere around \$7,500 per season! The key there was to send letters to everyone one we knew and to start early! Since then we have done parties at local pubs that charged a cover benefiting LLS and included a raffle for great prizes. The parties have been very successful pulling in anywhere from \$1,500 - \$6,000 in single night! You have to spread the word. Also a word of advice, don't rely on your teammates to support your fundraising efforts, get out there and talk to your family, friends, co-workers, and other social networks!

We've also done Super Bowl and other various sports pools (March Madness for example) at the office and with friends. But I think the single most successful strategy has been Corporate Sponsorships/Corporate Matching! Just ask, there is money out there!

**TRAINING CAPTAIN, Mike Booth:** I've too have always started my fundraising with a letter writing campaign. I'm fortunate enough to work at a company that provides a corporate match incentive, so I always try to hammer the people I work with in order get the most bang for each buck. When you send out your letters be sure to remind folks to enquire about corporate matching at their place of work. Some businesses even offer a 2-1 match and those donations can help you build up your donation base in no time. After I've sent out letters to everyone I know I start looking at sending out requests for raffle prize donations. Raffles can be held in all sorts of locations at very little cost to you. The donations come in the form of raffle ticket sales for prizes that you can collect through donations. In the past we've always had the most success incorporating the raffle with some other sort of entertainment whether it be a live band, comedy act, or trivia night at a local pub.

Quick hits:

- Raffle off a free day off at work. Get approval from the head of your department and sell tickets for \$20 a piece. No overhead. Just place names in a hat. How easy is that?
- Superbowl and March Madness pools. A quick \$200 bucks if you tell folks that \$2 for every \$10 square goes to LLS. (1<sup>st</sup> three qtrs pay \$100, final pays \$500). The winner might even kick in some of the grand prize too!
- Bring in homemade cookies or brownies and sell them for \$5. Remember to tell people it's for charity!

**SOCIAL CAPTAIN: Stefanie Frances:** Start early! Tell people you know and even those you don't know what you have committed to for the next 10 months.

Carry your letters with you everywhere. Wear your TNT bracelet and when someone asks what that is for, tell them and then hand them a letter. Get excited about your event, people will get excited with you and donate.. explain the full ironman distance. People are amazed and inspired by what you have set out to accomplish and will gladly support your efforts.

Plan a fundraising event with a couple of Ironteamers and work on it together, the bigger the event the more money you will raise. i.e. wine tasting, car wash, dinner, poker party..

Get creative, if you have a special talent, cooking, baking, sewing, knitting, computer skills, or make jewelry, advertise your services for a donation. Make a sample of your special talent and hold a boutique, Christmas is very close you may want to hold a "boutique" for TNT.

Reminding and keeping your friends and family of your progress is very helpful. Let them know how you are doing and what your fundraising goal is and how much more you need to reach that goal.

**MENTOR, Beverly Tucker:** My main donation sources are letters, emails and donations through my blog. I create a brochure and write a letter which I mail with a fundraising form and a stamped, return address envelope. Last season, I sent far more emails than letters.

What we hear repeatedly about being surprised by donations has held true for me. I received several \$250-500 donations and a final \$1,000 donation the weekend of Ironman. (Frankly, that shocked me.) Most of my larger donations have been from people that I added at the last minute and had only minor expectations of receiving a donation from. I also heard that as friends learned more about what an Ironman really entailed, that donations would increase. This was true

too. Some friends who were rather blasé about my tri team fundraising gave substantial donations after learning more about IronTeam.

I created a training blog (with links to my fundraising page) to keep family & friends updated. I received several donations as a direct result of my blog. I also added Google's AdSense which earns money for you every time someone clicks on an ad on your page. I put my training blog & fundraising website in the signature of my emails. That generated a lot of traffic too. I used Stat Counter to track the effectiveness of my blog & emails. All three (blogspot, stat counter & AdSense) are free.

I raised about \$600 by charging money for the small get-togethers that I normally have for family & friends throughout the year: i.e. St. Patrick's Day. I charged below \$20 for each of these. These were a lot of work, for a minor return. Many friends suggested I should charge more if I ever repeat them. Probably in the \$25-30 range.

**HONOREE CAPTAIN, ANN GARVIN:** Like most people, I'm a big fan of the letter writing strategy for fundraising. I make my fundraising letter very personal and tie it into why I'm doing a specific season, team, or event. I always include information on the endurance challenge I'm taking on, my personal and team Honorees, facts about leukemia, lymphoma, TNT, and LLS. I also include a sponsorship form w/ a personal touch for each fundraising amount, and, lastly, I always include an area where people can write down their own Honoree names that I will add to my list and train in their honor as well. The main trick to a successful fundraising season is to start early. Send a letter to everyone you know, have an address for, or have ever written a check to. Be sure to set up your personal page asap so you're donors can donate online. Many folks need a gentle reminder; they intend to donate but just haven't gotten around to it. This is when the follow-up letter or training update is very effective in bringing in additional funds. In addition to the letter-writing strategy, sometimes you need to think outside the box, especially when you fundraise season after season or a large amount like the IronTeam. I've done some events and challenges to raise funds and would be more than happy to share my ideas, experience, etc. For example: poker night fundraiser w/ prizes & raffles, wine tasting fundraiser w/ auctions & raffles, TNT purple and green hair-dying challenge!