Fundraising is a necessary reality in school. Educators, students, and parents sometimes shy away when they hear the word. As a former marching band parent, I became adept at raising funds for the band year-round. I admit it; the apprehension is real!

As an integral part of service-learning, it is imperative that we overcome the apprehension and put the FUN back in FUNdraising. Service-learning has multiple benefits for students and is a ‘value-added’ teaching method. Incorporating service-learning into the existing curriculum allows teachers to integrate learning objectives for social and emotional learning, 21st Century skills, civic engagement, and employability skills while developing leadership skills and empathy. **Students need to understand that along with being an active participant in service-learning, fundraising is a form of service-learning and is another way to have an impact on a community need.** While we don’t want to encourage the idea that fundraising is the ONLY way to meet the needs in a community, sometimes fundraising may be the BEST way to effectively address a critical need. During recent natural disasters the Red Cross actually discouraged the shipment of material goods to victims and endorsed fundraising as the best way to aid the suffering. Not to mention, FUNdraising is FUN!!

When choosing to fundraise to positively affect a need in the community, follow these guidelines to help students understand the importance of fundraising and how to fundraise in a meaningful way.

- **DO** challenge students to think deeply about the problem or need. Have them research the problem and how the funds will be used to make a difference.
- **DO** lead students to explore issues that contribute to the problem and to reveal issues of social injustice to help students generate various ideas for action.
- **DO** consider how the idea for fundraising could be expanded to include advocacy, direct service or indirect service along with fundraising.
- **DO** focus on the involvement and learning by students rather than on the amount of money that is raised.
- **DO** have students research any organizations that will receive contributions to understand how the funds will be used and how much of the funds raised will go directly to those in need.

**DON’T** contribute to the potential for students to develop the idea that money is the only solution to issues or that only those with money can give.

The [Learning to Give website](https://learningtogive.org) has many lessons [here](https://learningtogive.org) on effective fundraising and how fundraising is a form of service-learning. Before engaging in a fundraising project consider using these LTG lessons and resources.

- [Fundraising](https://learningtogive.org/fundraising) - Suitable for grades 6-12, this four-minute video clip and accompanying questions provide a glimpse of how fundraisers get excited about asking for money.
- For grades 3-5 the LTG lesson, [FUNdraising Goal](https://learningtogive.org/fundraising-goal), sets a fund-raising goal and identifies private sources of funds for a class service project.
- For grades K-2 the LTG lesson, [One Coin at a Time](https://learningtogive.org/one-coin-at-a-time), has students design "Stop Hunger Buckets" for the purpose of collecting coins to donate to a nonprofit organization.
Students in Indiana have a unique opportunity to **FUNdraise for Riley Hospital through their Kids Caring and Sharing** program. The Indiana Association of School Principals and the Indiana Association of Student Councils recognize Kids Caring & Sharing for Riley Hospital as an official fundraising priority.

**Kids Caring & Sharing** offers students simple ways to help other children by fundraising for Riley’s pediatric research. Funds raised help Riley doctors and scientists search to find new treatments and cures for kid through cancer research, diabetes research, and research into many childhood heart, lung and genetic defects.

There are endless ways school groups can raise funds to support Riley’s pediatric research programs, including:

- Spirit weeks
- Penny wars
- Jump-a-thons
- Walks or runs
- Dance marathons

**South Spencer High School** student council members planned and implemented a service-learning fundraiser called **Color Run for Riley Children's Foundation**. They used **Learning to Give lesson Creating a Passion for Philanthropy**. The 3K Run/Walk involved three stations where Student Council members sprayed colored powder on the participants. The Color Run was a fun event to raise awareness and funds for Riley Hospital. The students learned about budget, funding, and philanthropy as well as the requirements for planning a large-scale community event.

“The Riley Dance Marathon program in Indiana is Riley’s fastest-growing fundraising event program, with more than 60 high school and collegiate programs. By "dancing for those who can’t" for hours on end, college and high school students across Indiana raise millions of dollars each year for the children at Riley Hospital. Dance Marathon participants showcase the best attributes of their generation through their energetic dedication to helping kids.”

**Lauren Moore and Emily Garrett**, Student Council sponsors and teachers at **Castle High School** in Newburgh, IN, used lessons from the **Learning to Give unit Philanthropy 101 Course of The Westminster Schools** as the foundation for their **Riley Dance Marathon Activities service-learning project**. Castle High School students hosted a dance marathon, where students selflessly stood for 7 hours, engaged the community, and had fun dancing while raising funds for Riley. Students also operated a concession stand at a local basketball tournament to raise money for Kids Caring and Sharing.

Students can put the **FUN back in FUNdraising** for worthy causes while gaining valuable lifelong skills and empathy. Consider leading a student group in raising funds for a worthy cause. **It makes a difference, and it is FUN!!**

Explore the free resources on **Learning to Give** and **generationOn** to find meaningful ways to serve others and give meaning to content, help students discover their passions, and help them develop empathy through incorporation of service-learning into the existing content.

Visit the **INSPIRE** page on the IASP website [here](#) and on the IMLEA website [here](#) for more resources.