

FUNDS FOR FUN® FUNDRAISING GUIDE

Deciding to build a new playground or add to an existing one is easy. After that decision is made, the next somewhat daunting question is, "Where will the money come from?" At Burke, we understand how time-consuming and demanding it is to raise funds for a playground. We designed the Burke Funds for Fun Play Kit to help you get the most out of your efforts in implementing a successful fundraising program. Thorough and organized planning is the key to achieving your goals.

During a Burke analysis of fundraising, we found that people would rather give a direct monetary donation to an exciting new playground that directs all of the proceeds to the fund, than purchase unwanted things where only a portion of the money raised is put toward your goal. We also found it is much more effective to have a few fundraisers, done well and thoroughly, than to constantly be asking for money. Volunteers get worn out, and so do donors. The Funds for Fun program will eliminate the need to keep asking. Donors will be asked once for a direct cash donation and you will watch your playground fund grow!

After consulting with your Burke Representative, you will be given the complete play kit with easy-to-use templates to create professional communication pieces to run your playground fundraiser. The documents are pre-written and designed for you; all you have to do is customize your project information and print. It's that easy. Running a fundraiser has never been so much fun!

Use the outline below for guidance in making your fundraising not only widely successful - but fun too! Whether you are a seasoned fundraiser, or a novice, the following information will help keep you on track and make the most of your endeavor. Our Funds for Fun Play Kit will enhance your planning and assist you in producing effective, professional and dynamic communication pieces with ease.

PLAN YOUR GOAL:

Before you begin your fundraiser, you need to know how much money you need to raise. Your Burke Representative will be happy to meet with you to conduct a needs assessment to determine your objectives, age requirements, space considerations, site planning, design ideas and more. They will also discuss your budget with you so that you know exactly how much money is needed for your playground.

Once you have determined the amount you need to raise, consider the date you need your funds by. Consider how many volunteers you will need for the fundraising activities and who would be a good candidate to organize and manage the process. Also, assign committees to work on different aspects of the various activities. Remember, many shoulders lighten the load. Break the workload into manageable pieces so no one person feels overwhelmed. Ideas of committee assignments for your project are publicity coordinator and/or financial coordinator. There may be others that you need specific to your project as well.

After you have your budget set, you need to develop the pieces to communicate with and track potential donors. The Funds for Fun Play Kit provides you with three pieces to customize with your specific project information:

- **Donor Letter:** This piece is targeted to businesses, individuals and organizations and details your project goals, who you are, why you are raising money, how much you need and contact information.
- **Brochure:** This piece is a general overview of your project explaining your goals, how much money you need to raise, donor opportunities and information about your organization.
- **Contact Form:** This is a form to keep detailed information on each person or group contacted for donations and how much they have donated.

This is also a good time to generate a list of potential donors to contact and ask to support your playground fundraising project. This list should include parents and other relatives of the kids who will play on the equipment, local businesses and community service organizations. You can also expand your message to include federal, state and city government contacts and individual and corporate foundations. To find more ideas for additional funding sources, search "playground fundraising sources" in your web browser.



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COORDINATE DATES AND DURATION:

During the process of planning your goals, you need to determine the date by which you need to have all your funds available. This need-by date often drives the dates you choose to hold your fundraiser.

It is important to find out if other groups are planning a fundraiser around your intended dates. It is frustrating and often counterproductive for two or more groups in the same circles to be holding fundraisers at the same time. Market saturation and donor fatigue can set in.

Finally, when you set your fundraiser dates, it is best to affirm a start date and finish date. This will give volunteers and donors parameters and keep them motivated for the duration of the fundraiser. Spirits fade when volunteers and donors think the fundraiser will go on indefinitely.

OFFER INCENTIVES:

This is not a mandatory piece to your fundraising project. However, prizes and contests are a great way to build excitement and motivation. If you offer an incentive program, make sure you offer something that will motivate your volunteers. If you offer prizes that no one wants, you will have wasted time and money on prizes, and fail to make an impact.

Also, make sure that incentive prizes don't eat up the funds you raise. The prizes and incentives do not need to be expensive, but they do need to be captivating. For example, pizza parties, stickers, outings to special places, ice cream sundae parties are examples of inexpensive and fun prizes.

You can also approach local merchants to donate prizes for your fundraiser. Promise to give them credit for their donations. This is a good publicity for them, and saves you money otherwise spent on your organization's ultimate goals.

After you have decided on your incentive program, write it up and pass it out during your kickoff event to build enthusiasm for your playground fundraiser.

Here are some ideas for prizes and contests that are designed to motivate your volunteers and donors and to just have more fun:

- **Meeting the Minimum:** Have a prize for everyone who secures a certain amount in donations for the playground.
- **Best in Show:** Have a prize for the person who secures the most donations.
- **First Across the Line:** Have a prize for the first person/people to raise a predetermined amount by a certain deadline. For example, the first person to secure \$100 in donations (or other amount that is appropriate) receives a special prize. This can jump-start your fundraiser, especially if the prize is something very desirable.
- **Top Team:** Offer a prize to the team that raises the most money. If you have a large fundraising drive, with many teams, this is a great way to build enthusiasm. People may be more motivated to reach your goals if they are part of a defined team. If you are in a smaller group, you can create teams of as small as two or three people.

PLAN YOUR KICKOFF EVENT:

Now that you have thoroughly planned out the financial goals, the fundraising dates and your volunteer team, it is time to get people motivated and excited about raising money for your playground. This is your chance to announce the project and provide everyone with the details of your plan. The Funds for Fun Play Kit provides several documents to help you with this event:

- **Invitation:** This document is customizable with your organization's information and should be sent to parents, grandparents, local officials and anyone else you know who might be interested in helping you reach your goal of building an exciting new playground.
- **Event Program:** This piece summarizes your playground project goal and outlines the itinerary for your kickoff event.
- **Pledge Card:** This document details where to send donations to and outlines levels of giving.
- **Thank You Card:** This piece can be used to send hand-written, personalized notes to donors and others who help you with your project.



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The kickoff event should include everyone involved in the playground project. It is also beneficial to have one or more keynote speakers and entertainers to discuss the project and build enthusiasm. For example, for a school playground project, have the principal give a brief overview of the project and detail the need for a new playground. Conduct a playground poetry contest before the event and have the student winner read their piece at the event. Build excitement with a student musical group performing or a skit presentation. Then, have your Burke Representative give a short motivational presentation on the value of play, the importance of safety for children or some other aspect of your project. It's important to keep the program short and to the point.

At the kickoff meeting, show pictures of your playground, as well as a large photo of the playground as it would look on the actual site (your Burke Representative can assist you with this), pass out brochures and pledge cards and even accept donations if people are so moved. After the kickoff event, you should also contact the potential donors on your list who did not attend the kickoff event.

PUBLICITY AND SUPPORT:

To keep your parents and donors informed on the progress of your playground goal be sure to keep the lines of communication flowing. You also want to maximize excitement and momentum by updating supporters of your project regularly. The Funds for Fun Play Kit provides you with two documents to assist in these efforts:

- **Progress Poster:** This attractive piece allows you to customize your goal in dollar amounts and track as you reach each milestone. Hang in high traffic areas to help keep the playground project in the spotlight.
- **Newsletter:** Customize this piece to update your donors and parents with the latest news regarding your project. The newsletter can be prepared to mail or can even be emailed. Once your goal is reached, use the newsletter to tell your good news of reaching the financial goal. You can also use this newsletter format to keep your supporters informed about the progress of the actual building of the playground.

Another way to give visibility to your project in the community is to send press releases or public service announcements to newspapers and local television and radio stations. You must include the vital information of who, what, where, why and how in these media releases:

- **The Who:** The name of your organization, what you do and the name, phone number, and email of the contact person.
- **The What:** What are you raising money for? Describe the project in detail.
- **The Where:** Tell potential supporters where they can find you - promote the kickoff event and if you will be promoting the playground project at other special events.
- **The When:** What are the start and finish dates of your fundraising project? Supporters will want to know this.
- **The Why:** Tell the story of why you need a new playground. People are willing to give to a good cause - especially if it benefits children.
- **The How:** Tell potential donors how they can help. Be sure to give the details regarding who to make the check out to and a complete mailing address.

MONEY COLLECTION:

As money for your playground comes in, you need to have an organized system to keep track of donations and donor information. Accurate record keeping will let you know where you are at with your fundraising goal as well as help you properly thank your supporters.

Depending upon your organization and how finances are handled, it may make most sense to open a dedicated playground account to keep track of your donations separate from other parts of the organization.

The Funds for Fun Play Kit provides you with two documents to assist in these efforts:

- **Donation Form:** This document helps to keep accurate, organized records.
- **Pledge Card:** This document details where to send donations to and outlines levels of giving.



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WRAP-UP:

The Funds for Fun wrap-up is just as important as the kickoff. You will want to be sure to acknowledge the effort, participation and achievements of all volunteers. This is also a good time to hand out incentive prizes, if you decided to have them.

The wrap-up gives everyone involved a needed pat on the back for a job well done - a great incentive to be motivated again when the next fundraiser needs to be done. It also provides closure.

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS:

The Plan is developed. The funds are raised. The playground is built. Now it is time to have fun on your new Burke playground. Congratulations on a job well done. Your children and many to come will thank you for your dedication to providing an innovative, safe and fun playspace.

You now have all of the information and tools you need to make your playground fundraising goals a reality. The Burke Funds for Fun Play Kit is right at your fingertips. So go ahead. Jump into the project and watch the playground fund grow.



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