

HEALTHY FUNDRAISING



Promoting a Healthy School Environment

Candy, baked goods, salty snacks, soda and other foods with little nutritional value are commonly used for fundraising at school. Schools may make easy money selling these foods, but students pay the price. An environment that constantly provides children with unhealthy foods promotes unhealthy habits that can have lifelong impact. As America faces a national epidemic of overweight children, many schools are turning to healthy fundraising alternatives.

Benefits of Healthy Fundraising

- ▶ **Healthy Kids Learn Better:** Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must also provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors.
- ▶ **Provides Consistent Messages:** Fundraising with nonfood items and healthy foods demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them.
- ▶ **Promotes a Healthy School Environment:** Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy fundraising alternatives are an important part of providing a healthy school environment. They promote positive lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning.

Children's Eating Habits are Poor

Currently, 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are overweight and 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese.¹ Between 1980 and 2004, obesity tripled among children and adolescents.² Children ages 2 to 18 consume almost 40 percent of their calories from solid fats and added sugars.³ Their diets do not include enough fruits, vegetables (particularly dark green and orange vegetables and legumes), whole grains or calcium-rich foods, and are too high in sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.⁴

Resources

Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies. Connecticut State Department of Education, Revised 2009. <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=322436>
Healthy School Environment Resource List. Connecticut State Department of Education. http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hse_resource_list.pdf

References

- ¹ Ogden, C.L., Carroll, M.D., Curtin, L.R., Lamb, M.M., & Flegal, K.M. (2010). Prevalence of high body mass index in US children and adolescents, 2007-2008. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 303(3):242-249.
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. (2006). *Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 2003-2004*. Retrieved on October 6, 2011 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/overweight/overweight_child_03.htm.
- ³ Reedy, J., & Krebs-Smith, S.M. (2010). Dietary Sources of Energy, Solid Fats, and Added Sugars among Children and Adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 110(10):1477-1484
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. (2009). The quality of children's diets in 2003-04 as measured by the Healthy Eating Index – 2005. *Nutrition Insight*, 43. Retrieved on October 6, 2011 from <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/NutritionInsights/Insight43.pdf>.

Consequences of Unhealthy Fundraising

- ▶ **Compromises Classroom Learning:** Selling unhealthy foods contradicts nutrition messages taught in the classroom. Schools are designed to teach and model appropriate skills and behaviors. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by other activities that promote unhealthy choices, like selling candy. It's like saying, "You need to eat healthy foods to feel and do your best, but it is more important for us to make money than for you to be healthy and do well." Classroom learning about nutrition remains strictly theoretical if the school environment regularly promotes unhealthy behaviors.
- ▶ **Promotes the Wrong Message:** Selling unhealthy foods promotes the message that schools care more about making money than student health. Schools would never raise money with anything else that increases student health risks, but food fundraisers are often overlooked. As schools promote healthy lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning, school fundraisers must be included.
- ▶ **Contributes to Poor Health:** Foods commonly used as fundraisers (like chocolate, candy, soda and baked goods) provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices. Skyrocketing obesity rates among children are resulting in serious health consequences, such as increased incidence of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.



IDEAS FOR HEALTHY FUNDRAISING ALTERNATIVES*

Schools can help promote a healthy learning environment by using healthy fundraising alternatives.

Items You Can Sell

- Activity theme bags
- Air fresheners
- Bath accessories
- Balloon bouquets
- Batteries
- Books
- Brick/stone/tile memorials
- Buttons, pins
- Candles
- Coffee cups or mugs
- Crafts
- Coupon books (nonfood items)
- Emergency kits for cars
- First aid kits
- Flowers, bulbs, plants
- Foot warmers
- Football seats
- Garden seeds
- Gift baskets (nonfood items)
- Gift certificates (nonfood items)
- Gift items
- Gift wrap, boxes and bags
- Graduation tickets
- Greeting cards
- Hats
- Holiday ornaments
- Holiday wreaths
- House decorations
- Jewelry
- Magazine subscriptions
- Monograms

- Music, CDs, DVDs
- Newspaper space, ads
- Parking spot (preferred location)
- Pet treats/toys/accessories
- Plants
- Phone cards
- Raffle donations (nonfood items)
- Raffle extra graduation tickets
- Raffle front row seats at a special school event
- Rent a special parking space
- Scarves
- School art drawings
- Souvenir cups
- Spirit/seasonal flags
- Stadium pillows
- Stationery
- Student directories
- Stuffed animals
- Valentine flowers
- Yearbook covers
- Yearbook graffiti

Healthy Foods

- Fresh fruit
- Frozen bananas
- Fruit and nut baskets
- Fruit and yogurt parfaits
- Fruit smoothies
- Trail mix

Sell Custom Merchandise

- Bumper stickers and decals
- Calendars
- Cookbook of healthy recipes made by school
- Flying discs with school logo
- License plates or holders with school logo
- Logo air fresheners
- School spirit gear
- T-shirts/sweatshirts

Activities Supporting Academics

- Read-A-Thon
- Science Fair
- Spelling Bee

Things You Can Do

- Auction
- Bike-a-thons
- Bowling night/bowl-a-thon
- Car wash (presell tickets as gifts)
- Carnivals/festivals
- Dances (kids, father/daughter, Sadie Hawkins)
- Family/glamour portraits
- Fun runs
- Gift wrapping
- Golf tournament
- Jump-rope-a-thon
- Magic show

- Raffle (movie passes, theme bags)
- Raffle (teachers do a silly activity)
- Rent-a-teen helper (rake leaves, water gardens, mow lawns, wash dog)
- Recycling cans/bottles/paper
- Singing telegrams
- Skate night/skate-a-thon
- Tag sale, garage sale
- Talent shows
- Tennis/horseshoe competition
- Treasure hunt/scavenger hunt
- Walk-a-thons
- Workshops/classes



*Adapted from: California Project Lean, California Department of Health Services. (2010). *Creative Financing and Fun Fundraising*. Retrieved on October 6, 2011 from http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/HHSA/CommunityPartners/Creative_Fundraising.sflb.ashx.