

Fundraising: Youth Softball

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In today's economic recession, sports programs are being slashed from coast to coast. In order for your program to survive, you will need to take proactive measures to ensure your league's future. Sports are very important in the development of our kids because of the lessons that are conveyed – sportsmanship, teamwork, selflessness and the concept of working in cooperation with others toward a common goal.

The ability to conduct successful youth softball fundraising activity can substantially change the number of people who can participate in your league and the quality of their experience. Here are five factors that can positively affect the outcome of your youth softball fundraising efforts:

- **Collaborative Involvement** – Fundraising for youth leagues and youth sports must involve all participants, namely, players, coaches, parents, league hierarchy and the community. Fundraising should never be a one-horse show, and it is advisable to have an adult presence at all times. For example, if your youth softball fundraising endeavor is a car wash, players should be prepared to participate in representative uniforms, while coaches and parents can talk to the drivers about the purpose of the fundraising event and the necessity for it.
- **Advertise Your Event** – It is a difficult task to run a successful fundraising effort for youth softball if nobody knows about it. Send a fundraising announcement to players' families, and exhort their assistance through volunteerism. Post flyers in neighborhood shops and stores, and contact your local radio stations and newspapers for free community announcements regarding your event.
- **Contact Your Local Representative** – Politics is a way of the world, and you'll need to play the game to have ultimate success in youth softball fundraising. It is advisable to have one of your league board members involved in local community development meetings. Do not hesitate to make a presentation at one of these meetings to explain your need and enlist support.
- **Contact a Grantwriter** - You'd be surprised at how helpful professional grantwriters can be in helping your youth softball fundraising efforts. Grantwriters match donors with worthwhile community efforts, and a good grantwriter could very well put you in contact with a foundation that will help you out with money and equipment.
- **Leverage the Internet** – National politics may have shined a light on the power of the Internet, but you might be surprised how having a team Internet presence can affect your efforts. Showcase your photos, videos, teammates and parents to give your promotion a face and leverage any Internet fundraising tools you have available. In today's economic climate, you may have to look "outside the box" to develop fundraising ideas and funding sources. These five factors can help you create a positive outcome for your youth softball fundraising program.

