

# TIPS ON HOW TO FUND YOUR UNITED PLANET QUEST





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# INTRODUCTION

Are you ready to start fundraising for the trip of a lifetime? In United Planet's Fundraising Guide, you will find fundraising ideas, sample literature, and success stories from past volunteers to help you cover the costs of your Quest.

The most important thing to remember when planning your fundraising efforts is to be creative - use your imagination and resources! With effort and a positive attitude, you can raise the funds to pay for part or all your Quest fee as well as your airfare - and all donations are tax deductible.

Before we share our fundraising tips, here is some important tax-deductibility information to keep in mind:

As a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, United Planet is required by law to only provide tax deduction letters for donations received by United Planet directly. Therefore, if donors would like a tax deduction letter, they will have to send a check to United Planet or pay with a credit card online or via phone. By law we are not allowed to provide tax deduction letters for cash donations. After receiving check or credit card donations, we will be able to apply the amount to your Quest fee and send tax deduction letters to the donors.



# **FUNDRAISING TOOLS**

United Planet has a fantastic fundraising tool for you to use once you enroll in a Quest. We encourage you to use this resource, as it makes the process of donating to your Quest simple and painless!

GoFundMe is an online fundraising tool that allows you to raise money for your Quest through your own personalized webpage. This page can feature photos and information about your Quest to encourage family, friends, and colleagues to donate. You can also generate support by sending out personalized emails through the website and by linking your GoFundMe page to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. It only takes a few minutes to create a page and is well worth the effort.

Donations made through GoFundMe go directly toward the cost of your Quest, and your donors will be able to deduct their donations from their taxes. With your GoFundMe page, you may fundraise up to the cost of your Quest and air flight, provided we receive a detailed receipt of purchase. Please note that your entire program fee will be due four weeks before departure (Short-Term Quests) or by the program fee deadline on our website (Long-Term Quests), but you will be able to continue fundraising for your international airfare until your departure date.

Please close your account the day you leave for your Quest. At this date, the Accounting Department will reimburse you up to the amount of your purchased airfare as stated in the receipt. Any money raised through GoFundMe after this date and/or exceeding the purchased airfare will be considered a donation to United Planet.

Go to https://www.gofundme.com/charity/united-planet and follow these steps:

- 1. Click "Fundraise for this charity" then click "sign up".
- 2. You may use an existing GoFundMe account, or create a new one.
- 3. Sign up as an individual, not as a charity!
- 4. If this is a new account, choose "Volunteer" in the options under "What best describes why you're fundraising?"
- 5. In the section "Who are you fundraising for?", select "Charity".
- 6. Enter United Planet's EIN number 04-3582778 and select "United Planet" in the options that come up.
- 7. Add a fundraising USD\$ goal- the amount should equate to your program fee (+airfare).
- 8. Add a photo of yourself as the best option presented next. Another option, other than a photo, is to use a YouTube link. The best YouTube video would be one that you create yourself describing where you want to volunteer and why. Another (less preferable) option is to use this video - https://youtu.be/3bjB5CmomyM.
- 9. Give your fundraiser a compelling title and tell your own story.
- 10. You can coordinate with a Quest Project Coordinator, or email quest@unitedplanet.org to review your campaign before taking the next steps after "Complete fundraiser."
- 11. Click "Complete fundraiser".

Please do not create a GoFundMe fundraising campaign until you coordinate with your United Planet **Quest Project Coordinator!** 



# **PROMOTING YOUR QUEST**

To really get the ball rolling with donations, you will want to promote your Quest to as many people as possible. The more people who know about your fundraising efforts, the better your chances of receiving donations. Two great ways to get the word out are to create a letter or email campaign, and to send out a press release.

#### **Letter and Email Campaigns**

The most efficient and effective way to reach many potential donors is through a letter or email campaign. In your letter, be sure to include a description of what you will be doing on your Quest and when you will be traveling, why you are participating in your Quest, and clear instructions for how to donate. Try to add a personal touch - people will be more likely to contribute if they feel a connection with you or your cause.

You can find a sample fundraising letter in the appendix section. Here are some additional tips to make your campaign successful:

- Provide stamped return envelopes with each letter. Even better, provide the link to your GoFundMe webpage in your letter to make donating even easier. (Refer to page 3 for more information on creating a personal GoFundMe page.)
- Send the letter to anyone you can think of. You never know who will support you!
- Contact local businesses in addition to family and friends. Many businesses look for opportunities for tax deductions and would love to support a great cause.
- Contact community organizations and local service clubs, such as Rotary International or Kiwanis International. Offer to do a presentation about your experience upon your return at one of the organization's meetings.
- Note that your sponsor's donation is tax-deductible. To receive a tax-deduction letter, the sponsor must write the check to United Planet - not to you! You must provide anemail or mailing address for the sponsor.
- · Create an email distribution list to send out updates about the details of your Quest and your progress toward your fundraising goal before and after you return – people like to see how their money is being used for good.



Follow up with thank you cards 24 hours after you receive a donation.

Tip: You may wish to create separate letters to send to personal contacts and professional organizations. You can adjust the tone of each letter to best fit your relationship with your potential donors.

#### **Press Releases for Local Media to Tell Your Story**

Let your entire community know about the life-changing adventure you are about to embark on. Contact your local weekly and daily newspapers to help spread the word about your Quest, direct people to your fundraising page, and encourage donors to contribute.

By contacting your local media, you may be given the opportunity to share your story with hundreds of readers. This will not only bring in financial support but will also draw much needed public attention to the international community you will be working with during your Quest.

You can find a sample press release in the appendix section. In addition to this press release, you can also ask your newspaperto do a story about your upcoming Quest.



# PLANNING A FUNDRAISING EVENT

The best advice when planning a fundraising event is think outside the box. Consider your strengths, people you know who might help, and what sort of entertainment your guests would enjoy. For example, if you are a dancer, play a sport, or play an instrument, then you could offer a clinic to teach that skill. If you are part of a tight-knit community, you could host a picnic with games, food, and fun. The ideas are endless—use your resources!

Note: Events are a great way for groups to fundraise. If you are going on a Group Quest, you can plan an event as a team effort. Decide on a great idea and divvy out the responsibilities.

We've put together some general steps you can take to get the ball rolling on your event.

- Decide what your event is going to be. Be creative! You can arrange anything from a silent auction, dance, or dinner, to hosting a family night or picnic, to creating a crazy float in your town's local parade.
- Figure out who you want to invite. Create a list of people who might be interested in attending your event. Figure out if you are targeting parents, friends, families, coworkers, or people in your local community. Email is especially useful for contacting many people at the same time.
- Seek out people who have experience with the type of fundraiser you are planning. Don't be afraid to ask questions - they may have constructive tips to share with you.
- Find a place to hold the event. Possible venues for large events include schools, churches, parks, or function halls. The best way to pick a location is to find out where similar events have been held in the past. You can use your contact list to ask people for ideas - you may even get lucky and get the space donated!
- Tour the facilities. This way you can determine if there is adequate space and find out what supplies are available to use. Also, consider making a map of the event ahead of time to avoid any "flow" problems.
- Determine a date and time. This will most likely depend on the availability of your venue, especially if the space is donated. If you have some flexibility, make sure to pick a time that is most convenient and relevant to your event and guests.
- Decide what types of payment you will accept. Cash and checks are the easiest types of payment to deal with. If you are using GoFundMe, bring a computer so people can donate through your page with a credit card.



- Get the word out. In addition to inviting people on your contact list, find out if a local newspaper or radio station would be willing to run an ad. Make flyers with information about the event and your Quest and post them around the area. Ask people on your contact list to spread the word via email, social media, and word of mouth. Make sure to promote your event on your own social media accounts! Create a Facebook event and tweet about the fundraiser throughout the process, describing how it is progressing.
- Get cash to make change and a lock box to store donations. Also, consider putting a large bucket at your entrance table along with some United Planet literature. This gives people an opportunity to donate more and learnabout your volunteer Quest. It works surprisingly well.
- Create a checklist of everything you need to do before the event. To help keep everyone organized, imagine the event a couple of days beforehand and write yourself a list of what still needs to be done and who is responsible. Keep a list of what materials you need and whether you already have them. This will help keep everything and everyone in check and minimize the possibility that you forget something crucial.
- Allow enough time to set up for the event. This may seem obvious but allocate some extra time to set up. Things might not go exactly according to plan, and you don't want to be scrambling at the last minute.
- Start the event and enjoy your hard work! Try and make it as fun as possible and remember to follow up with attendees by sending thank you notes or at least an email to all those who came and supported you and your Quest.



# **GATHERING PLEDGES**

Pledge to do something challenging and good for yourself and others in your community, whether it is running, walking, biking, cleaning, dancing, or anything else you can think of. For example, pledge x number of hours to clean up your local park or neighborhood.

Ask friends, family, and coworkers to support your efforts, letting them know that their donations will be going to supporting you as a United Planet volunteer who will be doing more positive work for a community abroad. You can find the generic pledge form in the appendix section.



# **USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **Facebook**

Facebook is a great social media tool to use to fundraise for your Quest because it allows you to connect with many people quickly and easily. To kick-off your fundraising activity, create an informative Fundraising Page that describes what you are fundraising for. You can create a Facebook Page here: www.facebook.com/fundraisers

Here are 4 tips for getting the most out of your fundraising through Facebook:

- Choose a short, catchy title that is clear and concise. You may also want to add pictures to support your statements. The more informative and eye-catching your Fundraising Page, the more you will capture the interest of people to help you.
- Create fun, eye-catching statuses linking to your Fundraising Page to make sure it shows up in users' newsfeeds. Do this throughout your fundraising efforts so that people are reminded to donate. However, don't overshare your Page - you do not wantpeople to become overwhelmed or annoyed. Also, ask your friends to write a status or share the link on their profile page so that their friends also see your page. Getting the word out is critically important to successful fundraising.
- Do not forget to thank those that contribute to your Quest. Create a Facebook status thanking your sponsors for their help. You can also post a cool picture from your Quest on their Facebook page when thanking them for helping you get there. People want to know how the money they donate has been used - so be sure to follow up with pictures, thank you notes, emails, and blog posts.
- Make sure people have a way to donate from your page! You can either ask them to send a check to you or United Planet or link your Facebook Fundraising Page to your GoFundMe page (details on GoFundMe, page 3) asking them to donate there.

Remember to have fun and get creative! Facebook enables you to tell a story and reach a lot of people while doing so.

#### **Twitter**

Not only is Twitter a great resource in telling people about your exciting United Planet Quest, it can also be used as an effective fundraising tool. However, you will need to put some thought into it.



Here are 4 tips for effectively using Twitter in your fundraising efforts:

- Create a community. It is important to build interest before asking for anything. Tell people why you are volunteering, what you will be doing, and how you will be helping others. When you do ask for people to donate, make sure to state your purpose and request clearly. Be as clear and concise as possible so that people understand why they should care about your cause.
- Create buzz and excitement. Tell people about your progress and ask for donations by using catchy taglines or hash tags.
- Recognize volunteers and donors. Recognizing individuals for their contributions goes a long way, whether they donated money or helped to spread the word about your Quest. Give them a shout-out in your next tweet or send them an email thanking them for their contribution, no matter how big or small.
- Keep contributors up to date on progress. Provide status tweets on how your fundraising efforts are going, and don't forget to keep people posted during and after your trip. People like to see what their money went toward. Post pictures during and after your Quest, tell people what you were inspired by most, or how you felt you madea difference in the community. People love to hear happy and heart-warming stories!

# **Personal Blog to Tell Your Volunteer Story**

Keep your blog updated on your travels and share your story with donors, family and friends!

Setting up a personal blog is also a great way to get the word out about your Quest. Send the URL to your friends and family and ask them to follow you. Post about your fundraising efforts before you go and use it as a way to keep people updated on your Quest once you get there. Be sure to link to your GoFundMe or Facebook page from your blog. Let your Project Coordinator know about your blog as well – we love to hear about how you are doing!

Wordpress, Wix, Tumblr, and Blogger are a few services that allow you to set up a free blog.



# OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Applying for scholarships and grants is a great way to get a substantial part of your Quest paid for. Research other scholarship and grant opportunities in your local community.

#### **University Funds and Scholarships**

Your university or college may be the best place to start looking for scholarships to help you realize your dream of volunteering abroad. Get in touch with the Financial Aid and International Office on your campus and tell them about your plans - they may offer stipends, grants, or scholarships to help you cover your Quest fee. United Planet is happy to provide you with any materials or information your school requires to qualify for available scholarships orgrants.

#### **Matching Gifts**

Employers often offer a matching gift program, which can be a great resource for employees wishing to dedicate their vacation to volunteer work. Inquire at work to see if your company provides this service.



# **SUCCESS STORIES**

#### TRACI: Fundraising and Fun with Cupcakes

Traci and a friend wanted to do some fundraising for their two-week United Planet Quest to Romania. We asked these girls to give us some insight as to how they successfully raised money for their trip.

#### What type of fundraising event or campaign did you do to raise money before you left for your trip?

Traci: We set up our fundraising page through FirstGiving, which was a huge success once I posted the link on my Facebook page. We had a cupcake drive where we made cupcakes and sold them. I got our local bank involved which led to lots of donations on our fundraising page as well as gifts for the children at the orphanage. We were also featured in an article in our local paper which got lots of support.

#### How far in advance did you start fundraising before you left for your trip?

Traci: A few months in advance.

#### How did you come up with the idea for your fundraiser?

Traci: We tried to get as many people and businesses as aware as possible and tried to do something simple - cupcakes are easy and a huge hit with most people. If you decorate them well and they taste good, people love them and are happy to donate.

#### Who did you speak with to get the ball rolling on your event? If you created an event, who did you get approvals from/did you have to get a space?

Traci: We asked a local business with a large shopfront if we could set up our cupcake standthere - we got the customers going into the shop as well as drawing people in with our colorfulsigns.

#### Did you have to invest any of your own money into your fundraising project? If so, how much?



Traci: We had to put in the initial costs for making the cupcakes and signs, but it was a small portion of what we made in profits.

#### Was your fundraising successful? How much were you able to fundraise?

Traci: Our fundraising was successful for us, as we did not have any set amount we wanted to fundraise, and we managed to raise over \$1,000!

#### Do you have any other words of wisdom that might help our future volunteers about fundraising?

Traci: Get as many people involved and aware as possible! When they hear you are doing something for a great cause the support is endless!

Traci and Meg's local newspaper published this story about their Quest to Romania.





#### KERI: Don't be Afraid to Ask: A Group Effort

Keri was part of a group of sixteen nursing students and two instructors that spent ten days volunteering at a clinic in Quito, Ecuador. Here is her story about how her group significantly lowered the cost of their Quest.

#### What type of fundraising event or campaign did you do to raise money before you left for your trip?

Keri: We wrote a grant proposal for a grant from a foundation of our university, Colorado Mesa University. We received a large grant from this foundation, which also allowed us to accept credit card payments for our fundraisers and process them through our university.

We also held a silent auction and dance event. Each person in our group was asked to get three items for the auction. We asked businesses for donations, making sure to tell them it would be tax-deductible, and we ended up having over 200 items to donate! We also got a band to donate their time and restaurants to donate food, so we eliminated costs there. We gave the restaurants free advertising with signs saying that they had donated food. Tickets were sold for \$10/person or \$35/family (2 adults and 2 children). 250 people attended in total, and many people made donations above the ticket price when they bought tickets at the door.

Finally, we asked people for donations. We took eighteen boxes of medical supplies and asked people to sponsor a box or donate the cost of the supplies and shipping. We found it was much more successful to ask people in person rather than through a letter.

#### How far in advance did you start fundraising before you left for your trip?

Keri: Our Quest was in July, and we started fundraising in April. Our silent auction event was in mid-May. If we were to do it again, I would start the fundraising process much earlier.

Who did you speak with to get the ball rolling on your event? If you created an event, who did you get approvals from/did you have to get a space?

Keri: We went to the head of the nursing department to ask her about possible scholarships or grants, and she told us about the foundation that we received a grant from. We had to reserve a space in a city park for our event. To promote our event, we used the resources at our university – television, radio, and internet, as well as making announcements in classes.

Did you have to invest any of your own money into your fundraising project? If so, how much?



Keri: We paid \$200 for the space in the park, which included tables and chairs. We bought tablecloths, some decorations, and posters, but the total cost was under \$500.

#### Was your fundraising successful? How much were you able to fundraise?

Keri: Our fundraising efforts were very successful. We raised almost \$9000 from the silent auction event. The total fee for our Quest started at about \$3500 per person, and after our fundraising, we each paid less than \$1000.

#### Do you have any other words of wisdom that might help our future volunteers about fundraising?

Keri: Be positive and stay with it! People want to help students, especially when they are working for a good cause. Don't be afraid about approaching people to ask for donations you're going to get some no's, but you're also going to get a lot of yes's, and that's what counts.

Part of Keri's group at their "hoedown" silent auction and dance event.





#### LIZ: Dogs, Baking, and Fundraising

Liz is excited for her upcoming United Planet Quest to Romania for a week to volunteer at an orphanage, but before she leaves, she wants to raise money to help pay for some of the costs. Here is her story about how she took her love for dogs and baking and got creative with it.

#### What type of fundraising event or campaign did you do to raise money before you left for your trip?

Liz: I did not just want to ask for money but instead wanted give something back in return for their contribution. That is why I came up with the idea of making homemade dog goodies and gift baskets which were an especially big hit during the holidays! I created a Facebook page called "Paws ForaCause" (if you type in the search bar of your Facebook page "pjpaws4acause@aol.com" it will show up).

I also created a FirstGiving page where people could donate and linked it to my Facebook page. I basically created a menu of items I could create along with the prices, as well as stating I could do customized pieces. I posted this on my Facebook and spread the word by telling coworkers, family, and friends. It has been a big hit so far and has kept me busy!

#### How far in advance did you start fundraising before you left for your trip?

Liz: I started fundraising as soon as I enrolled and will continue up until I leave for my trip. So, I guess that makes it about 6 months of fundraising for this trip.

#### Who did you speak with to get the ball rolling on your event? If you created an event, who did you get approvals from/did you have to get a space?

Liz: I basically got the ball rolling on my own, or maybe you could say my dogs helped me! I knew I wanted to do something fun and that was interesting, so one day when I came home late from work and my lovely dogs came to the door to greet me, it hit me—I love baking yummy dog treats for my pups; I should do so for others and sell them! From there I got the ball rolling by putting the word out. I told friends, family, coworkers, and others in my community. I put some demo treats out at work and shortly after I had people asking me if theycould buy these treats for their dogs.

#### Did you have to invest any of your own money into your fundraising project? If so, how much?



Liz: I do have to invest some money to make the treats and gift baskets but in return I make a lot of profit. Depending on the basket it can sell from anywhere between \$20 and \$70. I have done out the math, so I know that I am making a great return on each basket, treat or bag I sell.

#### Was your fundraising successful? How much were you able to fundraise?

Liz: Yes! I have fundraised for a good portion of my trip already and am still going strong! I have raised over \$1,300 already for my Romania trip and still have a few months left. I will also continue fundraising after my trip because I plan on volunteering in Nepal as well.

#### Do you have any other words of wisdom that might help our future volunteers about fundraising?

Liz: The best advice I can give is that anything is possible regardless of time and money. If you get creative and develop a plan you can do it! If any United Planet volunteer ever needs ideas or wants to talk about a fundraising idea, then please feel free to have them contact me, Iwould love to help, I love getting creative!

Liz with her dogs, Petey and Jax.





#### **ANDREW: Using Campus Resources Pays Off**

Andrew was part of a group of 8 student from Claremont McKenna College that volunteered in Guatemala for 9 days. Read below to see how they used resources on their college campus to help pay for their Quest:

#### What type of fundraising event or campaign did you do to raise money before you left for your trip?

Andrew: We applied for multiple grants through our college. We wrote a proposal for a grant from a leadership institute on our campus and received \$2600. We also submitted the proposal to the dean of student's office, receiving \$500 each, and a human rights institute at Claremont McKenna. In addition, we contacted our student government to see if we could raise any money through them. They paid us for cleaning up after campus events and we earned between \$500-600 by helping for just a couple of nights. Finally, we tried canvassing door- todoor to ask for donations, but this was not as successful as the other efforts.

#### How far in advance did you start fundraising before you left for your trip?

Andrew: We left in May, and we started planning our fundraising efforts in January. We submitted the grant proposals in mid-February.

#### How did you come up with the idea for your fundraiser?

Andrew: We decided to try to see what was available for us through our university in terms of fundraising.

#### Who did you speak with to get the ball rolling on your efforts?

Andrew: We contacted the Assistant Dean in the dean of student's office and the Assistant Director for Research at the leadership institute.

#### Did you have to invest any of your own money into your fundraising project? If so, how much?

Andrew: No money, just time and effort!

Was your fundraising successful? How much were you able to fundraise?



Andrew: Our fundraising was definitely successful. We even received some more funding when we returned from our trip by making presentations on the impact we made in Guatemalato a few groups on campus. Through our fundraising efforts, the total cost of our Quest, including the airfare, was more than cut in half.

#### Do you have any other words of wisdom that might help our future volunteers about fundraising?

Andrew: If you are a student group, try to find an applicable department on campus to ask for funding, as that can be a tremendous help. Overall, just try to use your resources!



# **Appendix**

(Includes: sample letter, press release, and pledge form)



#### **Fundraising Pledge Letter Sample**

**DATE** 

Dear XXX,

I am excited to share the news with you that in JANUARY I will be volunteering in COUNTRY for XXX weeks. Briefly describe your project, the population being served, and what you will be doing. See the project information sent you to by your coordinator for guidance. This is an opportunity for me to form genuine cross-cultural relationships while making a direct impact on the world.

The non-profit organization I am volunteering with, United Planet, fosters cross-cultural understanding and addresses shared challenges to unite the world in a community beyond borders. I hope you can help me in my endeavors to make this mission a reality and would greatly appreciate any donation you can make toward my international volunteer experience. As United Planet is a non-profit organization, all donations made by US residents are tax-deductible.

You can donate by sending a check to United Planet or by donating online. I appreciate any contribution you can make by XXX (30 days prior to departure date).

I pledge to share my experiences at the PROJECT NAME in COUNTRY with you when I return! Link to blog if you have one. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or United Planet at 1-617-874-8041.

Sincerely,

XXX



# **Fundraising Pledge Form Sample**

Yes, I would like to invest in VOLUNTEER NAME's volunteer Quest!
I will sponsor in the amount of:
\$25\$50\$100\$250\$500 Other Amount
Please attach a check made payable to United Planet with <b>VOLUNTEERS NAME</b> as the note on the check:
United Planet c/o Accounting 361 Newbury St, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02115
If you would like a tax-deduction receipt for your donations, please provide your email or home address and United Planet will send an official receipt.
Sponsor's Name
Sponsor's Address
Sponsor's Email Address (if this is your preferred method for receiving a tax-deduction receipt)



### **Press Release Sample**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [Day, Month, Year] [Title Highlighting Your Upcoming Program] example: [Chris will be volunteering for 3 weeks at an Orphanage in Romania]

[FIRST NAME] is volunteering with United Planet, a nonprofit organization that fosters cross-cultural understanding and addresses shared challenges in over 40 countries to unite the world in a community beyond borders. In JANUARY, [FIRST NAME] will be volunteering in COUNTRY for XXX weeks. Briefly describe your project, the population being served, and what you will be doing. See the project information sent you to by your coordinator for guidance.

For more information on how you can help sponsor [FIRST NAME]'s volunteer abroad experience, you can email [FIRST NAME] at [EMAIL ADDRESS]. You can donate by sending a check to United Planet with [FIRST NAME/LAST NAME] as the note on the check or donate online.

"Individually, we are one drop, Together, we are an ocean," – Ryunosuke Satoro

For more information, contact: [FIRST NAME/LAST NAME] [EMAIL ADDRESS] [PHONE NUMBER]

For more information about United Planet please contact us at: 1-617-874-8041 Or email us at quest@unitedplanet.org