

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Organizing a fundraising event as a Stem Cell City Citizen is one way to support The McEwen Centre for regenerative medicine and raise awareness and funding for Stem Cell biology research. To get you started on your way, we have compiled a list of fundraising ideas that have proven to be successful for businesses and individuals just like you. The list is for reference only and is certainly not comprehensive, but it can be a starting place for your own creative efforts – fundraising ideas are endless! Please note the list may serve as a guide in your planning, however, The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine does not specifically recommend or take any responsibility, financial, legal, or otherwise, for your fundraising efforts.

*Five Steps to executing the perfect event*

## **1. SET YOUR GOAL:**

Make the commitment and set a goal. Be aware that fundraising is fun, but it can also be considerable work. You may want to start small and expand on a successful event. Reach for the stars, but be prepared to make the time commitment to hit your target.

## **BRAINSTORM FOR IDEAS:**

What type of event will work best in your community or school? What time of day or year is most advantageous for your fundraiser? Who will be targeted to attend or participate (sponsors, ticket buyers, donors, etc.)?

## **DEVELOP A PLAN:**

Start a calendar and break down your fundraising goal into smaller goals. Schedule due dates for yourself and do your best not to procrastinate. Remember, successful fundraising is intentional, planned and intelligently executed.

## **SPREAD YOUR ENTHUSIASM:**

Share with your donors why funding research for The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine is important to you. They will be moved to help by your commitment. If you are finding it difficult to ask for donations, remember, you are not asking for a contribution for yourself, you are asking on behalf of the McEwen Centre.

## **FOLLOW UP:**

Follow through is the key to fulfilling your goal. Sometimes requests can get lost in the shuffle. Do not be afraid to send a gentle reminder to your supporters letting them know that there is still an opportunity to give. Follow up with individuals who have pledged to help and always remember to thank your donors.

## **FOR THE STUDENT** *Fundraising Ideas for Students, Faculty and Grads*

### **Alumni Organizations**

Ask your alma mater to place an ad in the alumni newsletter asking for donations to benefit Stem Cell City.

### **Dance-a-thon**

Plan a dance marathon in your gymnasium.

### **Read-a-thon**

As an individual, class or school, collect pledges per book read.

### **Talent Show**

Organize a talent show on campus and charge guests who attend. Let them know that ticket sales will benefit Stem Cell Research

### **Tired of that Uniform?**

Approach your principal with a “Blue Jeans Friday” or “Dress-Down Day”. Allow students to purchase casual dress allowances with proceeds benefiting The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine

## **FOR THE SALESMAN** *Auction, Goods and Services for Fundraising Dollars*

### **Car Wash**

Offer to wash your friends’ and family members’ cars and donate the fee to The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine. Host a larger car wash in your company lot or see if a local organization will let you use their property.

### **Bake Sale**

Selling cookies, muffins and cakes is a great way to raise funds.

### **Dog Wash**

Suds up the pups for Parkinson’s research.

### **Garage Sale**

It’s never too early to start spring-cleaning. Host a neighbourhood garage sale and pool the proceeds to help accelerate the McEwen centres biggest types or research. Collect goods from your basement, attic and garage. Ask your friends to search their homes for unwanted items, too. Place an ad in your local paper and post flyers at community college campuses, churches, supermarkets, etc.

### **House Sit**

If a friend or family member is going out of town, offer to look after their place while they are on their trip.

### **Pet Sit**

Kennels can be expensive. Offer to look after someone’s pet while they are gone and have your fee support the Foundation.

### **Silent and Live Auctions**

Hold an auction for donated items such as trips (put those frequent flyer miles to good use), tickets, etc. Offer a few “mystery” prizes such as a piece of jewelry wrapped in a brown paper bag.

### **Used Book/CD Sale**

Ask your friends and family member to donate their old books and CDs and set up a sale in your home or yard.

### **What are your special skills?**

Are you great with kids? Do you have a green thumb? Are you a Mr. or Ms. Fix-it? In return for a donation, offer to do neighbourhood chores such as gardening, or teach swimming lessons, or tutor computer skills, or baby sit, or ...

## **FOR THE ATHLETE** *Sports Fundraisers for Athletes and Everyone*

**Competitive Racing**

Dedicate your efforts in a 5k, adventure race, triathlon or marathon to The McEwen Centre and ask your friends and family for support.

**Cycling/Bike-a-thon**

Organize or participate in a bike ride for The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine. Contact your local bike shops for sponsorship. Too cold to ride? Some gyms hold Spinning Marathons in their facilities.

**Exercise Classes**

Ask your Pilates, yoga or kickboxing instructor to make an announcement during class about your fundraising efforts and how to help.

**Climb a Mountain**

Accept the physical challenge of mountain climbing while committing yourself to the personal challenge of fundraising. Seek sponsors to help you reach the top.

**Baseball Games**

Coordinate with a local sports team to purchase a large group of seats at a discounted or donated rate. Sell the tickets, charging more to family and friends. Contact the stadium to have your name and The McEwen Centre in lights!

**Tournaments**

Put together a soccer, basketball, football, baseball or softball tournament in your area. Contact local club teams for support. Incorporate a free throw shoot out or field goal contest to liven the event.

**Walk-a-thon**

Organize or participate in a walk-a-thon for The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine. Contact your local sporting goods/shoe stores for sponsorship. Weather a problem? Try an indoor track at your local university or high school campus. You can also ask your gym to open their facilities and allow participants to use treadmills. Each walker can collect pledges per mile walked.

**FOR THE BUSINESSMAN** *Getting Money from Places Where You Spend Money*

**Cover Charge**

Are you a regular at a local bar or club? Is there a cover charge? Arrange for a portion or all of cover charges to be donated for one evening to The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

**Local Businesses**

Ask businesses to make a pledge in return for your faithful patronage. If a monetary gift is not possible, ask for a raffle prize such as a dinner entrée for two, an oil change, a pound of coffee, a dozen bagels, 10% off haircut, etc.

**Retail Therapy**

Coordinate with your favourite store to have a percentage of profits from store sales, proceeds from a particular item or promotion's sales or a one-day sale's proceeds benefit Stem Cell research at the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

**Travel Agencies**

Contact your travel agent and ask them to donate a travel voucher. Auction the vacation prize.

**Work it Out**

Ask your gym to place a "Change for Change" jar at the front desk.

**FOR THE OFFICE** *Employer/Corporate Fundraising Ideas*

**Annual Events**

Turn your company picnic or holiday party into a fundraising opportunity.

**Box Seats**

Ask a company to donate their box seats to an entertainment or major sporting event in your community. Hold a drawing for the tickets.

**Casual Dress Day**

Approach your Human Resources department with a “Blue Jeans Friday” or “Dress Down Day.” Allow employees to purchase casual dress allowances with proceeds benefiting The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

**Change for Change**

Place a jar or can in a strategic position in the office and explain that all contributions will go toward The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine. It always helps to start with some seed money of your own, to show others your commitment.

**Matching Gifts**

Find out if your company has a matching gift program. Ask your fellow co-workers for pledges and approach your employer to match their support dollar for dollar. Matching gifts is a great way to double your donations, and at no extra cost to your donors!

**Office Fundraising Event**

Invite everyone to a fundraising party at work. Provide a pizza lunch and share your commitment to Parkinson’s research. Challenge your co-workers to raise the highest amount. Offer the “winner” a prize such as movie tickets or a restaurant gift certificate.

**Parking**

Auction prime spots in the office parking lot for one-week blocks.

**Payday**

Employees may elect to have a certain amount deducted from their salary to donate to The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

**Snack Break**

Buy bulk candy and sell it at work. You’ll be amazed how much a person might pay for an afternoon treat at 3p.m.!

**Vacation Days**

Ask your supervisor or Human Resources department if you can substitute one of your vacation days for a day’s pay. Encourage your co-workers to do the same.

**FOR THE HOST/HOSTESS** *Special Event Ideas*

**Barbeque**

Hold a cook out in a park or private garden and sell tickets.

**Chili Cook Off**

Contestants enter to win a prize. Supply your own judges and have guests pay for the tasting.

**Concerts**

Whether you prefer the symphony or old time rock and roll, concerts can be one of the most fun and successful ways to fundraise. Showcase one performer or a few and sell tickets to attend.

**Poker Tournament**

Invite the boys or girls over for poker night.

**Garden Tour**

Organize a garden tour of one or several homes in your community. Provide light refreshments and advertise through your neighbourhood historical society or local nursery.

**Movie Night**

Pop the popcorn and bust open the Junior Mints. Movie nights with friends are a fun and easy way to raise money. Find access to a screening room or local drive-in and you can invite even more guests. *Back to the Future* anyone?

**Scavenger Hunt/Road Rally**

Participants pay a fee to enter as an individual or team. Clues are given at each checkpoint pointing to the next checkpoint. Clues can be placed in different orders to avoid teams following/copying one another. Penalties for speeding, splitting up or cheating add to time total.

**Super Bowl Party**

Host a Super Bowl get together and raise money at the same time. Everyone scores!

**Theme Party**

Host a theme party (80's, Beach, etc.) and charge per person to attend.

**Weddings**

In lieu of wedding gifts, ask your guests to make a donation to The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine on your behalf for your special day. Have them honour your commitment on your anniversary too.

**Season/Series Finales**

TV shows provide memorable finales and great fundraising opportunities. Charge your guests at the door and turn on the tube.

**Wine and Cheese Parties**

Ask a local restaurant to donate a portion of a wine tasting if you bring participants or recruit local suppliers to donate wine and cheese and serve in your own home to ticket buyers. You can also invite ticket holders to bring along a bottle of their own favourite wine to share their good taste.

**FOR ANYONE** *Miscellaneous Fundraising Ideas*

**Amateur Night**

Can you or someone you know play a musical instrument or sing? Ask the owner of a neighbourhood bar or coffee shop to let you bring in guests one evening for entertainment and refreshments. Charge at the door and let patrons know it's a fundraising event for the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

**Environmentally Friendly**

Collect recyclables and ask your neighbours to do the same.

**Letter Writing/Email Campaign**

Write a letter/email sharing your commitment to find advancing stem cell research and being a stem cell city citizen. Browse through your contacts and holiday card list to reach out to people you interact with everyday, people from your past and those with whom you do business. You never know who has been helped or involved with stem cell research or who is looking for an opportunity to give. The more personal your letter is, the more compelling you will be. Mention your fundraising goal and provide information about the Stem Cell research that is happening at the McEwen Centre

**Birthday**

Ask your friends and family member to write a check to The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine in lieu of birthday gifts this year. Try it again this holiday season.

**Online Auction**

Utilize a blog or flickr account and post a bunch of items that people can bid on through the comment section. Explain that all proceeds are going to McEwen Centre and have a big event to hand off the gifts and announce the total money raised

# FUNDRAISING 101

Thank you for making the commitment to raise funds and awareness for The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

By contributing to the efforts of The McEwen Centre and Stem Cell City, you are working towards the future of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. As you fundraise, that goal will inspire you and others.

Stem Cell research has the potential to benefit all of us and you never know who may have a personal connection to Stem Cell research. Remember that as you ask others for support; you are offering them an opportunity to make a difference. The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine is here to help you reach your individual fundraising goal.

Below you will find a few tips and tricks to keep you motivated along your way:

- **Educate yourself on the science behind Stem Cell research**

The best way to convince your friends and family to support something you care about it, is to make sure you know what you are speaking about in the first place. The McEwen Centre website is a great resource for finding out which accelerated discovery you might want to support. Walk through the site and do your own research so that when your potential donors ask, you can tell them about all of the amazing things that we are doing here at the centre. Check out this link for more information

<http://www.mcewencentre.com>

- **Make the first pledge yourself.**

Before you ask others to join in your cause, show you are serious by pledging your personal support with an individual donation. It is easier to ask someone to do something you have already done yourself and your personal gift will show how strongly you feel about the cause.

- **Just keep asking.**

Some people find fundraising hard when they first begin, but it can be as simple as just asking. You can only raise money if you ask for it. Don't start by apologizing and don't feel guilty or greedy- you are being generous. You are helping to cure countless diseases and advancing research that will have a global impact. You may be surprised by yourself and by others. The more you ask, the more you raise, the easier it gets.

- **Tell everyone you know and ask them to tell everyone they know.**

Generate genuine enthusiasm for the cause by reaching out to as many people as possible and sharing your story. Why are you raising funds for McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine?

Whether it is through word of mouth, email or letter - this is worth sharing. Start with easy targets like your close family and friends and build confidence. If you sound excited, your ask will sound like an exciting opportunity to give. Excitement is contagious!

- **Create a network of supporters .**

Once your supporters have made a gift, ask if they will extend a challenge to other potential contributors (example: "I'm supporting Joe with a pledge of \$100, will you match or beat that amount?"). Sometimes the best gifts aren't monetary. Ask a friend to help you brainstorm ways they can help you fundraise. Perhaps they can host a social function in their home, expanding your list of contacts. Maybe they are a member of a

service club or organization and would be willing to make an appeal for funding on your behalf.

- **Stretch your network with the web.**

Utilize social media to give updates and send messages to your Facebook, twitter, and other social media contacts. Most social media sites, particularly Facebook make it quite painless to organize and keep tabs on who is coming to an event. Further to that, it's a medium that is used by millions of people and a majority of them check it daily.

Blogging about your goals and how close you are to reaching them is a great way for your donors to feel as up-to-date as possible on how things are going.

- **Make fundraising a part of your everyday life.**

Talk about your efforts in conversation with both old and new friends alike. Consider changing your voicemail/answering machine to mention your participation with Stem Cell City. Add information about Stem Cell City and include a link to donate at the bottom of your email signature.

- **Familiarize yourself with the Contribution Form and Donor Tracking Sheet.**

Know your materials so that you can answer your donors' questions. Make copies of the form and put your name on each one. Donors can return the forms to you or mail them directly to the McEwen Centre with payment. Keep a few copies of the Pledge Form with you to always present at a moment's notice. You never know when you will run into a potential donor.

- **Always be on top of your pledges and reminders.**

If you are sending a letter or email sharing your story, some people may respond to you immediately, while others may forget. Just because someone hasn't given to you, doesn't mean that they have said no. Perhaps they are on vacation or maybe your request is under a stack of paperwork. One way to offer a friendly reminder is to sending updates either via email, through facebook or a newsletter giving everyone an update on your progress (example: "Thank you for your support. Together we've raised \$1000 for The McEwen Centre for regenerative medicine so far and are half-way to our goal!"). This will make your donors feel like part of your team and inspire new supporters to give. If you are asking people to sponsor you in person, you can save the trouble of following up if you collect a donation at the time of their pledge. Try asking for a gift when money is handy, like around payday.

- **Think big.**

Put together a list of potential major donors in your network: those who can donate \$500 or more. These may be business associates, employers, college friends, etc. Arrange to meet one-on-one over lunch or dinner. Face to face meetings are always best. Write a script of things you wish to cover. Be passionate and be bold. Remember, when you focus on a mission, people want to support you.

- **Send thanks.**

Like your fundraising letter, the more personal you can make it, the more meaningful it will be to your supporters. Add photos. Be creative. Take the time to express your gratitude to each donor for their generosity. The McEwen Centre will also send an acknowledgement letter to each contributor once we receive their payment. This letter may be used for tax purposes.

- **Stay motivated.**

Fundraising can be tough. Don't be discouraged if you hear a "no thank you." Chances

are it just wasn't in that individual's budget to give at this time. Remember, funding significant research initiatives is only possible with the help of people like you. You cannot know the number of individuals you are inspiring, educating, and reassuring. Thank you.

***\* If you have fundraised before...***

Don't assume that if you have asked someone for donations in the past, that you cannot ask them again. Let them know that you appreciated their previous support and share with them your excitement for this new opportunity. These family members and friends have already invested in you and will probably want to do it again. They may have even put it in their annual giving budget for the year. If they were unable to give before, maybe this is a better time to donate.