

School News & Notes

Putting the FUN Back in School Fundraising

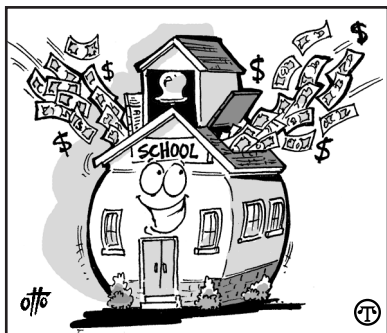
(NAPSA)—Buried under a seemingly insurmountable mountain of wrapping paper? Have more cookies than you could ever eat? Never want to see another chocolate bar again? Sounds like fundraising season.

Every year, thousands of families participate in drives to raise much-needed funds for their schools. And while the money raised is important, many parents dread the amount of time and work required—and the limited return. Plus, many feel uncomfortable repeatedly asking friends to continue supporting their children's activities. A little creativity, however, can make all the difference. Companies like DIRECTV, Target and Staples have low-maintenance programs to help local schools raise money.

Jean Carucci, a mom and former PTO president in Stamford, Conn., says, "There are lots of programs that can work, if you'll look for them, and don't just settle for the tried and true. We know parents are disappointed about all the time they spend, and they get tired of doing the same programs every year. But there are ways to be successful at these efforts that won't take all your free time and can even be fun."

Here are some tips you might try when it's time for your school's fundraising drives:

- Take on what you can manage. If your kids are running several programs for various groups at once, it's important to choose how extensively you participate in each. Don't overpromise, and don't feel pressured into saying "yes" to something you know you can't do.



- Look for a strong return. Like any good business endeavor, you want the most return for your investment. Participate in programs that can help you maximize your time, give maximum value to people you contact, and save you lots of logistical problems like delivering product to people's homes.

- Be on the lookout for new or different programs. One innovative program is DIRECTV4Schools, which contributes \$100 to your child's school for every new customer who activates service and rewards the school for current customers who extend their commitment for one year. Find out more about this program at DIRECTV4Schools.com.

- Rotate your list of prospects. Don't approach the same friends every year with the same program.

- Be active with your PTO and school. Your input, individual creativity, and active involvement are important to the success of any program.

Most important, make it fun. When you set realistic goals, share the work, and find a program you really believe in, you'll be amazed at how satisfying and rewarding school fundraising can be.