



# Relay For Life Fundraising Ideas from A-Z

## A

Ask: The easiest way to raise money is to ask your friends, neighbors, relatives and anyone you know to make a donation to the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life event, which you are taking part in. Explain your commitment of 18 hours and why you are involved – maybe because of a loved one battling cancer.

Art Sales: Have preschool and elementary students produce great art and have a show. Parents and friends buy back their budding artists' masterpieces.

Auctions: Many teams are putting together live or silent auctions. Teams can make a whole event out of it- work with an auctioneer who will donate his/her time and hold a live auction. A team in MA held a silent auction during their family reunion. Some teams are putting together sports auctions, which are very popular. Collectibles are hot! Auction off the boss -- have the boss or department head as your assistant for the day at work.

## B

Baby Sit: Do extra baby-sitting and give your pay (or at least part of it) to your team. Or baby-sit as a team during a community event.

Bake Sales: Hold a bake sale (focus on healthy treats!) at work or at a busy place- a bank branch held a bake sale once a week for several months. Or have a no-bake sale where co-workers pay so they don't have to bake goodies.

Balloon Day: This is good for students. Sell a Relay balloon with a message attached for \$2 each. The students take orders in advance and then deliver the balloon messages at a later date.

Bank for a Year: Get everyone on your team to put in \$2 each week beginning the week after this year's Relay. In 50 weeks each team member will have his or her \$100. Or try this – 50 cents every day, in 50 weeks you will have collected, from yourself, \$175 – add just two more friends giving you 50 cents each per day and you will now have a total of \$525 in 50 weeks. See how easy it is.

Birthday Party with a Purpose: Individuals have had birthday parties and on the invitation they state in lieu of gifts, please bring a check made out to the American Cancer Society for Relay For Life.

Block Party: Put together an old-fashioned block party in a parking lot, or close off a neighborhood street (with permission). Have a band or DJ donate a few hours, have a BBQ, do face painting, offer hay rides etc. Have fun and raise money for your team.

Book Sales: Do it in conjunction with a publishing house that will donate books or have everyone on your team bring in good condition used paperbacks or hard cover books. Set up a table to sell your books. Get permission to have your table set up in a local mall or plaza, or if you work for a large employer, set it up in the break or lunch room.

Boss for the Day: Allow people to bid on being boss for the day-high bid wins.

Bounce-a-thon: Elementary students take a collection envelope home to collect pledges for bouncing a basketball for half an hour. Each class in the school takes turns gathering in the school's front hall throughout the day to bounce their basketballs.

Bowl-a-thon: Some student teams have been holding bowl-a-thons, where they get pledges per pin they knock down.

Bowling Chance: \$1 gives you the chance to throw 2 balls (toy bowling set). If you strike your name is entered into a drawing 2 times. If you throw a spare with your second ball your name is



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entered into the drawing once. Team is to solicit a nice prize for the drawing. This one could be held on site.

Breakfast With: Put together a breakfast with Santa or the Easter bunny or other favorite kids' character. Work with a local restaurant or your team can do it themselves at a hall or club. Have someone in costume and sell tickets, also have pictures taken. You could also use this as breakfast with the mayor or other high profile person.

Brown Bag Lunch Day: Everyone brings in their own lunch and donates the money they would have spent to the Relay For Life fund.

## C

Candle Sales: Sell scented votive candles to fellow employees and friends.

Candy Bar Sales: Sell candy bars at work, or have someone at a business let you set up a little display box (beauty shops, store check-out counters, etc.). You can purchase box kits from wholesale warehouses such as Sam's or ask a candy store to donate them.

Car Washes: This is another good idea for students as well as adults. Especially in the spring when everyone wants the mud off of their cars. Try saying "donations accepted" instead of charging a set price (people tend to give more).

Car Smash: Secure an old car and write in large bold letters CANCER across the car. For a dollar donation you get to "smash cancer" three times with a sledgehammer.

Challenges: Challenge another team to raise more money than you. Some radio stations may gladly put your challenge on the radio.

Change Makes a lot of Cents: Bank and credit union teams post this message at the teller line – Donate the cents from your deposit to the (name of bank) Relay For Life team and help fight the war against cancer. If your check total is for \$187.67 your donation is just 67 cents. We might find the cure for cancer right in your pocket. All proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society.

Chili Cook Off: have a Hot-Hot-Hot chili cook off.

Christmas Party: Play carols, serve cookies, decorate a tree, have pictures with Santa and charge admission – no matter what time of year it is!

Christmas Tree/Wreaths: Ask a local retailer to donate \$1 for every tree and wreath sold to support your Relay team. Or make your own wreaths as a team- use princess pine you find in the woods.

Coin Drive: This is especially good for students to do at schools- have everyone give them their change in the lunchroom. Set up a coin jar at the beginning of the school year and see how it grows.

A college put a twist on the coin drive, which would also work at companies with different departments or at a bank with the different tellers etc. They sent out a flyer explaining: JOIN THE PENNY WARS- drop off your change in the jars at the front of your residence hall. The residence hall with the most points wins a pizza party for its residents. Pennies are worth positive points, silver coins and cash are worth negative points. Sabotage the other residence halls by dropping off your silver coins into their jars! Spare some change for cancer research.

Coin Toss: Get permission from the local mall to collect all the coins tossed into the fountain for a designated time period. Be sure to have signs state that the coins will be donated to the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life.

Comedy Club: Ask a local comedy club to host an evening in support of the Relay For Life and invite all teams to sell tickets. The teams would get the credit for the tickets they sold.



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Concession Stands: Set up a concession stand or booth at a community event during the year.

Cookbooks: Collect recipes from employees and have them published and sell them. Can be produced for approximately \$2 each and sold for \$7-\$8. You need to be sure that all recipes are healthy and follow nutritional guidelines.

Craft Fairs: Have your team set up a craft table at a craft fair or festival.

Crafts: In a holiday mood? Craft tree ornaments, stockings or decoration and sell them.

Cut-a-thon: Have a beauty salon or vocational school hold a cut-a-thon for you.

Cutest baby: Have a Cutest Team Baby Contest, either on site or beforehand at your place of work. Place a photo of each team member as a baby on the bulletin board or on a display board. People donate \$1 per vote. You decide on the appropriate reward.

## D

Dances for a Cure: Students can hold a school dance. Adults can put together a dance at a local club or hall. Get a band or DJ to donate their services.

Day of Cleaning Drawing: Team members donate a suggested five hours to spring/fall house clean your home, with tickets selling for \$5 each (at the Relay only).

Day Spa: Have a drawing for a day of beauty or, for a set fee, provide haircuts, manicures, and massages. (Sell tickets and do your drawing only at the Relay.)

Decorating Service: No time to decorate?... holiday decorating service! Also can put Holiday lights up on houses for a fee- this is a job many people would like someone else to do.

Deliver Flyers: See what businesses distribute sales flyers in the weekly paper or through the mail and offer for your team to deliver them within the town (at each house) for a set amount. It costs these businesses a lot to mail them out and they would be able to save money by having you distribute them personally. This is another good idea for a student team. In Washington State the phone company paid a high school team \$2500 to distribute the new phone books throughout the community.

Die Cut Cards: The suns and moons paper cut outs (available at a minimal cost through the Society office) can be sold at businesses, companies, or anywhere people frequent. Some teams have used them at holiday time to place a memorial or honor tree. Other divisions have seen other paper cut outs with the RELAY logo used. Ice cream cones with the logo at local ice cream shops, paper bowling pins line the walls of a bowling alley to "bowl down cancer" and in one area, paper clocks are sold at local businesses to benefit the event.

Dog Walkers: Have your team walk the neighborhood dogs for a donation. Many pet owners would appreciate the opportunity to let someone take their dog for a long walk.

Dog Sit: While the owners are on vacation, saves them from sending Fido to the kennel.

Dress Down Days: Many businesses have been doing this, where their employees can dress down for a day if they make a certain donation. This is also happening at parochial schools or other schools that require uniforms. For a specified donation, the student doesn't have to wear a uniform to school that day.

Dress as a Woman: Raise money to have a certain person dress up as a woman for the day, or have employee's pay \$! To vote for the individual they would like to see dress as a woman. The two individuals with the most votes would spend the entire workday dressed as a woman.

Dunking Booth: Set up a dunking booth at a local event festival, fair, picnic etc. and recruit local celebrities to sit for you.

## E



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Email: Email your friends and associates for donations.

Envelope at Restaurant table: Restaurant teams generate donations by placing a Relay For Life envelope at every table during a designated time period, stating "Please support our Relay For Life team and the American Cancer Society" Waitresses check envelopes after each seating and find surprising results. Be sure to have 1-800-ACS-2345 on the envelopes.

Errand Service: Never have time.... Run an errand service!

Event parking spaces: Sell parking spaces for community events near your home.

## F

Face Painting: set up a booth at a local event, fair, or festival. Kids love it! Charge .50 and up.

Fashion show: Work with new or existing clothing stores to hold a fashion show. You could have it at the store, or use a club or church hall. Offer refreshments and your team members can be the models.

Fast Food Restaurants: Ask your local restaurants if they will have RELAY day. Either a percentage of the day's take or from a certain item on the menu will go towards your team. Your team should be on hand to ask for donations from the patrons as well as be able to talk about the event. Salad Day Saturday- on a Saturday prior to your Relay, a dime from every salad sold goes to your team total.

Fifty/Fifty Drawing: Everyone loves the chance to win cash. Hold a 50/50 at your Relay event!

Flamingo Alert: Use Mike Wagner's idea and place pink flamingos in someone yard. It will fly away once a donation is made to Relay For Life. Some people have expanded this idea and for a set amount you can designate the next person is should go to, as well as you can purchase flamingo repellent, so it will not land on your yard. Other lawn ornaments could be used.

Flower sales: Work with a local florist or wholesaler and sell bouquets, potted flowers or individual stems (carnations or roses) at your place of work or school.

Flower bouquet Drawing: Ask a local florist to donate one bouquet of flowers, one for each month for a three-month period (or go to 3 different florists and get one per shop). Another easy on-site idea!

## G

Game Night: Have a game night- much like a party with a purpose. Everyone comes to your house to play board games, charades etc. Charge an "entrance" fee.

Garage Sales: Work individually or as a team to set up garage sales- clean out your attic and raise money for the American Cancer Society at the same time!

Glow Sticks: Sell glow in the dark sticks that can be worn as necklaces or carried at the event.

Go Door to Door: Go door to door and ask for donations. Canvas your neighborhood, work as a team and canvas the town.

Golf Tournament: Have your team put together a golf tournament with the proceeds benefiting your Relay Team goal.

## H

Hat (or Cap Day): This is good for schools. For a specified amount, the students can wear a baseball cap to school for the day.



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Haunted House: For Halloween, organize a haunted house and charge admission. Or as a team organize a haunted forest. You can also sell refreshments or bob for apples.

Hoagie Sale: Hold a hoagie sale at work or around town, taking orders ahead of time.

Hole-in-One: set up a portable putting green and for a donation; let people try to putt it in. You can do this on site, or at a community event beforehand.

Hot Dog For Cancer: Principal at an elementary school agreed that if ALL the teachers would raise \$100 each he would dress up like a hot dog and let the students squirt ketchup, mustard, and relish on him.

## I

Ice Cream Socials: Plan one at your place of work or for friends, asking for a donation to attend. Sell ice cream, low-fat yogurt and other frozen treats for dessert at your place of work.

## J

Jail & Bail: For a donation employees can be arrested. For an additional donation they can post their own bail, or employees have a bounty placed on their head, are arrested and are not set free until the entire bounty is raised (\$100 or more per inmate). This activity can also be done on site.

Jewelry Sales: Work with a wholesale company to sell jewelry they don't wear anymore and have a jeweler clean it up for you, then have a sale.

## K

Kiss a Pig Contest: Recruit a local celebrity to kiss a swine when a certain amount of money has been raised. Also has been done as a contest. Put the face of all the teachers or employees one on each jar, and who ever raised the most money must kiss the animal (could also be a team mascot, goat mule, dog etc.)

## L

Lawn Service: While you are mowing your lawn, mow someone else's - for a donation.

Letter Writing: A great way to ask for donations without asking in person. Send letters out to your friends and family explaining what you're doing and why, and asking for a specific amount (more than you want) seems to work best or leave it up to them. Write them your personal goal and ask for their help. Some people are writing letters on behalf of their pets or babies adding a little humor.

Line Dancing: Work with a local club or facility to offer a night of line dancing. Get a DJ to volunteer his/her time to play music and get someone to teach a couple dances. It's a fun way to spend a night while collecting donations.

Longenberger Basket Bingo: Work with a Longenberger basket sales rep to hold a bingo party. Get the use of a hall, sell tickets ahead of time and sell refreshments at the party. Most groups are selling 200-250 tickets for \$15-\$20 each, which entitles the ticket holder to 20 games. Each game winner will be awarded a Longaberger basket. The rep could also help with selling extra games or special rounds.

Lunch with the CEO: Auction off lunch or maybe a round of golf with the CEO or president of your company.



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## M

Massages: Offer massages for a donation at the event.

Matching Gifts: Ask your company to match what you raise. Some companies have a matching gift policy, check to see if your does. If they don't ask them anyway.

Money Jars: Set up money jars or coin boxes at your place of work. This is good for banks, diners/restaurants hairdressers, and stores. Check back to empty frequently.

Movie night: Invite your friends over for a night at the movies. You provide the popcorn and soda and charge admission. Or have a movie week during lunch hour at work. Charge admission and invite employees to eat their lunch while they watch.

## N

Nonalcoholic cocktail party: have a nonalcoholic cocktail party at the RELAY and ask for donations. Or have a moving one, where each team has different appetizers and drinks available so people go tent to tent. Be sure to have your donation cans next to the refreshments. You could also do this a team and move from house to house on different weekend nights.

## O

Odd jobs: Call on your neighbors and ask to do some odd jobs, such as fixing a rain gutter, shoveling their driveway, paint a fence, or rake their leaves.

Open House: A fitness center held an open house with a variety of toning and aerobic classes offered throughout the day. They also included babysitting. Ask for donations.

## P

Pancake Breakfasts: Hold a pancake breakfast at a hall or church or at work on specific days.

Parking Space Auction: College students can auction off the presidents parking spot, or company employees can auction off a prime spot.

Payroll Deduction: Employees can make their own contribution by having it deducted directly from their paycheck. A little each week, can grow into a large amount by RELAY time.

Percentage of Sales: Designate a percentage of one day's sales or proceeds and let the public know so they will buy more.

Personal Bake Sale: Bake some extra delicious, extra gooey brownies and sell them for dollars a piece- make the slices large. Don't forget to make some healthy yummys – fruit salad with low-fat yogurt and granola – for those adhering to healthy eating. Make a different dessert each week for your co-workers.

Pet Fashion Show: Have a pet fashion show where you give everyone's pet the opportunity to flaunt its favorite outfit. Charge admission and vote for best outfit, matching outfits (owner and pet) wildest outfit etc.

Photos: Have your photo taken with a local celebrity for a specified donation. Or use one of those realistic cardboard stand-ins. Do this at work or in conjunction with a local fair or festival.

Pie Sales: Much like bake sales, these are also popular. Especially around the holidays- take orders or set up a table at a busy grocery store or shopping center.

Pizza Sales: Work with a pizzeria to give you a percentage of the pizzas you sell. Take orders and deliver them. OR put pizza kits together yourself. Also can work with a wholesaler to get pizzas at a reduced price or donated is even better.

Place a "Plea" in your employee bulletin or newsletter: Place a plea in your employee newsletter letting them know that you are contributing dollars plus 18 hours of your life to the Relay For



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**Life.** Place a picture of the person your team is working in honor or memory of in a highly visible place to remind team members of the importance of their participation.

**Plant Sales:** Like the flower sales, work with local florists or wholesaler and sell potted plants. A nursing home team did this and painted the flowerpots, repotted the plants and added a bow with a card. They sold a number to friends, staff and family members of the patients.

**Pot Luck Lunches:** Designate every Wednesday as Relay For Life Pot Luck Day, where team members take turns making chili, salads, desserts, etc and offer to employees at a set price or donation.

## Q

**Questions for a Buck:** One team raised money by having their boss, who was constantly being asked questions by everyone to start charging a buck for each question. Word spread throughout the company what he was doing, and everyone started asking questions and paying up.

**Quilt Drawing:** Have your team make a quilt to be given away at the Relay. Or if you have that creative seamstress on your team, have her hold a quilting class or just a quilting night. Quilters like to sew in groups, make a night out of it and ask for donations, or they can make the quilt for your fundraising drawing.

**Quoits Tournament:** hold a quoits or horseshoe tournament.

## R

**Roll those pennies:** Roll those pennies sitting in a jar on your dresser. While you're at it roll the rest of your coins you have been collecting.

## S

**Sell employee services:** i.e. get the best gourmet chef on your team to agree to go to someone's home and prepare a meal (for a fee of course). Get your VP to commit to wash an employee's car, or several, if willing. Have the company photographer take a family photo for a certain amount etc.

**Shave your head:** Have someone agree to have their hair shaved once a certain amount of money has been raised.

**Shoe Shines:** Shine shoes for donation- enlisted men would love it.

**Shutter bug mania:** into photography? Take candid shots around the community, schools, etc to sell to subject. OR take photos of a friends wedding, anniversary party, or birthday.

**Silent Auction:** Have a silent auction at the Relay using items you've had donated by area business (goods, services, gift certificates) or new items from family or team members (like that beautiful wool sweater that Aunt Mable gave you for Christmas but you're allergic to).

**Sign Relay Shirt:** For a donation of \$5 (or amount designated by you) the contributor can write the name of the cancer patient they are honoring or in memory of directly on your Relay T-shirt. You will walk/run representing the cancer patients listed.

**Skunk Them:** As a hospital group did, put a stuffed skunk on a coworker's desk. They need to pay a donation to your team to have him go away or they need to pay to be de-skunked. See Flamingo Alert for other ideas.

**Soup Sales:** Especially during the cold winter months, take orders from your coworkers and have a soup at work. If you work in town, offer it to the offices throughout the community. Take orders ahead of time and have an evening of team soup making.



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Spaghetti Dinner: Have your team put together a spaghetti dinner at a local hall or club. School teams have also done this with the help of their parents. The students take the tickets wait and clear tables.

Sports Tournaments: Teams organize bowling, hockey, basketball, soccer, and other sports tournaments.

Story Time Reading: Have an organized story time reading. Hold it at your place of work where employees can bring their children, work with your local library to have a special time. Also a good idea for on-site fundraising.

Student/Faculty Basketball Game: Set up a benefit basketball game between students and faculty, Or put together and alumni game. Challenge a local radio or television employee team.

Super bowl party: Have a super bowl party and ask everyone for donations when they get there. It is certainly worth it after all the trouble you go to organize the party and provide the refreshments. The same can be done for the NACC Championship basketball game, Indy 500, Masters final round etc. Great idea for the team member with a big screen TV!

## T

Tupperware party: Have the profits from a Tupperware party benefit your team.

Turkey Drawing: Great way to raise money at Relay! Get a grocery store to donate a certificate for a turkey or ham to be picked up just in time for Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas or a BBQ package for Labor Day or Memorial Day. Food is always a good item to chance off.

“Cold Turkey” Subs: Encourage sub/pizza shops to donate a set amount (50 cents) from each cold turkey sub sold to benefit your REALY team. This would be a great idea to get all sub shops to participate during the great American smoke out-the third Tuesday in November.

## U

Ugly Bartender Contest: Get all the bartenders in town to agree to be in your “Ugly Bartender Contest” At \$1 per vote, a lot of money can be raised for your team with the winner getting some sort of reward and being asked to become an honorary team member.

## V

Vacation Day Award: Have your employer award a free day off to the team member who raises the most money. Post the standings for the weeks leading up to the Relay.

Vending machines: Coordinate with your vendor to add .05 cents to the cost of a snack or soda prior to RELAY, with the extra nickel going to your team total.

Vendors: Solicit your vendors for cash donations or goods you can use for a drawing or auction item at the Relay.

Video Sale: Hold a video sale at work and have each team member bring in videos they don't watch anymore, especially kid videos their children have outgrown. Other employees with younger children would appreciate this.

## W

Wait Tables: Work with a restaurant that will let you designate a specific night to benefit your team for the RELAY. Pizza Huts have been known to do this as well as others. Your team would be the waiters for the evening and would collect all the tips as well as possibly a percentage of that evening's receipts. Make sure all your friends and family eat at that restaurant during the RELAY benefit.



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Wear Company Logos: Tell companies that you will walk around wearing their hat or t-shirt for half an hour for a \$25 dollar donation.

Weed: Offer to weed gardens or pull dandelions from the lawns of friends and neighbors for a donation to the Relay.

Wrap Presents: During holiday time (Christmas or Mothers Day) set up a booth at a local mall, plaza or busy department store. Have your team members donate the paper and tape and raise money while helping out the holiday shoppers.

X

Xylophone concert: Hold a music concert or recital. Pass refreshments and ask for donations or sell tickets in advance.

Y

Yard Sales: Just like the garage sales, work together as a team, or have one individually.

Z

Zoot Suit Party: Swing music is in. Hold a swing dance party and give awards for the best Zoot suit there.