



Fundraising Ideas for Your GSA *as brainstormed by the LTI Class of '09*

One of the most common questions we get from students and advisors is “How can we raise money for our GSA?” We recognize that not all clubs receive money from their schools, and not all GSAs are treated equally as other clubs (even though they should be!). This can make fundraising really tough.

At our summer Leadership Training Institute in 2009, a couple of our Peer Mentors led a great workshop on how to run an effective GSA, and they had the group share some of the different strategies they've used in their own schools to raise money for their GSAs and clubs:

- 1. Candy sales or bake sales** – You'll have to check and see what your school's policy is on selling treats, but this has been one of the most successful strategies we've seen by far. And if you can somehow tie the candy in to the GSA's cause (like Skittles or other rainbow-themed snacks), you might be able to turn it into an educational opportunity, as well.
- 2. Rainbow ribbons** – Pinning a rainbow ribbon to your shirt, coat, or bag is a really simple way to say “Hey, I support LGBT equality”. Rainbow ribbons are often given out for Day of Silence and Ally Week, and you might even be able to make some money on them. Make a sign that asks for a suggested donation, and you'll be surprised by how many people give!
- 3. Donation jars** – And speaking of donations, why not put out a donation jar? Your GSA advisors might be willing to put one in their office or classroom, and it should come out for every GSA meeting. If all your GSA members threw some of their pocket change into the jar at every meeting (or every other meeting), it would add up pretty quickly.
- 4. Hold an all-nightathon** – What could be more fun than an overnight retreat with your GSA? You could have a lock-in at the school or do it at one of the club member's homes. Ask your family and friends to pledge a dollar for every hour you stay up past midnight, and then collect the pledges after the event. This fundraiser is best done on the weekend, obviously.
- 5. Have a dance** – Is there a local band that might be willing to split the proceeds with your GSA for a dance? Or perhaps someone in your club wants to try their hand at spinning. Dances usually take a little bit of money up front to organize, but if you do it right and the turnout is good, they can be huge moneymakers. If you really want to keep the cost low, have a talent show or poetry slam instead of a dance.

6. **Go after corporate sponsors** – Has your GSA ever made t-shirts? Some businesses will pay money to have their logo out in the community, and if they're supportive of LGBT causes, they might be willing to pay to have their logo put on your GSA shirts. It never hurts to ask, right?
7. **Sell raffle tickets** – Do you know of any local businesses that might be willing to donate an item or two for a raffle? Many businesses can write off donations as tax deductible, and then you can turn around and sell raffle tickets to your classmates to be entered into a drawing to win the donated items. Some examples of donated goods might be restaurant gift certificates, sporting goods, or jewelry. Just make sure you check with your school to see if this is okay.
8. **Paint some faces** – Face paint is pretty inexpensive, and it can go a long way. Do any of your club members have artistic skills they could share? See if you can set up a table at a school or community event and offer to paint faces. And while you're painting, you can talk about GSA!
9. **Button making** – Another way of showing support for LGBT causes is by wearing fun and clever buttons. Does someone in your school have a button maker you can borrow? If not, why not team up with another club or two and split the cost? Then you can have a button-making party and charge a dollar or two for the buttons you make.
10. **Write a grant** – More and more organizations and foundations give out mini-grants to high school students working on projects that involve improving their community or social justice. Ask around to see if any local businesses give out grants to youth, or do a little bit of online research. Check out Do Something (www.dosomething.org) and Youth Service America (www.ysa.org) as starting points.

These are just a few ideas to get the ball rolling, and ultimately you get to decide what would work best for your school and your club.

And don't overlook the easiest and quickest way to raise money for your club: By asking for donations from your members, your friends, and your family. If everyone in GSA made a list of five people in their lives who they could call and say, "Hey, this is really important to me – would you be willing to donate \$5 or \$10?", you'd be off to a great start. Of course, you don't want to make membership fees a requirement, because there are lots of students who wouldn't be able to participate if that were the case.

Do you have other fundraising ideas that have worked well at your school? Let us know and we'll add them to the list!