

My Service Dog Fundraiser Idea List

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Hello everyone! Today I am going to be sharing my list of ideas for fundraising when it comes to your service dog!

First off, congratulations on being accepted with Above The Clouds Siberian Service Dogs! They are an amazing organization dedicated to their dogs and the people who need them for service work. The effort, care, and amount of time they put into each dog makes them truly worth every penny. As of this writing, I have spent the past nine months putting on various fundraisers to reach my goal for my service dog in training, Mystique! I am proud to say that by applying myself through these various methods I have reached my goal for her and cannot wait to start a life with her by my side. That being said, let's get to those fundraising ideas!

It is important to talk to local, independent businesses and see if they would be willing to sit down with you, listen to/and or read your story. Some may let you make a donation jar to put on the counter or out front or want to help you fundraise in a different way.

If you have trouble talking about your need for a service dog, or about asking them to fundraise for him or her, I recommend that you take some time to sit down and write it all out. I've found it is much easier to type out a summary of who I am, what my disabilities are, how having a service dog will benefit me and my daily life with my disabilities, my fundraiser goal, and ways a business can help (detailed below) to allow them to choose what they would like to do, or they may choose to offer a new idea!

Having copies of the summary article made it much easier when applying for fundraising help from organizations as well! You can apply for help through multiple organizations, depending on your state. I would recommend writing up an article (such as the one described above) and submitting it to local organizations that might be able to help! Some organizations you can reach out to are the Lions Club, the American Legion, and the Kiwanis Club!

You might be able host a 50/50 raffle fundraiser within your community. Please keep in mind some states require an organization with a license to do this, as anyone without one cannot legally host one. If you are planning on doing this be sure to look up your local and state laws! If you are allowed to do this, be sure to have at least one other person with you at your booth to help you at events, as you may get waves of people wanting tickets all at once!

Having a bake sale is another great idea! I have been making all natural homemade dog treats and selling them locally since last November. A friend of mine made me signs to help advertise my treats. They have been a huge hit at vendor events and local shops have even offered to display them in their stores and help sell them for me! This has been a big help for fundraising, and it really makes me feel good to help give other dogs healthy treats while raising funds for my girl at the same time!

This brings me to my next idea. If you are artistic or a crafter, you can make items and sell them locally! There are pop-up craft vendor events almost year-round that don't usually have too high of a fee for a table. At events, it also helps to have a small jar with a label written on it that says "Donations for (your service dog's name goes here)".

You can also host a benefit fundraiser dinner, and have themed basket raffles/silent auctions during the dinner (for example, a pair of tickets to a sports game, gift cards, a salon-themed basket, or other things that would make nice gifts). Talking to people is crucial for this so you don't break your bank. Sometimes businesses will donate packaged gift baskets or gift cards to you for raffle off or for silent auction items. They are also usually open to putting up a flyer detailing your event to publicize it as well! It helps to advertise this for at least a month prior to the event to help it gain traction through social media, local flyers, and by word of mouth.

Setting up a GoFundMe is an option too. It helps to type it up like the article summary I mentioned earlier! Giving your readers a good idea of who you are, your journey to needing a service dog, a connection with the dog itself via photos and a name, and your goal amount, gives them incentive to connect with you and your story on a deeper level. This helps with donations, shares, and spreading your story. If you are able to get a GoFundMe going, bring attention to it through social media, news outlets, or other forms where people will hear about it!

I understand bottle can drives may sound like they don't do much, but if you advertise in your local community with flyers, your local online community groups, and by word of mouth, those cans really do add up fast! It helps immensely to have a large can collection bin at your residence or at designated drop-off locations. Be sure to check your drop-off locations each night if you are hosting this for multiple days. I would recommend advertising this a month in advance and recruiting volunteers to help gather cans and do bottle returns at your local stores if needed. If it will be a few days until you can get the cans to be returned, take the time needed to wash them out. This prevents attracting wild animals and any bees or ants that would want to get a taste!

Some restaurants, such as Applebees and Big Boy, will host a fundraiser day where a percentage of the proceeds goes towards your cause. I haven't done this personally, but have heard good results from people who have! Be sure to get clarification from the restaurant manager or owner in writing on whether customers must mention your fundraiser for a percentage to go to you, or if it is a percentage from each customer that dines on that day.

There's a lot of things you can do to fundraise and get involved with your community to help them support you and your future service dog. When you are struggling or doubting yourself, it helps to keep telling yourself you are doing all this for your dog, you, and your life-changing future together.

Remember, getting a service dog is a marathon, not a race. Take it one step at a time~

This process can be stressful. I know it has been for me. A month after I was accepted into the Above The Clouds Siberian Service Dogs organization and began this journey I left a three-year-long abusive relationship. It felt like I was trying to build myself out of nothing to start with. I didn't know who I was without my ex, how I would accomplish this fundraising goal, or if I would ever see the light at the end of the tunnel.

It has been nine months since then. In these past nine months I've learned I am stronger than I ever thought possible. I am capable of so much I never knew of until I applied myself and committed to this goal when nothing else was anywhere near as much of an incentive for me in life. I am my own superhero and have powers I only discovered during this journey that have strengthened who I am, all I am capable of, and what I stand for.

I honestly don't know where I would be today if it wasn't for being accepted into this amazing organization and being matched with Mystique. She has been my light through all this darkness. She

has been the goal I've worked so hard for. She has made all this hard work worth a life-changing future with her.

Writing this piece through my experiences is my gift to all future handlers. You can do this and everything will be okay! This is the first step of the rest of your future with your service dog. I promise you it is worth all the time, effort, and commitment.

Thank you to Above The Clouds Siberian Service Dogs for this life-changing opportunity to be part of your organization. You have truly changed mine for the better. I'm certain they can and will change yours for the better too!

I wish you the best of luck going forward on this life-changing journey with your service dog! ❤️🐾