

Fundraising: The Key to Success

By Laura E. Bedard

One of the things I have been most proud of my chapter for is their ability to raise large sums of money in a pinch. Our chapter raised almost \$12,000 to attend the National Conference in California. Previously, we had raised as much as \$18,000. This success is due to many things. As Lambda Chapter's Advisor, I never let them get away with saying they can't. I know they can succeed and I have high expectations that they will. They always do.

Students have excellent ideas for raising money. I think it is important to "spread the wealth" so to speak and share our secrets of effective fundraising. First, organization is the key. If there is only one person in charge of each fundraising event, then it is easy to figure out who to speak to when something goes wrong. The person in charge has the job of making sure everyone else does what they are supposed to do. Making sure people follow through on their assigned responsibilities is key to any organization's success.

Advertise what is happening to keep members motivated. At chapter meetings, let members know how much has been raised and how much needs to be raised. Publicly congratulate people who have worked hard so they feel appreciated.

Try different fundraising approaches each semester. The people who support your efforts do not want the same old thing each semester. Be creative. Here are some of the ideas we have had success with in the past aside from the traditional car washes and bake sales which bring in about \$50.00 per event:

1. We took \$250.00 of our chapter funds and purchased a color television set. Each member was responsible for selling ten raffle tickets at \$2.00 each. We advertised and sold tickets both on and off campus. We made \$650.00 profit in a few short weeks. We published the winner's name and made a production about presenting the TV. – good public relations goes a long way.
2. We worked along with our local police department and identified neighborhoods which needed better house identification numbers. Then we borrowed from city maintenance reflector paint and stencils. We painted house numbers in the curb and then went back and asked for donations. People gave us an average of \$10 per house for about 5 minutes of work! We raised \$1,000 over two weekends. The group enjoyed doing it and it was service to the public – again getting ACJA/LAE's name out and about.
3. We also drafted a sponsorship letter asking for tax deductible donations to sponsor a student for a criminal justice competition. We solicited not only members' parents, but local businesses which work in the criminal justice system (pawn shops, lawyers, police supply companies, shooting ranges). We mailed the letter first and then students went out, in person, to follow up a week later. Each student was responsible for visiting one or two agencies. Most folks donated \$100. Be sure to write a thank you note so you can ask again in the future.
4. In conjunction with our University Homecoming, the chapter set up a silent auction with items donated from local businesses. We had tables with the item displayed and minimum bids of each item. There was no overhead, just leg work on the part of our members getting donations. We raised \$300 for a couple of hours work.

In addition, our chapter has offered our services for yard work, spring cleaning and moving. The money is out there. The key is to be creative and organized. Fundraising is an essential part of your chapter's success!