

# **FUNDING YOUR CARPE DIEM SEMESTER:**

## IDEAS FOR FINDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Prepared by Carpe Diem Education



# FUNDRAISE

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Fundraising for Carpe Diem's semester programs is a commitment that will take time, energy and creativity. Fundraising is also an opportunity for you to create a more meaningful experience for yourself and your community. As you ask people for support, you will have to articulate what this program is all about and why it is important for you to participate in it. You will be educating your community about alternative forms of education, the rewards of cultural immersion, and about the social action to which you are contributing.

In this package, you will find tips for successful fundraising, a list of fundraising ideas that have been used by participants in the past, some scripting that you may wish to use in your fundraising efforts, a sample fundraising project from a past participant, and scholarship opportunities.

We wish you luck with your fundraising and remind you that by asking others for financial support you are affording them the opportunity to support your international education and efforts. In addition, you are creating an opportunity for people to receive a charitable tax deduction. (Checks must be made out to the student in order for it to be tax deductible.)

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## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

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Here are some suggestions to get your fundraising off on the right foot.

### To Get Started:

- ⇒ *Set a goal.* How much money do you plan to raise and by when do you need it?
- ⇒ *Start ASAP.* Some people or businesses you may ask for support may need time to make a decision about donating to you.
- ⇒ *Be creative.* Use the list of projects included in this package to get you started but don't be limited by these suggestions. Ensure that your project doesn't require you to invest more money than you are likely to raise.
- ⇒ *Make a plan.* Break down the various tasks of your project(s). Create a timeline remembering that many people will take some time to write and mail checks to you.

### In Your Outreach Efforts:

- ⇒ *Know your audience.* Be sure to highlight the aspect of the trip that is interesting to prospective supporters. You may need to create a few versions of your 'pitch' to ensure that it is well received by all.
- ⇒ *Note:* you are not selling anything. You are asking for support. Recent social studies have shown that when people are simply *asked* to provide support, they are up to 6 times more likely to contribute.
- ⇒ *Provide information* about the organizations that you will be supporting. You may wish to refer people to Carpe Diem's website: [www.carpediemeducation.org](http://www.carpediemeducation.org)
- ⇒ *Be specific* about why it is important to you to participate in this program.
- ⇒ *Follow up:* Describe what you plan to do in your community upon your return.
- ⇒ *Mailings:* If you are mailing requests, include self-addressed stamped envelopes.

### After people have contributed:

- ⇒ Acknowledge contributions immediately. You may wish to send a formal thank you note after your experience abroad so that you can share an anecdote from your experience. This is important for both keeping up your fundraising energy and for the donor's tax deduction purposes.
- ⇒ Be sure to follow up on offers for speaking engagements shortly after your return home.

## FUNDRAISING THAT HAS WORKED FOR PREVIOUS STUDENTS

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- ⇒ **Plan a social event** (brunch, dinner) and charge admission in exchange for the promise that you will host a presentation about your experience when you return home. At this presentation you can show a slideshow. Carpe Diem has basic presentations you can use for these events, but make sure to review them and add or subtract information that you feel is appropriate.
- ⇒ **Host a 'band night'** of your friends' bands (this way friends of participants and friends of band members show up), charge admission.
- ⇒ **Provide Holiday gift baskets:** Send a letter to people in your community a couple months in advance of the holiday inviting them to purchase a gift basket (for \$20-\$25) to be delivered for the holidays. A portion of the money will pay for the basket (about \$5), and the rest will subsidize your participation in the program.
- ⇒ **"Steal the gate" at a popular nightspot:** Try to get the owner of a popular hangout to give you a certain percentage - or even all - of the cover charges for the night in return for you guaranteeing a larger than usual crowd that will buy food, drinks, etc. at regular prices. This is best done in conjunction with a popular band, a guest speaker or something to convince the owner that there will indeed be a large turnout.
- ⇒ **Make a winning event yours:** Approach the sponsoring organization of a successful annual event and ask them to focus on a theme that relates to the work you will be doing overseas.
- ⇒ **Sell progressive T-shirts, buttons, etc:** If you're into the promotion of peace, environmental or other causes and you can get a good deal on related T-shirts, buttons, bumper stickers, etc., you could set up a stand at a busy place (at a mall, a rally, a street fair) and accomplish four things at once: inform people about what you are doing, gain more sponsors and earn extra cash, all while promoting your favorite cause.
- ⇒ **Have a rummage sale:** A rummage sale is a good way to sell your possessions and gather support for your cause. You may want to combine a raffle at the site of the sale, or an auction, especially if there is a natural group that would support you in this endeavor (fraternity, workplace, synagogue, church, temple, club, etc.).
- ⇒ **If you are affiliated, ask your home religious community place of worship or local federation for personal financial assistance.** Be sure to remind them of your connection to the community that they represent. Even if you haven't seen your local clergy person for many years, he or she should be glad to support you as you reconnect with your community through this program. You might want to ask for a specific amount as an honorarium for an informative presentation about your experience when you return.
- ⇒ **Letter to friends and relatives:** You should send a detailed letter explaining the program and what you hope to accomplish to as many people as possible, including friends, relatives, former teachers or professors, former co-workers, etc. Ask for a specific amount of money - \$50 is a nice round figure, but for older, more established relatives or friends \$100 is not too much to ask; for students or young adults, perhaps \$25 to \$35. You may want to break your potential supporters into two, three or more groups, sending a custom letter to each group, based on your relationship with them, or the amount of money you are asking for. If you send out 100 letters asking for \$50 on average and on half respond, you have raised \$2500. Often a few people will be very inspired by what you are doing and many give much more. (*Sample letter below*). Also, be sure to follow up on your letters. One courtesy call to check in about whether someone has received your letter can make a huge difference.
- ⇒ **Form a support group:** One of the best support structures is to have the people closest to you act as your fundraising committee. Have them write letters on your behalf and distribute pledge forms to their co-workers, immediate family and good friends. The best fund-raisers have even gone as far as to officially organize something like "The Committee to Send Rachel to India" - which is personal, catchy and shows you have organized support. It also shows you are serious about participating in the program.

- ⇒ **Local Businesses:** Local businesses are far more likely to support you than are large corporations. The key is to make a linkage between the owner of the business and you or someone close to you. You may want to approach the businesses with a letter first, enclosing all the relevant materials and a pledge form, then follow up with a phone call. Asking for \$100 or more is not unusual.
- ⇒ **Special Collection:** Take up a special collection at a general meeting of a community group coordinated with the meeting/event organizers. It is important to educate the community about what you will be doing before the collection is announced, via written materials in the bulletin or preferably featuring a personal appeal by you during the meeting/event.
- ⇒ **Community groups:** Civic groups such as Rotary, certain unions, special interest groups (like the Sierra Club or Returned Peace Corps Volunteers), your local outdoor club (like REI or EMS) might be interested in sponsoring you, especially if you can give them a special presentation when you return from overseas.
- ⇒ **Get a part-time job:** Getting an easy part-time job (like house-sitting) can earn you extra money without unduly cutting into your time.
- ⇒ **Support from employers and coworkers:** Approaching your own employer is an often-overlooked source of possible support. Even better is getting support from your coworkers. You might get permission to send an email or drop a letter in the mailboxes of your coworkers.
- ⇒ **Letters to alumni associations:** An announcement in a high school or college alumni newsletter about what you are about to do with a pitch for contributions, can be a good way to gain support and touch base with long lost friends.
- ⇒ **Letters to Greek organizations:** if you, or a relative, are involved in a fraternity or sorority, you may want to ask them for their financial support directly or help in conducting other fundraising activities through their newsletter.
- ⇒ **Telephone campaign:** Getting permission to call a friendly membership list can be tricky, but if you are successful in persuading a group to let you call their members this can be an effective fundraising tool, especially if the group shares something with you (alumni, international development, religious affiliation, etc.) You will want to prepare a script beforehand of what you will want to say to potential donors. Below is a sample script to help you develop what you may want to say to a potential donor.
- ⇒ **Raffle.** You might be able to solicit donations from local businesses create raffle tickets and sell them in all of your classes.
  - Most professors will give you permission to address your class for a few minutes in order to tell them about your upcoming experience. Some classes might want to hear from you again when you come home.
- ⇒ **Service for service auction.** You might even ask friends who are not going on the trip to support you by auctioning off a service too. This could include tutoring, a home-cooked meal, essay editing, salsa dance lessons and much more. Make sure to advertise your auction well and hold it in a busy spot. Having a charismatic auctioneer doesn't hurt either. Make sure that the audience knows that by purchasing your service, they are helping you to go do service in a community in need.
- ⇒ **Gear Donations and Deals.** Carpe Diem has special discounts established for their participants. Locate promotional information at [www.carpediemeducation.org/students.php](http://www.carpediemeducation.org/students.php) under the 'Shopping for Travel Gear' section. This is another way to help minimize your overall costs for the program.
  - Other ways to minimize gear costs:
    - Shop at Salvation Army or Goodwill. Most of your gear will come back dirty and heavily worn at the end of your semester anyway
    - Ask gear stores directly if they will 'sponsor' you in exchange for holding their company sign and snapping some cool photos with it around the world. In 2006 a student formed a connection with an amazing woman managing her local REI who wanted to empower other young women to travel and grow in ways that she believed in
    - Ask a friend or family member to loan you a portion of your gear. You will only be gone for 3 months – people can usually part with their things if they know when they will get it back.

## WHAT'S WORKED FOR FORMER STUDENTS

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Many former Carpe Diem participants have raised money to make their participation in the program possible. Most participants approach one or more of the following to request support: community organizations, in-school funds/groups, companies/small businesses, family, and friends. Here is one story of a participant who raised money she needed while also sharing her experience with family and friends. We hope that her fundraising project will help inspire you to launch your own fun and successful fundraising campaign:

Megan Baustian participated in our Central America Semester in the Fall of 2008. She decided she wanted to involve her community in this project, not only to raise money but also to engage the people in her life in the journey she was about to take. Here is what Megan had to say about her fundraisers:

*"To raise money for my trip I conducted three main projects:*

*The first one I did was put together a short letter including an explanation of the trip I would be going on, some of the itinerary highlights, a few photos from previous Carpe Diem trips, and the Carpe Diem website.*

*The last sentence of the letter read something along the lines of, "As I prepare for the trip I would really appreciate your thoughts and prayers, and any monetary donations would be greatly appreciated." I did not want to push the idea of making a donation, but wanted it included in the letter. I then went through my address book and sent the letter out to family and close friends, and received quite a response - eventually totaling around \$1400.00 or so, sending out about 30-35 letters.*

*The second fundraising project I worked on involved the Student Senate at my school, The College of St. Scholastica. The school is very committed to community service, and our Student Senate often allocates funds to people working on volunteer projects. I contacted student senate, filled out some paperwork, got a couple letters of recommendation for funding from Scholastica staff, set up a time at a Senate meeting to present, and put together a PowerPoint presentation about my trip. After my presentation and the Senate vote, following the financial handbook I was granted \$938.00 to put towards my trip.*

*For my third fundraising project I turned to the two churches I am involved with. Although this program is not religiously affiliated, if you are a religious person it's hard to miss the connection. I talked to my Pastors and Youth Directors, and they helped me organize a bake sale and pancake breakfast one morning at each church. I put announcements in the bulletin, and made announcements at the beginning of church service. I also put together a board to display at the breakfasts about my trip. I got some donations of baked goods, pancake mix, sausage, and syrup as well. This helped me raise about \$800 between two small congregations.*

*Although these projects took a lot of work, I knew that they would pay off in the long run. It's always a good feeling to work hard for what you need, and even better when you know that it's going towards servicing others. Look around your communities; there are always people willing to donate, willing to help, or who have some great fundraising ideas."*

### **Megan believes that her fundraising was so successful because she:**

- Requested that people send the money within a few weeks of getting the letter
- Made it clear that she was going to try to include them – through sharing pictures and by writing a piece afterwards
- Spoke with people about the trip before sending out the letters - they knew she was going to be trying to raise funds

## SAMPLE LETTER

As a tip, try to keep your letter to one page. Donors may get disinterested having to read too much. In general, keep it short and to the point

Date

Dear family and friends:

As some of you know, I recently applied for and was accepted to participate in an incredible alternative educational opportunity happening this Fall/Spring. I have been chosen to go with a group of students, about a dozen of us between the ages of 17 and 22 from all over the United States, to do service work in a town called \_\_\_\_\_, which is located in \_\_\_\_\_. The trip is being made possible through the organization of Carpe Diem International Education. The trip costs \$\_\_\_\_/person, and I'm writing you to ask if you would be able to give me a donation of \$\_\_\_\_ or more to support my participation on the trip.

Carpe Diem International Education runs international academic programs that work with youth in an educational capacity to get them both out of the country and out of their comfort zones. They firmly believe that the greatest treasure in every being is their own self-reliance: the knowledge that "every student already has everything they could ever need." Throughout the course of their semesters, they focus their energy into helping students learn just what it means to take ownership of their lives. *-carpediemeducation.org*

I want to become a participant with Carpe Diem to provide much-needed assistance and service, learn about other cultures, as well as provide the opportunity for people who have never met an American to work with me and get to know me personally. The plan for the trip is the following: \_\_\_\_\_.

Basically, I am very excited about this trip because it combines three of the values I hold most dear: human service, self-discovery, and creating cross-cultural exchanges. I want to ask you if you would be able to provide me with financial support for the trip. I would greatly appreciate any amount, whether small or large. If you are able, you can send a check made out to me at my home address as soon as you can, which is \_\_\_\_\_. Feel free to email or call me with any questions at \_\_\_\_\_. If you are not able to contribute, thank you anyway, and consider this a little update on what I am doing these days. Take care and thank you!

Love,

\_\_\_\_\_.

## BUT WHAT WILL I SAY?

Below are some places to look for text / talking points for your fundraising work.

- ⇒ There are a few pages on the **Carpe Diem website** that might be helpful including a description of the organization's mission and explanations of the kinds of projects that we participate with around the world.
- ⇒ Make sure that you can describe the work that this organization does and how you will be helping them.
- ⇒ You can contact the Carpe Diem office to get **quotes** from past participants and parents.
- ⇒ Carpe Diem can email you **digital photos** from past delegations.

Finally, you may wish to use quotations or find statistics that relate directly to the work that you will be doing: ex. "We need to put the "world" back into world-class education." -U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige

## SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT

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This is a very basic script of a phone conversation to have with a potential donor. Be prepared for both a positive and negative response to your call. Someone who agrees to donate may ask you to report back after your trip to let them know the outcome of the experience. Make a list for yourself of who said they would contribute, who would not contribute, and who wanted further information or a presentation upon your return. Make this list clear so that if you need to make follow up calls with individuals who said they would contribute, you have a clear idea of who to contact.

Make sure that you speak slowly, clearly, and with a positive demeanor in your tone. This is especially important when speaking with individuals you may not know well or do not know at all.

- If the potential donor is a close friend or relative, you should just say who you are and can be a little more informal about your request for their support.
- If you know the potential donor but they may not remember who you are, remind them of your connection
- If this potential donor is unknown to you, introduce yourself

*Good Morning.*

***My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling to ask for your support in my personal educational goals for this upcoming semester and tell you about a great charitable opportunity for you as well.***

***I have been accepted to participate in a unique educational opportunity with Carpe Diem Education. They are an amazing organization that provides international academic programs that work with youth in an educational capacity to both get students out of the country and out of their comfort zones.***

***I have been accepted to participate in their program going to \_\_\_\_\_ and while in this country, will be participating in several community service projects that are dedicated to\_\_\_\_\_.***

[ give one or two examples of what YOU will be doing as service work specifically.]

***I am very thankful and excited to be accepted to this program, but am in need of financial support in order to actually participate in the program. Therefore, I am calling to ask if you would be kind enough to financially contribute whatever you can to this academic endeavor.***

[at this point, they may ask you more questions about the organization or about what you will be doing abroad. Be prepared with materials to answer questions in front of you before you make the call.]

[If they say they would like to contribute:]

***Thank you so much, that would be wonderful. If you could make a check out to\_(your name)\_\_\_\_\_ and send that to \_\_\_\_\_(your address)\_\_\_\_\_by \_\_\_\_\_(goal date that you set up in your timeline)\_\_\_\_\_ I would greatly appreciate it.***

***Thank you again \_\_\_\_\_(donors name)\_\_\_\_\_ and I hope you have a great day.***

[If they say they cannot or will not make a contribution it is still important to be courteous: ]

***Well I appreciate your time and hope you have a great day\_\_\_\_(individual's name)\_\_\_\_\_.***

Once you have received checks from people who you spoke with on the phone it is important to send them thank you notes. If it is a close friend or relative, you may want to simply call them and have a more personal thank you expressed. Either way, it is important to follow up with whomever is donating to you.