

Successful Grassroots Fundraising

Katie Shea, Preschool Special Education Teacher, Virginia

Katie recently ran a successful fundraising campaign on Digital Wish to get an iPad for her classroom. Here are some tips from Katie to help others with their campaigns:



Know what you need and why you need it. Katie used a friend's iPad with her students and found three children doing things with the iPad that they had never done before: demonstrating joint attention, engaging in difficult fine motor tasks, and reciprocal communication. She recognized the iPad can be an important learning tool for her students and felt that this technology had enhanced her student's developmental success in just one day.

Set up a Fundraiser on DigitalWish.org. When Katie found there were no funds available in this year's school budget and two grant applications didn't come through, she turned to Digital Wish. She created an account on Digital Wish.org. While setting up her Wish List and fundraiser for an iPad with accessories and care plans, she clearly described her need for these items. Check out Katie's fundraising page:

http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/view_fundraiser?id=561



Make your fundraising campaign compelling. The items Katie placed in her Wish List appeared as images in her fundraiser, helping donors see the items she needs. Katie gave a clear explanation how the iPad accessories would be incorporated into lessons and how they would help enhance learning and development for her students. She was professional, detailed, and clear when creating her fundraising campaign.

Let people know about your campaign. Katie sent an email to 60 of her family members and closest friends who respect her work in education. She also sent announcements about her fundraiser through Facebook and Twitter using the easy "share" buttons on Digital Wish.

Thoughtful and clear emails are key to reaching your goal. Katie emailed everyone with a personal message that was heartfelt and thoughtful, being clear about her need for an iPad and how it will help benefit her students. Her first batch of donations came in immediately and within 3 hours, her fundraiser was 80% complete. Katie said, "It was such an encouraging feeling to know that other people care about what I do as a Special Educator and that people are willing to help children they don't even know."

Thank you! She emailed each donor a personal thank you message. You can get template thank you letters in the Digital Wish fundraiser tools section. Thank you messages can be by phone,

email, Facebook or Twitter. The important thing is making sure your notes of appreciation are timely.

Follow up by email and other social networking tools. While Katie was still trying to reach her fundraising goal, which included Wish List items, Katie followed up by emailing her family and friends again, except for the people who already donated, talking about the progress she's made towards her goal and the distance left to go.

Closing the fundraising campaign. The third email Katie sent updated everyone on the progress since she started, who had given, and how it's made her feel. She hadn't reached her goal yet, so she let everyone know the last day of the fundraiser so they were aware of the deadline for donations.

With each email reminder about the fundraiser, she received donations. Everyone's busy, but a donation on DigitalWish.org takes less than 3 minutes. Acknowledge that you know your friends and family are busy, but tell them that completing a donation will take less than 3 minutes of their time. It's thoughtful and it works.

Wishes Granted and Fundraiser Goal Reached. Katie's fundraiser campaign reached 105% of the goal, plus friends and family purchased items directly from her Wish List. She received almost double the amount of her fundraising campaign goal, giving her the added accessories and iPad insurance she needed. Digital Wish delivered the iPad and accessories to Katie's classroom for her students and they immediately start learning with her new iPad!

Katie said, "My experience with using Digital Wish's Fundraising tools was wonderful. There were too many hoops to jump through with other fundraising sites, but Digital Wish's online tools were easy-to-use and the customer service was great. When I needed items that weren't on DigitalWish.com, I contacted customer service and they were available for me within a few days!"



Key Elements of Katie's Success:

1. Create professional, detailed and clear wish lists and fundraisers on Digital Wish.
2. Email and follow-ups to family and friends.
3. Be upfront about the need and how it will help benefit the growth and developmental of your students.
4. Keep family and friends updated on the progress with the goal and with what students are going to achieve through it.
5. Thank your supporters!