How To
Run a Successful
Letter Writing Campaign

By Heather Chirtea

Get your students involved in classroom fundraising efforts for technology!
Introduction

Letter writing is part of every school’s curriculum, so why not make it practical. Involve the students in a real world letter-writing campaign to raise funds for digital imaging projects in the classroom!

To help you get started, Tool Factory and Olympus have created a grants and fundraising website at [www.digitalwish.com](http://www.digitalwish.com). *Digital Wish* offers a myriad of free resources to get you started:

• How-to instructions for mounting a letter writing campaign.
• Templates for letter writing and thank-you notes.
• Ready-made worksheets.
• Tips on grant writing
• Links to grants.
• A lesson plan library of digital imaging projects.
• Shopping for cameras and software.

This guide shows you 5 easy steps to success.
5 Steps to Success

Step 1 - Select your project
Let the student’s brainstorm!
http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=2

Step 2 - Make a budget
Find the cost of everything you need.
http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=3

Step 3 - Identify your targets
Consider friends, family, local business and national corporations.
http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=4

Step 4 - Write, write, write letters!
http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=5

Step 5 - Thank you notes
http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=6
You’ll need projects at the center of your letter-writing campaign. Imagine receiving a letter that says,

“... please donate money so that we can buy digital cameras…”

That letter won’t be nearly as effective as,

“...we’re setting up a ‘mock’ crime scene in our class. Students will get to use digital cameras to photograph and analyze clues. Then we’re going to write forensics reports, and create presentations for a mock courtroom proceeding, using digital software…”

A letter writing campaign will be more successful if your students have a story to tell. Every great project begins with an idea, so be creative and find out what interests your students. Visit Digital Wish and browse the Lesson Plan Library. Every project idea in the Digital Wish library was created by teachers who want to acquire cameras and software for their classroom.

http://www.digitalwish.com

Click “Lesson Plans”
# Project Ideas - Digital Imaging

## Administrative Ideas
- Yearbooks
- Award certificates
- Student ID cards
- Field trip photos
- School calendars
- School/Class handbooks
- Parent newsletters
- Seating charts
- Photos for open houses
- Photo inventory for insurance
- Flyers for school plays, or fundraisers
- Presentations
- Display cases and bulletin boards
- Class web pages
- Email attachments

## Math
- Worksheets (counting, patterns, sequences, addition, subtraction, etc.)
- Story problems and solutions with pictures
- Geometric shape hunt
- Illustrate area, perimeter, diameter, etc.
- Demonstrate fractions, multiplication, division, etc.
- Money counting with photos of coins and bills
- Time-telling with photos of clocks
- Patterns and sequences
- Budget builders
- Create a catalog with pricing, sales items, etc.
- Illustrated charts and graphs

## English/Language Arts
- Illustrated stories, essays, book reports, autobiographies, biographies, etc.
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Photo-inspired poems
- Flyers and advertisements
- Illustrated journals and diaries
- Visitor guides
- Shining Star books
- Captions for photos
- Greeting cards
- Pen pal letters
- Storybooks

## Science
- Lab reports
- Observations
- Labeled diagrams (plants, electrical circuits, etc.)
- Posters for presentations and projects
- Document: wildlife, chemical reactions, dissections, geological features, animal/plant growth, pond/beach study
- Nutrition planner
- Building photo-rich databases for collecting science data

## Printing
- Banners
- School newspaper
- Making worksheets
- Posters for the school play or fundraisers
- Student projects
- Scrap books
- Photo albums

## Social Studies/History
- Illustrated timelines
- Maps of your school and town
- Visitor guides
- Ballots
- Illustrated pen pal letters
- Virtual museums
- State reports (flag, flower, bird, industry)
- Time period collages
- Dioramas
- Family or class coat of arms
- Class flag
- Oral history project with photos and interviews
- Local history project
- Archive of historical photos and documents
Lesson Plan Library

The largest library of lesson plans can be found right on the Digital Wish website. Adding a project to your class showcase is as easy as 1-2-3!

http://www.digitalwish.com

Click “Lesson Plans”

1) Browse by subject, or conduct a search by subject, grade level, key word or interest.

2) When you find an interesting lesson plan, select “Add this plan to my account!”. The lesson plan will be moved into your personal profile. A “suggested materials list” will automatically appear.

3) You can then edit the text of the lesson plan to meet your own curriculum objectives and ideas, then tailor your materials list to match your project.
More Free Lesson Plan Libraries

Some classes select a single project idea. Others plan a stream of projects in order to integrate digital imaging across a wider range of grades and subjects. Either strategy works. Here are more free online libraries. Browse and find a winning idea!

Tool Factory’s curriculum area has a whole section devoted to “Digital Camera Projects”.

http://www.toolfactory.com/cgi-bin/gencur.py
Select “Digital Camera Projects”

Read the winning applications on the Classroom Grants Website for some great ideas!

http://www.toolfactory.com/olympus

Olympus has the Envision Your World curriculum with great project ideas in social studies and science.

http://www.envisionyourworld.com
Step 2 - Make a Budget

With your project selected, it’s time to figure out how much it will cost. Remember, the budget will become the basis for your fundraising campaign. Donors will be given the opportunity to sponsor items from your Digital Wish list. Here is a typical materials list:

Digital Imaging Materials List

Digital Cameras - http://www.toolfactory.com/cameras
Camera Accessories
  - Storage cards
  - Rechargeable batteries
  - Camera cases
  - Extended warranties - if students are handling cameras
  - Image transfer drives - flash drives
Project Building Software
  - Photo manipulation or art software
  - Web page building
  - Slide shows
  - Page layout software
Digital Voice Recorders
Printing
  - Printer or photo processing
  - Ink and photo paper
  - Book binding or calendar creation
Building a Simple Budget

The easiest way to make a budget is to simply...go shopping! A budget is nothing more than a list of things you want to purchase, along with the price for each. Here is a simple budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price Per</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Camera - Olympus SP-510</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$329.99</td>
<td>$659.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresco- Art Software</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$379.95</td>
<td>$379.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Toner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$132.99</td>
<td>$132.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyan Toner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majenta Toner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Toner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color Lazer Photo Paper, High Gloss, 2-sided, 100 Sheets</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$18.49</td>
<td>$517.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6mm Spiral Bindings, 100/box</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$15.25</td>
<td>$30.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 9&quot;X12&quot; Envelopes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,127.11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By showing the individual cost of each item, sponsors can make small contributions or large ones. The total shows the cost of the entire project.

Download budget templates from *Digital Wish* in Excel format. Then just fill in the blanks!

http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=3
Building a Categorized Budget

For larger projects, you may want to create a categorized budget. This will help isolate costs for major items. This can be useful when doing fundraising with larger corporations who are more likely to make larger contributions to your project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price Per Unit</th>
<th>Total Per Item</th>
<th>Total Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital Cameras</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Digital Camera Lab - 11 Cameras</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3,452</td>
<td>$3,452</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Camera – EVOLT E-500 Two Lens Kit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$799</td>
<td>$799</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cameras</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camera Accessories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Camera Guide for Educators</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash Drives for photo transfer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charger and 4AA batteries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$35</td>
<td>$280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Gigabyte xD Picture Cards</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Accessories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,040</td>
<td>$1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Software for Project Building</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software for project building - Tool Factory Workshop, school site license</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,999</td>
<td>$1,999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide show software - MultiMedia Lab V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art software - Fresco, school site license</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$379</td>
<td>$379</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Software</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,477</td>
<td>$2,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Printing Output</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ream of photo paper</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color printer cartridges</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$39</td>
<td>$312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Printing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$812</td>
<td>$812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$8,580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corporations or parents might make larger donations.

Download easy budget templates at http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=3
Step 3 - Identify Your Targets

Friends and Family Member
Have your students make a list of everyone they know. Don’t forget people in far-away towns!

Local Businesses
Get the yellow pages and identify businesses in your local area.

Real estate agencies and banks - A strong school system will increase local property values. Real estate agents can be your most supportive donors.

Local retail stores - Don’t overlook the value of “In Kind” donations. If a local store carries anything on your list, write them directly for a donation of goods.

Personal connections - Students should make note whether they have a personal connection in each business.

Don’t duplicate effort - Let the students write to the businesses where they have the strongest ties. No overlap!

National Corporations
Target a small number of presidents or CEOs of national corporations. Do some research at the library and involve your tech coordinator or librarian! Plan to send a myriad of letters to each targeted executive.

http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=4
Letter Writing Campaign Targets

Make a list of relatives, local businesses, and national corporations. Be sure to note whether there’s a personal connection with each contact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr.</th>
<th>Mrs.</th>
<th>Ms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>Zip:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Business
- Friend
- Relative
- Local

Note: |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr.</th>
<th>Mrs.</th>
<th>Ms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>Zip:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Business
- Friend
- Relative
- Local

Note: |

Download editable templates at www.digitalwish.com
Step 4 - Write Letters

Writing is part of every school’s curriculum. The planning and execution of a letter-writing campaign makes an excellent real-life application of your English curriculum.

It can be a great deal of fun, and there is a tremendous benefit in community outreach. Community members who might not otherwise have a connection to your classroom, will suddenly take an interest in your success. Here are some tips and tricks.

**Tips for Success**

• Plan your letters with pre-writing worksheets.
• Tell your story - don’t just ask for donations.
• Include instructions on how they can donate. They need to know who to make the check out to!
• Be sure your budget includes items in all price ranges. You’ll want them to be able to contribute at any level.
• Don’t forget to decorate the envelopes, draw pictures, or include photos.

Look for downloadable templates here:  
http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=5
Letter Planning

Download, edit, and print. Free letter-planning worksheets are posted on the Digital Wish website for all grade levels.

http://www.digitalwish.com

Click “Mount a Letter-Writing Campaign” and download worksheets
Dear Mr. Johnson at Manchester Pizza,
The Kindergarten Class is fundraising so that we can study flowers, bugs, and frogs. We’d like to take photos of plants and animals around the school. We’ll need to buy digital cameras and software for our classroom. Will you help us? Below my students have drawn pictures to represent their intended use for the new technology we seek.

We want to take photos of flowers.

This is me.

We need cameras and software.

Thanks for your support!

We will study nature.

Sue
January 17, 2007

Officer Jennifer Jones
Georgetown Police Department
432 Main Street
Georgetown, VT 05256

Dear Officer Jones:
Our class would like to learn what it's like to be a detective and we need your help! We are going to set up a mock-crime scene, then use digital cameras to record the evidence and examine clues.

This project will culminate with a report on the crime scene, then we'll hold a mock-trial to present the evidence and argue the case.

We need to purchase 3 Digital Cameras for our classroom, a visual database to log the photos, and a presentation software program to create our final display of the evidence.

Unfortunately the school cannot incorporate this purchase into this year's budget, so my class has decided to run a fundraising campaign to reach our financial goal. I hope you and the police force can help us with a donation! You can mail a check to Georgetown Middle School. Also please visit our class website at www.digitalwish.com. Here you can read about our class project, see the products we need, and make a cash donation to our online account.

Thank you for your time and generous support of our local school community!
Sincerely,

Jim Mackenzie
Georgetown Middle School, 6th Grade
Georgetown, VT 05256
Corporate Example

Select corporations who will be sympathetic to your mission, and always write to the president. Plan to send 10-50 letters to each targeted executive. They may not answer your students directly, but you will receive a response, and probably a larger donation.

January 17, 2007

Orvis Catalog Company
Peter Orvis, President and CEO
126 Main St.
Manchester Center, VT 05252

Dear Mr. Orvis:

Will you help bring science to our school?

I am writing to see if you can help provide classroom materials for our science study program. My entire class is hoping to track the growth and weather effects of the wetlands behind our school. We would like to use digital cameras to record the changes in the environment throughout all four seasons, then detail the progression or digression of growth throughout the wetland. The yearlong project will culminate with a report on the effects of weather, particularly global warming on specific environments such as the wetlands. Our final project is to develop a plan to protect the wetlands from such harsh environmental effect such as global warming.

We need to purchase 10 digital cameras, a visual database to log the photos and record environmental changes, plus webpage software so we can showcase our findings. Unfortunately the school cannot incorporate this purchase into this year’s budget, so my class has decided to run a fundraising campaign to reach our financial goal. We are writing letters to ask the local community for donations through a fundraising website www.digitalwish.com. If you visit http://www.digitalwish.com, you can read our detailed project plan and even see photos of our wetland.

Thank you for your time and generous support to our local school community!

Sincerely,

Mark Adams
Burton High School
Manchester Center, VT 05253
What to Put in the Envelope

Make it easy for your recipients to donate. Every envelope should include the following:

1) Personal letter.
2) Sponsorship form.
3) Self-addressed return envelope (add postage if possible).
Step 5 - Thank You Notes

You’ve done all the research, written the letters, and now it’s time to send a big “Thank You” to everyone who donated to your project! The hardest part of Step 5 is keeping track of who donated, and how much they contributed. Digital Make your own system and stick with it! Here are some tips.

Thank You Note Tips

• *Digital Wish* will automatically track who donates online, and send you an email notification every time there’s a purchase made.

• A quick thank you note utility is available at www.digitalwish.com.

• Let the kids write the “Thank You” notes. The donors will always appreciate personal notes from the students.

• Be sure to mention how well your project is progressing. Take pictures and include them in your correspondence!

http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=6
Step 5 - Thank You Notes

Download easy-to-edit templates for writing perfect thank you notes.

Download, edit, and print templates.

http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/fundraising?id=6