

FUNDRAISING IDEA BANK - MIDWEST PETS 2026

NOTE: These ideas were shared by attendees of the Fundraising Idea Bank sessions. The recordings were transcribed, lightly edited using AI, and then polished up by the facilitators, Lyle Staab and Jim Wales. Of course, we may have gotten the names and some of the details wrong, but it still resulted in a terrific reference. If you like an idea, contact the club for more info.

| Speaker | Club & District | Fundraiser Name | Amount Raised (Net) | Comments | One thing to do differently |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|---|
| Barb Groskinsky | Woodstock, IL Rotary Club (6440) | Jeep Raffle | ~\$50,000 | Sell 1000 tickets at \$100 each. Winner gets Jeep or \$50K. Major fundraiser of the year | Not specified |
| Mike Erickson | Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates, IL (6440) | Annual Gala | \$150,000 | \$95k from sponsors; includes dinner and live and silent auctions. Black tie optional. | Not specified |
| Mike Erickson | Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates, IL (6440) | Timeshare Drawing | ~\$25,000 | Club bought a timeshare about 25 years ago, to raffle annually | Not specified |
| Scott Daniels | Glenview Sunrise, IL (6440) | Taste of Glenview | ~\$30,000 | Newer event; involves tastings from 12 local restaurants at a Park District center. Tickets cover costs; profitability from sponsorships. Interact club helps. | Not specified |
| Dean Solberg | Crystal Lake Dawnbreakers, IL (6440) | A Night at the Raue | ~\$20,000 | Bring a artist-specific cover band into a one night concert at a community theater. | Not specified |
| Jeff Zergobel | Hartland - Lake Country, WI (6270) | Yule Feed Families | ~\$65,000 | Campaign to solicit donations earmarked for the five food pantries in the community. Matching donations drive up the total. Donors can earmark a particular pantry. Starts the Weds before Thanksgiving, and runs through the end of the year. About two-thirds of all the money we raise. | Not specified |
| Jodi Jaffe | Northbrook (IL) (6440) | Duck Race | ~\$25,000 | Sell numbered rubber ducks (actually, the rights to a numbered duck), which are dumped into a stream at a park. The first duck that crosses the finish line is the winner. | Event is done at part of community fest; not clear to attendees that the duck race is put on by rotary. |
| Jodi Jaffe | Northbrook (IL) (6440) | Family Game Night | New event | Family-focused evening of playing a dozen or so different games, some of which are team-based and others for individuals. Prizes for the winners. Simultaneously, there will be Name That Tune, a Raffle, and other activities. | Not specified |
| Eileen Hansen | Rhineland, WI (6220) | Rotary Gala | ~\$25,000-\$30,000 | Open to all of Oneida County. Dinner, followed by an auction, gift baskets, dessert dash. | Not specified |
| Eileen Hansen | Rhineland, WI (6220) | Scavenger Hunt | ~\$2,000 | First time we tried this event. Occupants of a car must identify all the items / locations. Charge was per car. It was a lot of fun, and we're expanding it this year to a broader area to attract more people. | Not specified |
| Frank Taylor | Bradley-Bourbonnais, IL 6450 | Annual Jigsaw Puzzle highlighting community and Rotary | ~\$3,500-\$4,000 | Stole idea from RC of San Clemente, CA. Have a contest to choose the puzzle picture from submissions in the community. Partner with and sell at about a dozen businesses, which drives traffic to them. Cost is \$13, we sell for \$30. Challenge is the minimum order of 350 puzzles, which must be paid for in advance. Use every bit of the box to promote Rotary. | Not specified |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Adam Weber | Whitnall Park, WI (6270) | Craft Fairs | ~\$40,000 | Two fairs/year, around Xmas and Easter. Easy to run, not a lot of effort. Held at high school. 200 crafters, each of which pays \$60/booth. Charge \$4 entry. About 2000 attendees. Club is 20 members; get help from scouts. | Not specified |
| Jim Wales | Chicago Citywide Service, IL (6450) | Carnivals | as much as \$60,000 for a three day carnival | Pretty easy. Most areas have companies that will put on carnivals. They do all the work, but you might provide some monitoring and minor labor. You get a percentage. You need to find the locaton and do the permitting for the event. | Not specified |
| Cindy Pettit | Cedarburg-Grafton, WI (6270) | 26th Annual Rotary Music Festival - a Drum & Bugle Corps Competition | ~\$70,000 | Held around 4th of July. Four Corps compete. Held at high school stadium. Tickets start at \$25. Work with Drum Corps International for ticketing and promotion. | Not specified |
| Cindy Pettit | Cedarburg-Grafton, WI (6270) | Rotary Holiday Concert | ~\$50,000-\$60,000 | Partner with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Ticket sales pay for the event; make our money on sponsorships. Strong business sponsorship relationships, who are interested in investing through Rotary to improve the community. | Not specified |
| Amy Smith | Vacationland Wisconsin (6270) | Wine Fundraiser | \$3,000 | 90% from non-members. Super easy; 2-hour event at a local shop. Club members made the appetizers. | Not specified |
| Kevin Dinser | Marquette, MI (6220) | Annual Golf Outing | ~\$27,000-\$28,000 | Usually have about 34 teams registered. 70%-90% of giving from non-members. Takes a lot of work; committee of 12 meets monthly. Sponsorships are VERY important. | Try to evolve/change a little thing every year |
| Phil Price | Sun Prairie, WI (6250) | Golf Outing Ball Drop | Not specified | Ball drop from a roof, the person who guesses where it will land wins. | Lots of variations on this theme. Number the balls and drop them from a helicopter, a fire ladder truck, or platform onto a putting green. Closest to the pin wins. Also can sell balls, set a target on a green, and simultaneously have everyone try to roll their ball closest to the target. |
| Lyle Staab | Facilitator (6440) | Putting green targets | Not specified | On a putting green, create a target difficult for putters to achieve for a big prize. On the rest of the green, put smaller gifts - bottles of wine, Rotary branded items, donated gift cards, etc. Sell 3 putts for \$20. Whatever they hit first, they get - they can't keep putting to get something else. | Not specified |
| Tom Cunningham | Schaumburg AM, IL (6440) | Souper Bowl of Soups | ~\$14,000-\$15,000 | We've done this for five years. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at door. Area restaurants supply and serve soup. The attendees vote for the winner. Smart move - three years ago, we added the culinary programs at district 211 five high schools, so they have their own competition. That drew in a lot more people, changed the crowd a bit, and became a lot more fun. | For 50-50 Raffles - don't do one for five, three, for ten, five for 20. Do only an arm length for 20. You will sell a lot more tickets and make a lot more money. |
| Blair Rodinas | Sandwich, IL (6420) | Brats and HotDogs at Sandwich Fair | Not specified | Nothing special about selling brats, but make a big deal about polio at the tip jar. Gets the word out, attracts donors who remember polio. | Not specified |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|---------------|
| Mariana | Woodridge, IL (6450) | Gala | \$35,000 | Work with owner of a music venue who has connection with serious professional musicians. Just had the Cover Girls Violin Show, who played with Chicago in Vegas. Attracts 300-350 people. Restaurants donate food, food stands with their items. Grossed \$50K, net \$35K this year. Also, live music brings in a lot of people from outside the community. | Not specified |
| Sandra Scedrina | Chicagoland Lithuanians, IL (6450) | Golf Event | as much as \$164,000 | Around 200 guests. Closest to pin, 50-50 raffles, live and silent auction, and a cash call where they buy balloons at different amounts. | Not specified |
| Seyda Calderwood | Rotary One, IL (6450) | Member dining out nights | ~\$2,000 | Negotiate a per person price for a meal at a gourmet restaurant. Great fellowship, especially if the place has live music. We had 41 members at our last event | Not specified |
| Tom Wilson | Door County North, WI (6220) | Progressive Xmas Raffle | ~\$20,000-\$22,000 | Borrowed idea from Wausaw. 12 days progressive Christmas raffle - 100, 200, up to 1200 dollars. Get sponsors to cover the eight thousand dollar costs. | Not specified |
| Ellis | Green Lake, WI (6270) | Chili Cookoff | ~\$20,000 | Have done this for 40+ years. We sell the chili and have beverage sales and live music. We added some things in the last couple years. | Not specified |
| Dave Owens | West Allis, WI (62700) | Beer Box | ~\$10,000-\$18,000 | Work with local craft brewer, with a discount on five cans of beer. Then we asked businesses for any donations to go in the box: pretzels, candies, snacks, and anything like that. Sold the boxes for fifty dollars. | Not specified |
| Craig Pierce | Batavia, IL (6440) | Vehicle Raffle | \$50,000 | Have done this for 37 years. Sell 1200 tickets at \$100 each. Winner gets a \$50K in cash, or they can apply that to a vehicle at a dealer who gives them a great price. (This was a raffle for a Corvette until they became too expensive and difficult to source.) | Not specified |
| Craig Pierce | Batavia, IL (6440) | Trivia Night for Polio | \$10,000 | Team trivia night including heavy appetizers. Cash bar. Silent auction items, and cash call. | Not specified |
| Jackie | Waukesha, WI (6270) | Pancake Breakfast | \$15,000 | We've done this for 70 years, but it's a lot of work. Before COVID, we'd have 1800 attendees and make \$25K. | Not specified |
| Jackie | Waukesha, WI (6270) | Bourbon Tasting | \$10,000 | Bourbon tasting. 100 attendees. Looking to scale up the event. | Not specified |
| Linda Callahan | Aurora, IL (6450) | Wine and Chocolate Event | ~\$30,000-\$40,000 | We've changed it up a little bit over the years, but we're doing a wine pairing dinner and wine and chocolate tasting. We do everything we can possibly think of: cash call, silent auction, live auction. We get a lot of sponsorships - probably 50% of the money comes from the community from the businesses and the aldermen. | Not specified |

| | | | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---|--|
| Amber Wood | Rock Island, IL (6420) | Trivia Night | \$4,000 | Usually a lot of rotarians host a table, and bring non-rotarians in. Silent auction raffle items, and a 50-50 as well. No food costs because everybody brings their own food and treats and snacks, so it's just the bar. So, the costs are very inexpensive for hosting that event. | Not specified |
| Amber Wood | Rock Island, IL (6420) | Annual Sponsorships | \$20,000 | <p>Instead of doing event sponsors each time, we offer annual sponsorships for all our events. We ask them if their company's values align with the work we're doing in our community. Sponsors get mentioned at meetings and on website. and get tickets to out events. They also are recognized when we do the Rock Island Labor Day Parade.</p> <p>It's been really successful, We have funded most of our club operations through those sponsorships. I think we're raising around twenty thousand dollars through sponsorships in that way, even though there are many other rotary clubs in the area.</p> | Not specified |
| Unknown | Libertyville Sunrise, IL (6440) | Second City Troupe | \$125,000 | Hire a Second City travelling company to do a show at the local high school. Lots of silent auction items, 50-50. Sell 600 tickets plus. Have an after-show party at a craft brewery. Work with local restaurants to reserve tables for show attendees with a commitment to get them out in time for the show. Lots of profit comes from sponsorships. | |
| Unknown | River Cities, IL (6440) | Jigsaw Puzzle Race | Not specified | \$200 for a four-person team. You get a 500 piece jigsaw puzzle - everyone has the same one, which is created for the event. Each team gets a 16 inch pizza and you get two pitchers of the beverage of their choice.. Awards go to the teams first to finish the puzzle, pizza, and beverages. Another prize to the team that gives up on their puzzle first. | |
| Unknown | Unknown | "Touch-a-Truck" | Not specified | Kids can sit in and touch emergency and other types of vehicles. Sell concessions in addition to tickets. | Recommended using AI to brainstorm new ideas |
| Peggy | Mount Horeb, WI (6250) | Recommendation | | If you want to have some fun, ask AI what kind of an event can we have where our club can raise fifty thousand dollars in one night and not spend more than five thousand dollars and everybody has a lot of fun. You'll will be amazed at what it comes up with. | |