

# Special Events

## SPARKS



A resource for creative fundraising events to “spark” your imagination and jump start any campaign.

United Way  
of the CSRA



# How SPECIAL EVENTS Can Help Your Campaign

A fun campaign makes your job more enjoyable and creates increased awareness of United Way of the CSRA among your co-workers. With that in mind, we've compiled some creative sparks-- examples of ideas and events--to help ignite an exciting and effective employee campaign. We've included simple campaign promotions, as well as unique, successful special events that companies have sponsored in the past.

Remember that not everything you do has to make money. Sometimes just getting together for fun and team-building can be a good way to remind people about the campaign. Use this booklet as a starting point to help develop ideas tailored to your company's theme. Many companies also like to include fun activities in their kickoff or as a thank you to their employees for contributing to a great campaign.

## Event Planning Tips

- Name a special event chair and ask him or her to create a special event team to share the duties and spread the enthusiasm
- Decide if the goal of the event is to raise awareness, boost employee morale, raise money or all three
- Put together a budget and determine prizes (*see suggestions within this guide*)
- Choose an event that's a good match for your work environment and employees
- Select a date that doesn't conflict with other company events
- Reserve an easily accessible location and get approvals
- Assign responsibilities to team members (publicity/promotions, prizes, food, decorations, volunteer recruitment, etc.)
- Inform your United Way representative of your special event(s) and ask for any help and/or advice you may need
- Schedule a run-through a day or two before the event
- Take pictures at the event and give them to your United Way representative
- After the event, evaluate its success, make notes for next year's committee and report the results to employees and your United Way representative
- Send thank you notes to everyone who helped make the event a success, including volunteers and vendors who donated food and prizes.

# Suggested Campaign Themes

- Be a Superhero
- Building a Brighter Future
- Caring Works Magic
- Doing Good Today for Great Tomorrows
- Give...Wholeheartedly
- Giving is Good News
- I Give at the Office
- Imagine What We Can Do...Together
- Join the Winning Team
- Let's Make the Difference
- Make a Change for the Better
- Make Your Caring Count
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- Paint a Brighter Tomorrow
- Rise to the Challenge
- Take Stock in Our Community
- Tune in to Your Community
- You're a Lifesaver Every Day
- We're Counting on You
- Write a Happy Ending
- Working Wonders Together

❖ **Or...use any of the following starting points to create a theme:**

- **A movie (*Mission Impossible*)**
- **A TV show (*Happy Days for United Way, Make a Caring Reality*)**
- **Sports (*Pitch in and Give, Teaming Up for Better Tomorrows*)**
- **Summer or Fall Holiday (4<sup>th</sup> of July, Oktoberfest, Halloween, Labor Day)**
- **Pick a Decade (1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s)**



# Campaign Ideas

## Got Games?

Educate employees about United Way and its partner agencies in a fun way by incorporating a game show theme. Use information from United Way printed material, web site ([www.uwcsra.org](http://www.uwcsra.org)) and our partner agencies' Web sites to create quizzes inspired by different game shows. Play the game(s) at a group meeting or give everyone the opportunity to play by creating a worksheet or posting questions online.

- A few ideas...
- Jeopardy: Have 10 "answers" about United Way; have employees write down the corresponding "questions."
  - Let's Make a Deal: Go around the office and ask random United Way-related questions

## Who Knows the Nose?

Take a side picture of employees' noses and see who knows the most noses.

Have employees contribute to participate in the guessing.



## Baby Picture Contest

Employees bring a baby picture of themselves and staff guesses who is who. Charge an entry fee for employees to submit their guesses. The person with the most correct answers wins a prize.

## Employee Cookbook

Collect recipes from employees. Then retype your collection and group it into sections. Sell the cookbook for a nominal fee. Consider having an employee's child provide their cover artwork. Books can be printed and bound by a local business. See if you can get this service done pro bono. Plan for an enthusiastic response!

## Dessert Bake-Off

Find out which employee can make the dessert. Hold a competition in which employees can put their family recipes to the test. On the day of the event, sell taste tickets and have employees vote on the best dessert maker in the company. Award a prize for the winner.



## Candy Sale

Purchase your employees' favorite candy to sell. Place candy in a prominent area where employees will be tempted to satisfy their sweet tooth.

## Turkey Giveaway

Use the Thanksgiving holiday as an inspiration for special events. Raffle off a turkey for Thanksgiving dinner. Purchase a turkey or ask employees to donate free turkey(s) earned from shopping.





## Jail-and-Bail Day

Designate an area to represent the jail or if you have a talented maintenance department have them construct one. Charge people to put someone in jail and also charge to get them out. Designate certain employees to be the “deputies” to take employees to jail. Make use of the time employees are in the jail by having them fold the United Way pledge forms for distribution or help with attaching them to employee paychecks.

## Hats Off to United Way

Designate a day as “Hat Day” and ask employees to wear their favorite hat to work. Award prizes for silliest hat, biggest hat, a hat that most represents your company, etc.



## Take a Day Off for United Way

Employees “buy” a vacation day. When employees choose to participate, their wages from the day’s work are deducted from their paycheck. The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to the campaign. This is a win-win situation: the organization achieves high participation, the employees get a vacation day and the community is helped.

## Executive Receptionist

Put together a board with head shot pictures of company executives. Place an envelope below each picture for “votes.” The executive who receives the most contributions of money in their envelope wins the honor of being “receptionist for the day.” As the time draws near to the end of the “voting” period, you may see large contributions being made to ensure a certain executive wins!

## Be a Hero with Roses

Purchase long-stemmed roses to sell on the "Sweetest Day." Talk to a flower wholesaler for better rates.



## Talent Show

Use your campaign theme to put on an employee talent show. Charge employees admission to the show. Sell popcorn for a snack as employees enjoy the show.



## Ticket Giveaways

Free tickets for movies, theater productions, amusement centers and other local attractions can be a pledge incentive. Encourage employees to pledge \$2 per week by giving two movie passes to every employee who meets that challenge.

## Valet Parking

Have management park employee cars and retrieve them at the end of the day. Prizes can be awarded for giving levels.

## Balloon Pop

Employees donate prizes for this event—a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of a prize. Employees pay \$1 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they've won. Include a United Way fact in each balloon.



## Used Book Sale

Invite employees to donate books. Encourage them to bring their donations in early. Price paperbacks at \$1 and hardbacks at \$2. The leftover books can be donated to a United Way agency.

## 10 Ways to Get the Word Out

1. Email/intranet messages
2. Company intranet postings
3. Articles and ads in employee newsletter
4. Payroll stuffers
5. Calendars of campaign event
6. Posters/fliers/banners: elevators, stair wells, inside of restroom stall doors, cafeteria, water cooler, break area, coffee machine
7. Announcements at staff meetings
8. Piece of candy or event-related item with a reminder tied to it
9. Table tents
10. Voicemail messages

# Need an Idea for an Incentive?

## These work well...

- Bonus vacation days
- Gift certificates donated by local merchants
- Golf lessons
- Mugs, t-shirts, key chains, etc. (with company logo\*)
- One share of company stock
- Movie passes or lottery tickets
- Sleep-in-late or leave-work-early certificates
- Traveling trophy for department with highest participation or percentage increase
- Casual days
- Job swap (boss does winner's job for a day)
- Flowers every month for a year
- Department pizza party
- Candy
- Prime parking spaces or free parking
- Day off to volunteer
- Massage
- Cafeteria coupons
- Homemade craft or cooking donated by employees
- Buttons/pins
- Lunch or dinner with CEO
- Gift baskets or goodie bags
- Early dismissal on a Friday
- Employee-designed t-shirts
- A trip (using company frequent-flyer miles)
- Open soda machine if company reaches goal

\*Consider ordering custom items with your organization's and United Way's logo from an advertising specialties company or from the United Way Store ([unitedwaystore.com](http://unitedwaystore.com))

\*Please contact the United Way office at 706-724-5544 for assistance with running your campaign!