



Thoughts from a Big Brother and Volunteer Fundraiser:

General

- Try to bring your Little (if you have one) into the fundraising process. Explain why you are running the Marathon and that it helps to raise money to match other Littles and for many of the activities that you do with Big Brother Big Sisters. Let your Little help with writing the letter and doing the mailing. Your Little might even ask people they know or the family know for at least a nominal donation. If you make your Little feel like this is their project as well, they will have a chance to feel the reward as the donations start to come in. This also is a good chance to work with your Little on the computer when you are making your list and keeping track of donations.

Letter Tips

Technical

- Send out letter or e-mail 4-6 weeks before the Ride. If you send out a letter, you can then do a reminder e-mail. A letter is probably more effective, but e-mail allows you to reach more people quickly if you are getting a late start.
- Include small return envelopes if your letter with your address already on them for the checks.
- Ask for money back about one week before it is actually due.
- Make sure to provide your address and who the check should be made out to clearly (maybe bold) in your letter or e-mail.

Strategic

- Put the person's name(s) on each letter or e-mail, don't make it generic.
- Discusses your involvement in the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization and why it is important to you. Mention what Big Brothers Big Sisters will use the money for (making and supporting matches)
- Include a picture of you and your Little in the letter (scan or use a digital picture).
- Make sure everyone you reach out to knows your fundraising goal.
- Explain that unlike most fundraising events, 105% of money goes back to Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- Sign the letter from both you and your Little (if applicable).
- State that contributions are 100% tax deductible.
- If you want to make a donation yourself, in your letter offer to match each donation by a certain % up to a dollar amount i.e. "I will match the first \$1,000 in donations by 5 or 10%." This personal commitment will encourage people to give more.

Tracking

- Keep an excel spreadsheet with all your donor info. You might want to consider using a database program such as Microsoft Access if you have more than 100 people you plan to solicit. You can also use a spreadsheet/export with Microsoft Word and do a "mail merge" to produce your fundraising letters and/or mailing label

Post-Ride

- Make sure to write a thank you note to each donor. If you have a Little, get them to write it with you or to sign their name if possible.