

Alternative Virtual Fundraising Options

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation greatly values your ongoing leadership, creativity and commitment to help us raise much needed funds!

We are all in this together with the unprecedented health crisis of COVID19. Thank you for championing our cause and continuing to reach out to your network and into the community to inspire and motivate meaningful support via the innovative fundraising initiatives you undertake.

We know you are brainstorming your own initiatives and thinking about how you might update your event strategy within this new 2020 landscape. We would like to provide some ideas, best practises and resources as inspiration and to support your success. These are some event options that can help you remain close to your network while maintaining a safe physical distance.

As always, we are here to be helpful! We will continue to connect and are here to support you and your potential contingency plans.

1. *Virtual Auction*

Consider setting up an online auction through a third party service such as [Greater Giving Fundraising Software](#), [BidJs](#), [Auctria](#), [Bidding for Good](#), [One Cause](#) and [Silent Auction Pro](#). These services have varying features but all support online and mobile auctions depending on your needs.

2. *Virtual Concert*

If a musical performance was part of your event previously, consider one of these following options for hosting a virtual concert for your audience. [Side Door](#), [Gigee](#), [CrowdCast](#) and [Stage It](#) are great options that help run the event, but they do absorb a percentage of the funds raised. Free (or lower fee) options include Facebook Live, Twitch, Instagram, and Zoom. For more information on them – check out this [article](#). It is important to note that the social media-esque options do not have a built in payment/tip feature so you will need to establish that for donations independently.

3. *Virtual Party*

For smaller, more informal gatherings of friends, consider hosting a virtual party. Applications such as [Zoom](#), [House Party](#), [Google Hangouts](#), [FaceTime](#) or [Skype](#) can be great tools to use for planning events or celebrating your success. Once again these apps do have the ability to connect you with a small audience, but there is no payment feature available.

4. *Birthday Parties/ Celebrations*

Utilizing an online platform such as TeamRaiser or [ECHOage](#), donors will be able to bring their network together virtually, to celebrate important moments. Depending on the platform, there is the ability to customize a webpage and send out virtual invitations, RSVPs, reminders and thank you notes. These resources are best accessed when facilitated by the organizations that have memberships to these websites. With ECHOage, it is possible to simultaneously fundraise for your charity of choice, as well as pooling separate donations together to buy the extra special gift you had in mind for the birthday child.

5. *Social Media Challenge*

We have seen the tremendous impact of social media challenges in the past – think of the Ice Bucket Challenge, the Harlem Shake, and many currently-viral activities like the Push-Up Challenge on Instagram. Here is a New York Times [article](#) talking about just how easy it is to go viral with an easy online challenge during this physically-distant but socially-connected time. These are a great way to raise awareness about your specific cause or event and increase the conversations surrounding your central mission. Always remember to make the message clear – what the challenge is – and then tell them where to donate and post results on your chosen social media platform. Encourage them to challenge “X” more people to do the challenge – it will expand from there.

6. *Online Stream/Live Show or Speech*

Similar to hosting an online concert, this option is a helpful tool if you were planning to host a panel, conference or event with many guest speakers. Taking time to have an interview format with key speakers (perhaps previous patients or grateful family members) can be just as impactful through a screen as it is in person when executed well. Check out sources such as [Glisser](#), [Splash Virtual](#), [ON24](#), [GlobalMeet](#), or [Metro Connections](#).

7. *Online Gaming*

Similar to a telethon, gamers are now getting together to create events where they are sponsored for every hour they play. A similar event is [Extra Life](#), which benefits McMaster Children's Hospital Foundation through the Children's Miracle Network. Interested in learning more? Check out this blog post that goes into detail on how the world of online gaming and philanthropy can merge together [here](#).

8. *Golfing/Virtual Golf*

Golf tournaments are one of the most popular outdoor fundraising events. Some clubs are already seeking ways to make the game of golf at their courses completely contactless, as seen in this [video](#). Looking for a virtual option? Check out a website like [SkyTrak](#) that allows you to remotely play on the world's top golf courses! Looking for an element of togetherness with your attendees? Consider adding a virtual Happy Hour to the end of your game with one of the aforementioned technology options.

9. *Walk/Run*

The first of the events to come out with an online option were popular fundraising efforts such as climbs and marathons. This [article](#) from the New York Times provides great insight into the options available online and the way these events can continue without sacrificing one's training! Looking to set your own virtual walk or run? RaceRoster offers many templates in setting up a run or to find one already supporting one of the Hamilton Health Sciences locations such as Isolation Run. Visit www.Isolationrun.org and choose from the different Hamilton Health Sciences options to start your own run with or without a team. You can also use the "Social Media Challenge" (option #4) to do your own walk/run or physical activity by encouraging others to donate, and undertake the physical task associated with participation. Have them post their photos or video on whichever social media site you are comfortable with.

10. *Online Gala*

A grand event can be seen as daunting both as a live or virtual undertaking. Consider combining any of these options and you are giving people an entertaining evening/day where a little prep-work will go a long way toward the ultimate experience for an attendee. Give a local restaurant extra business by offering their delivery or curbside pick up options (be sure to speak to the business first) for the beginning of your event. Offer live performance(s) and guest speakers throughout the online video stream. If you do not have an experienced social media/production volunteer, consider reaching out to an organization that does it professionally such as [Hopin](#), [King Events](#), or [Stage Ten](#).

11. *Lemonade Stands/ Bake Sales*

While making and selling delicious treats for your neighbours during this physically distant time is a challenge, consider hosting a zoom baking party where for a small fee, donors can join a bake-along and get to bake or make themselves the same snack as you, at the same time by providing them with a list of ingredients in advance. This is a fun way to socialize while enjoying making something yummy!

12. Physically Distant in-Person Fundraising

With summer around the corner consider setting up a driveway drive-by station where donors can throw water balloons at you for a donation, or even have you wash their car! Another option? Think about scratch card fundraisers; consider constructing a large version of one with each square having a specific donation amount – have all the donations on the card total the amount you are aiming to raise. Get creative about how you let donors choose their square: will they throw a dart at a balloon board, squirt water at a chalk covered driveway, drop a ball down a peg board? The more creative you're willing to be, the more options that are available!

13. Further Alternatives

Other very successful campaigns that we have witnessed in the past include the following options: [Window signs](#) to aid fundraisers or just show support; [Givalanche campaigns](#); and, fundraising pages or employee giving once workplaces re-open.

There are so many opportunities to get creative during this time! We're eager to work with you to brainstorm, even if it means a shift away from your traditional approach of generating funds.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment; we are so thankful for your efforts as a valued community partner.